

IRANIAN AND TURKISH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SOLICIT U.S. AID AND PROTECTION
1943-1946

Jonathan Edward Storer

Iranian and Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Solicit U.S Aid and Protection 1943-1946

A Thesis

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Masters of Military History (M.A)

Jonathan Edward Storer

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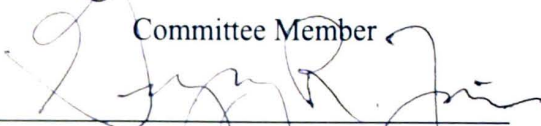
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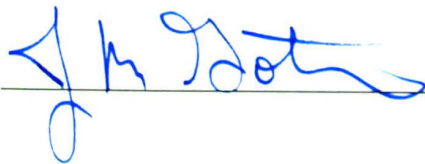


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ABSTRACT

JONATHAN E.STORER. Iranian and Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Solicit U.S Aid and Protection 1943-1946 (Under the direction of DR. ANTONIO THOMPSON.)

Purpose: The historiography of the origins of the Cold War focuses mainly on the aims and objectives of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The purpose of this thesis was to examine the role of The Iranian government from 1943 and the Turkish government from 1945, in their pursuits of economic and military aid from the U.S. government. The thesis examined the possibility that the U.S. foreign policy that became known as Containment was influenced by the Iranian and Turkish governments' description and interpretation of Soviet foreign policy.

Methods: The thesis examined the diplomatic records of telegrams and policy papers between the U.S. State Department and its embassies in Iran and Turkey to ascertain how much of Iranian and Turkish versions of events were transmitted back to the Secretary of State.

Results: There is evidence to suggest that Iran and Turkey influenced U.S. strategic thinking between 1944 and 1946. Both countries pursued direct U.S. support in their separate disputes with the U.S.S.R. The Clifford Elsey Report (1946) directly quoted Iranian versions of clashes between their police and Soviet troops.

Discussion: Smaller nations could influence the U.S. in the Cold War for their own ends.

Conclusions: There is a need to further enhance our understanding of the origins of the Cold War by going beyond the simple construct of the U.S. versus the U.S.S.R. and instead, examine the aims and objectives of less powerful nations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: The Historiography of the Cold War in the Near East	7
CHAPTER II: Iranian Efforts to Secure U.S. Support Against Foreign Interference 1943-46	22
Historical Background	22
Iranian Influence on Shaping the Direction of the U.S. Missions 1943-4	24
Iranian Delaying Tactics Over the Oil Negotiations - 1944	28
The Iranian Portrayal of the U.S.S.R.'s Refusal to Withdraw its Troops 1945-6	31
Iranian diplomacy and the Security Council – January 1946	37
Iranian Diplomacy February- April 1946	39
Iranian Diplomacy May-December 1946	44
Conclusion	48
CHAPTER III: Turkish Efforts To Secure U.S. Support Against Foreign Interference 1945-46	54
Turkish-Diplomacy During World War II	54
Soviet Attempts to Weaken Turkish Sovereignty: October - 1944	56
Turkish-U.S. Relations January-February - 1945	57
Soviet Threats to Turkish Sovereignty and Turkish Efforts to Solicit U.S. Support: March-June 1945	62
The Issue of the Montreux Convention at the Potsdam Conference	68
Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Secure Direct U.S. Support its Border Dispute With the U.S.S.R.	70
Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Shape U.S. Foreign Policy – 1946	74
Conclusion	80
CONCLUSION	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	95

INTRODUCTION

On March 12th 1947, U.S. President, Harry S. Truman announced to a joint session of Congress, his doctrine that pledged support to “free people” in their struggle against “subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” The new policy was known as “Containment.” His speech was in direct response to diplomatic notes sent to Truman by the British Government, on February 21st 1947.¹ The British Government had indicated their immediate withdrawal from the Greek Civil War. They also reversed a commitment previously given to the Turkish government of economic and military aid. The Greek Civil War had been fought intermittently since 1944 and Britain could no longer afford to finance the Greek government. Truman did not name the U.S.S.R. directly as the “outside pressure.” He did, however, refer to Bulgaria, Poland and Romania as countries that had succumbed to “totalitarian regimes against their will.”² The U.S.S.R. had liberated these three countries during World War II and large numbers of Red Army troops were still inside their territories. All three governments were now communist led or dominated. Truman, therefore, referred to the U.S.S.R. indirectly and abandoned thereafter, any further attempt to accommodate them. He, instead, embarked upon a policy of confrontation.

Turkey and Greece made up two of the three Near East countries that played an important part in Truman’s decision to confront alleged Soviet aggression; the third was Iran.³ The U.S.S.R. had clashed with both Iran and Turkey in the aftermath of World War II. The first crisis was in Iran and the Azerbaijan issue of 1945-6. The U.S.S.R., unlike the U.S. and the British, refused to withdraw its troops that had been occupying Iran since 1943. The U.S.S.R. had also sponsored nascent regional governments in the

north of the country and both Azerbaijani and Kurdish separatists threatened independence from the government in Tehran. The U.S.S.R. had also demanded oil concessions from the Iranians.

At the same time, a second crisis flared up in Turkey and continued into 1947. The U.S.S.R. demanded the right to install military bases on the Bosphorus, and renegotiate the terms of the Montreux Convention, signed in 1936, that gave Turkey the right to govern maritime access of the Dardanelles Straits. They also threatened the annexation of the two Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan.

The Azerbaijan and Straits Crises were only two of many factors that influenced Truman's decision to confront the U.S.S.R. Others included, but were not limited to, the communist takeover of Eastern Europe, the U.S. monopoly of atomic weapons, U.S. domestic policy and Stalin's diplomacy. From such varied incidents, it is not surprising that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have been independently or jointly blamed for causing the Cold War.⁴ The literature review, in Chapter I, will demonstrate that existing scholarship mostly conforms to the interpretation of blaming either of the two competing superpowers for clashing in the Near East over oil security. Very little of the historiography has covered the aims of either Iran or Turkey, and there has been little previous analysis of their diplomatic efforts to achieve U.S. protection. The Turks, however, successfully altered Truman's preferred option of internationalizing the Straits, while the Iranians out-maneuvered the U.S.S.R. into withdrawing its troops before any agreement on oil rights had been secured. Both countries then secured U.S. support with very little asked of them in return. This suggested that both countries achieved considerable diplomatic successes in defending their sovereignty.

In Chapter I, the preponderance of material that focused on the Greek government will be analyzed as a point of departure for the thesis. The Greek government was chaotic and relied upon the British for support. British involvement bordered on direct interference in the running of the country. The U.S. was uninterested in the country until late 1946 as the U.S. regarded Greece as a British problem. By contrast, both Iran and Turkey were not in the throes of a civil war and were much more independent of foreign influence. Because of this stability, the Iranians and Turks were in a position to influence U.S. policy directly without the necessity of having to ask British permission first.

This thesis analyzes the influence of the Iranian and Turkish government on U.S. foreign policy through what was said to U.S. officials and how this affected U.S. foreign policy. The thesis relies mainly upon the Records of the Foreign Relations of the United States (F.R.U.S.). These archives chronicle the correspondence between the State Department and their embassies. The thesis does this for three reasons. First, unlike President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman relied far more on his officials from the State Department for advice and policy formulation. They are, therefore, important in understanding how the U.S. decided to contain the U.S.S.R. Second, the records reported what Iranian and Turkish officials said to U.S. ambassadors and their staff. The evidence of alleged Soviet aggression was presented to both the Secretary of State and the President from officials within the department. They in turn relied upon the reports from their embassies in Tehran and Ankara. Only rarely, did an ambassador question the veracity of information given to him by local officials. Third, Iranian and Turkish evidence was also augmented by frequent interviews between their embassy officials and State Department bureaucrats in Washington.

Chapter II examines the role of the Iranian government in its efforts to have the U.S. guarantee Iranian independence. From 1943 they constructed a clear and simple narrative of Soviet aggression in its Azerbaijan province. U.S. support had been the aim of the Iranians from the beginning of the Twentieth Century, but it would only become a possibility after 1943 with the arrival of U.S. missions that aided the Iranian government. At the same time, the Iranians resisted all U.S. efforts to reform the structure of its government. Chapter III will, likewise, assess the role of the Turkish government to secure U.S. aid after March 19th 1945. On that date the U.S.S.R. allowed for the expiration of the Treaty of Friendship with Turkey and demanded a wide range of concessions from the Turks.⁵ As will be shown, up until March 19th 1945, the Turks had been in dispute with the U.S. over Lend-Lease liabilities and their relationship was quite frosty.

Chapters II and III will both conclude by comparing what each of the two governments reported to the State Department and what was written in the Clifford-Elsey report. This had been commissioned in July 1946 by Truman and presented to him on September 24th 1946. Its authors Clark Clifford, Special Advisor to the President and George Elsey, Clifford's assistant, had consulted widely within the U.S. government in its preparation.⁶ Its aim was to assess Soviet actions to date and advise on any future U.S. foreign policy with regard to relations with the U.S.S.R. If Iran and Turkey had succeeded in influencing U.S. policymakers, then their evidence or version of events would be present in the report.

This thesis does not deny that both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. had strategic and economic interests in the region. Where it differs from existing accounts is the

importance of both Iran and Turkey in inflating, for their own purposes, the size of any Soviet threat. Both countries had experience of diplomacy with Tsarist Russia and the U.S.S.R. Both the Iranians and the Turkish governments helped change U.S. perceptions about Soviet intentions. They constructed a narrative that portrayed the U.S.S.R. as overly aggressive. From 1943, Iran, and from 1945, Turkey, both solicited and succeeded in securing U.S. protection against a perceived Soviet threat.

Finally, the thesis does not assess the veracity of the policy of Containment. It will not pass judgment on Soviet actions vis-à-vis either Iran or Turkey. The thesis does not necessarily suggest that the U.S.S.R. was being aggressive towards its southern neighbors. It will, however, demonstrate that the Iranians and the Turks both interpreted the U.S.S.R.'s actions as hostile to ensure U.S. diplomatic, economic and military support. In this endeavor, they were ultimately successful.

¹ Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 32-33.

² Harry Truman, "The Truman Doctrine Calls for Aid to Greece and Turkey to Contain Totalitarianism, 1947," in *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Volume II since 1914*, ed. Paterson Thomas G. Merrill Dennis, 6th Edition ed. Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 202-204.

³ Bruce R. Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 1st Edition ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), xv. Kunniholm noted that the term 'Northern Tier' was first used by John Foster Dulles in the 1950s. It was taken to mean countries that formed the southern border to the U.S.S.R.

⁴ For an analysis of the differences between the Orthodox and Revisionist interpretations, see Thomas G. Paterson, "The Origins of the Cold War," *Organization of American Historians* 2, no. 1 (Summer, 1986, 1986): 5-9. For an overview of all three schools of thought see chapter 9 of Gerald Grob N and George Athan Billias, *Interpretations of American History since 1877. Volume II: Patterns and Perspectives.*, 6th Edition ed., Vol. II (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

⁵ The Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality was signed in 1925.

⁶ Clark Clifford and Richard C. Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir.* (University of Michigan: Random House, 1991), 111.

CHAPTER I

The Historiography of the Origins of the Cold War in the Near East

The existing literature by Cold War scholars and specialists on the topic of U.S. relations with Iran and Turkey in the Near East, from 1945-47, has mostly ignored the strategic interests of the Iranian and Turkish governments and the influence they exercised, in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Instead, most of the literature has concentrated upon the aims and motives of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the region.

By contrast, the Greek government, which was the third country in the Near East to experience a crisis after World War II, has been written about more than the Iranian and Turkish governments have. The Greek government, however, was not in a position to influence the U.S. because it was weak, struggling to win the Civil War, and under the influence of the British.

In defense of the policy of Containment, U.S. officials first put forward the theory that the U.S. merely reacted to Soviet provocations in the Near East. Dean Acheson, who was the Acting Secretary of State throughout 1946, wrote in his 1969 memoirs, that the U.S. was forced to respond, after it became apparent that the U.S.S.R. was acting aggressively over the Iranian-Azerbaijan Crisis. He compared U.S. demobilization in 1946 favorably when compared to Soviet efforts to annex Northern Iran. Acheson also equated Soviet southern expansion with the same invasion routes used by barbarians against Ancient Rome and Greece.¹ Acheson linked both the Turkish and the Iranian crises. Turkey was “being subjected to a softening up process,” and that Soviet failure to subjugate Iran, led it to threaten Turkey.² Robert MacMahon, Acheson’s biographer,

claimed that Acheson did not become a Cold War warrior until the Turkish Straits Crisis in the summer of 1946. This occurred at the same time as the Iranian-Azerbaijan Crisis and was “pivotal to his conversion.”³

The interpretation that the U.S. simply reacted to Soviet aggression was repeated in the aftermath of the 1980 Iranian Revolution. Barry Rubin’s book, *Paved With Good Intentions: America’s Experience in Iran*, suggested that the U.S. had no ulterior motive in 1946 and that the U.S. merely reacted to Soviet aggression towards Iran. He claimed that the failure of U.S. diplomacy at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, which aimed to get the U.S.S.R. to abide by the Tehran and Tripartite Agreements, was a major cause of the conflict. By 1946, the U.S. was convinced that the U.S.S.R. had irredentist designs on Iran and that Soviet aggression was a continuation of Tsarist policies.⁴ Recent scholarship, that used the Soviet archives, seemed to support this interpretation.

John O. Iatrides and Nicholas X. Rizopoulos’ work examined the wider international involvement in the Greek Civil War. They suggested that U.S. interest in Greece became apparent in August 1946 and was due to how the U.S. government perceived the nature of a Soviet threat in the region. The threat to Greece was linked to events in Iran and Turkey and U.S. interest in Greece was simply a “genuine” reaction to the U.S.S.R. that threatened American security interests.⁵

Their work was supported mostly by the work of Eduard Mark. His journal article “The War Scare of 1946,” examined how the U.S. viewed with alarm the threat that the U.S.S.R. posed to Turkey. The U.S. believed that Turkey was threatened within the context of “U.S. strategic premises,” and that “Soviet bellicosity would force the U.S. into a war that was not of its choosing.” Mark downplayed the role of the U.S. in ending

the crisis. According to Mark, the U.S.S.R. only backed down once Donald Maclean, a Soviet spy within the British embassy in Washington, informed his controllers just how serious the U.S. viewed Soviet actions against Turkey.⁶ This argument excused the U.S. government for misreading the Turkish crisis and its lessons for future conduct with the U.S.S.R. From that point on, officials in Washington were determined to meet head-on any further Soviet aggression because there was a strong belief that the Soviets always exploited weakness, but would cave-in to pressure, if challenged.⁷ Mark differed from Iatrides and Rizopoulos' conclusion. He suggested that the resolve displayed after October 1946 had more to do with the U.S. government's need to keep Congress on a war footing than for an expected expansive aid program.⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, the Cold War Historian, suggested that President Harry S. Truman had already decided to embark upon a European Recovery Plan six months before its actual announcement. It has been argued that the U.S. was indeed prepared for war with the U.S.S.R. in the autumn of 1946 because of the perceived threat to Turkey and Iran.⁹

Truman's suggestion to internationalize all inland waters in Europe has also been interpreted as benign. Jonathan Knight, whose journal article "America's International Guarantees for the Straits: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine," claimed it was not seen as an attempt at "imposing an American capitalist hegemony upon the Soviet Union; much less was it a shrewd test of Soviet honesty." Instead, Truman preferred to internationalize the Dardanelles Straits so that it would guarantee peace. At the same time it would benefit the U.S. economically, but ultimately Truman had "no clear idea" as to how this would occur. Truman only dropped the idea, once he realized the opposition to the plan from

within his own State Department coupled with the lukewarm diplomatic response from the Turkish government.¹⁰

Because of the centrality of the State Department in helping Truman formulate his foreign policy, some scholars have blamed its officials as causing the Cold War. They were anti-communist and they forcefully shaped U.S. foreign policy. Truman relied upon those same officials because of his lack of experience in foreign affairs.¹¹ Henry William Brands, author of *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire*, identified Loy Henderson, the Chief of the State Department's Near Eastern Division, as being instrumental in shaping foreign policy between 1946 and 1947. His "narrow focus on the communist threat was instrumental in producing an essentially negative foreign policy."¹²

Jonathan Knight's article, "American Statecraft and the 1946 Black Seas Straits Controversy," singled out James Forrestal, the Secretary of the Navy from 1944, because he was avowedly anti-communist. Forrestal looked to assert U.S. power in the Mediterranean with the U.S. Navy. A strong navy was, he thought, able to project U.S. foreign policy aims by "gunboat diplomacy," without having to place troops on the ground. He was convinced that the U.S. Navy would supplant the British as the dominant sea power. Knight did not accuse the U.S. of aggressively confronting the U.S.S.R. over the Straits; he suggested that the U.S. followed a policy of restraint over the Straits by sending the U.S. Navy into the Eastern Mediterranean so that it would scare off the U.S.S.R. from demanding a revision of the Montreux Convention.¹³

The first book to place the Near East at the epicenter of the Cold War was Bruce Kunniholm's *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, published in 1980. Kunniholm also acknowledged the role of individuals in shaping U.S. policy. Henderson was central in formulating policy amidst clear signs of Soviet aggression. James Byrnes' absence from Washington gave the Regional Offices far more influence in shaping policy.¹⁴ Henderson was convinced of Soviet intentions with regard to Greece and the Near East in general.

Kunniholm's main thesis was that the Cold War in the Near East was a clash of powers over the control of the region's oil. He viewed Henderson's opposition to Soviet expansion in the region as linked to U.S. commitment to the Atlantic Charter as well as the pursuit of U.S. oil security.¹⁵ Kunniholm's book, nevertheless, did seem to lay more blame on the U.S.S.R. than on the U.S., for causing tension in the Near East. He also argued with Thomas G. Paterson's assessment of Robert Rossow, the U.S. Consular Official in Tabriz who claimed that Rossow's reports of Soviet troop movements were "over excited." Kunniholm, by contrast, thought that Rossow's reports were very perceptive.¹⁶ As will be discussed in Chapter II, Rossow's reports were instrumental in validating the evidence presented by the Iranians.

Other interpretations questioned U.S. motives in confronting the U.S.S.R. Cold War historian Lloyd Gardner, author of *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-49*, suggested that the U.S. exaggerated the Soviet threat, simply as a measure to shore up the domestic economy and secure markets abroad.¹⁷ This was linked with the U.S. need to secure its oil supplies. During World War II, the U.S. had developed oil fields in Saudi Arabia. Greece was located strategically north of the

Suez Canal from which the oil was transported from the Saudi oil fields. Iran was just as important as it looked across the Persian Gulf to the same fields. The U.S. could not afford for the Near East to become aligned with the U.S.S.R.¹⁸ Brands' book, *Into the Labyrinth: United States and the Middle East 1945-1993*, studied U.S. interest in the region. He went as far as saying that "it would likewise strain the truth, but not sunder it entirely to say that the Cold War was fought over oil." The economy would be enhanced by making sure the U.S. had a ready market from friendly government for its goods and by the expansion of free trade in general. Oil was of crucial importance in maintaining an industrialized economy, and the securing of it demanded a change in U.S. policy.¹⁹

Fred H. Lawson's journal article, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-6 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," saw the inevitability of a clash once the U.S. had decided to supplant the British as the U.S.S.R.'s main rival for influence in the Near East. Although the U.S. wanted a strong Iran for their strategic interests in the Persian Gulf, U.S. attempts to secure oil in Saudi Arabia and Iran caused the U.S.S.R. to respond. The spiral model helped explain the course of events in Iran. At the beginning of 1945, Great Britain was seen by the U.S. as the principle threat to its oil interests in the Gulf. The U.S. then built up its diplomatic and military presence in Iran to act as a buffer against British interference in Iranian affairs. This resulted in a similar response by an alarmed U.S.S.R., which in turn led to an increased U.S. concern over Soviet intentions.²⁰

Walter LaFeber, author of the book, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, also pointed to the lack of Soviet motives. He suggested that the U.S.S.R. had few, if any designs on Iran, and that partition was not on their agenda.²¹ Thomas G. Paterson who wrote the journal article, "The Origins of the Cold War," suggested that the U.S.S.R. was

unable to pursue an aggressive foreign policy in 1946 and its shattered economy could not sustain another major war. The U.S., therefore, exaggerated the Soviet threat for its own purposes.²² The lack of any Soviet motive was due to U.S. domestic economic concerns that forced the U.S. government to expand its horizons and look for markets overseas. It was this, more than anything else, which led to the announcement of aid to Greece in 1947.²³

Fraser Harbutt's journal article, "American Challenge, Soviet Response: The Beginning of the Cold War," suggested that the U.S. used the Turkish Straits Crisis as a bargaining chip in an argument with the U.S.S.R. over Eastern Europe. U.S. policies in Eastern Europe threatened the U.S.S.R. and U.S. policy makers at the beginning of 1946 confronted the U.S.S.R. in order to achieve diplomatic success in Eastern Europe and ensure free elections. In response, a worried U.S.S.R. interpreted the aggressive U.S. move as a direct threat to its security, and in turn looked to gain control of the Straits.²⁴ This interpretation was supported by the work of Geoffrey Roberts who suggested that the quickness of the retreats in both Iran and Turkey demonstrated that Stalin was far more concerned with keeping his gains in Eastern Europe.²⁵ Gaddis, however, disagreed with this analysis. He suggested that Stalin was wedded to the idea of the inevitable clash of capitalism and socialism. Stalin's retreats over Iran and Turkey in 1946 were only temporary and he set no timetable for his foreign policy conquests.²⁶

Thus, both the Iranian and Turkish Crises have been explored through the lens of both Soviet and U.S. objectives. Iranian diplomacy has hardly figured in the existing analysis. When it did, it was usually towards the denouement of the crisis when Prime Minister Qavam appeared to be pro-Soviet, in an attempt to rid Iran of Soviet troops. The

important role played by Qavam in ending the crisis was mostly hidden from the literature because of the claim made by Truman in his 1952 memoirs that he gave an ultimatum to Stalin to remove his troops. This was a myth but remained believed for many years afterwards. James A. Thorpe, author of the journal article "Truman's Ultimatum to Stalin on the 1946 Azerbaijan Crisis: The Making of a Myth," first debunked Truman's claim in 1978. Other official's memoirs had neglected to mention the ultimatum and Thorpe concluded that it did not happen.²⁷

Gary R. Hess' journal article, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-6 and the Cold War," first credited in 1974 Iranian diplomacy with ending the Azerbaijan. This was achieved by Qavam hoodwinking the U.S.S.R. into pulling their troops out with promises of oil concessions in Northern Iran. Kunniholm credited Qavam with playing a very clever diplomatic game throughout 1946 amidst vague "signs" and "suggestions" of U.S. support.²⁸ Similarly, James Clark's article, "Oil, the Cold War and the Crisis in Azerbaijan of March 1946," attributed the Iranians with playing one power off another during the first three months of 1946 and that Iranian diplomacy ended the dispute with the U.S.S.R.²⁹ What Hess, Kunniholm and Clark all suggest was that the Iranians had far more experience of dealing with Russian aggression than did the U.S.

Kirsten's Blake's book, *The U.S. – Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals*, did try to place the Iranians in the forefront of the clash between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. However, Blake concentrated on the grievances of the Azerbaijanis in Iran, as well as the diplomacy practiced by the Iranian government. The Soviet sponsored regime in Azerbaijan and Iranian Kurdish areas was not just a cynical ploy designed to disrupt Iranian sovereignty. She demonstrated that the Kurds and

Azerbaijanis in Iran had genuine complaints that were ignored by the government in Tehran.³⁰ Blake also recognized that the Shah realized he would have to have an economic plan in place to placate the U.S. and secure their long-term aid.³¹ Blake, like Kunniholm before her, credited Qavam's diplomacy as much more important than the efforts of the U.S. in resolving the crisis.³² Blake's book, however, did not analyze to any great extent Iranian attempts to achieve third power security from 1943.

Iranian attempts to influence the U.S. and help secure long-term security was analyzed by Stephen McFarland's journal article, "A Peripheral View of the Origins of the Cold War: The Crisis in Iran 1941-47." McFarland credited the Iranians with deliberately manipulating and exaggerating all of the Soviet Union's intentions during the period. McFarland's analysis suggested that the Iranians utterly manufactured the crisis in Azerbaijan for its own ends and they were also determined to ensure that the U.S. helped run all of its government institutions.³³ McFarland's work correctly identified the Iranian diplomatic strategy, but because of the lack of Soviet sources available in 1980, failed to identify the genuine Azerbaijani demands for autonomy that was sponsored by the U.S.S.R. As will be demonstrated in Chapter II, the Iranians wanted the guarantee of U.S. support and they certainly furnished the U.S. with exaggerated information; however, the Iranians did not wish to become a mere U.S. puppet. The U.S. advisors that helped run Iranian government institutions were always kept at arms length.

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov explored the extent of Azerbaijani demands for autonomy alongside Stalin's expansionist foreign policy. Their work benefitted from access to Soviet sources that became available after 1991. They identified Stalin's revolutionary-imperial paradigm that melded a Marxist interpretation of capitalist

self-destruction with the Tsarist vision of the civilizing effect of Russian territorial expansion.³⁴ However much Stalin believed in the clash of ideologies, he was also a realist. They noted that he wanted to secure the huge oil reserves in Iran. He isolated the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) and chastised its members for interfering in Soviet foreign policy when they attempted to foster revolution amidst the oil negotiations of 1944.³⁵ Zubok's own book, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union From Stalin to Gorbachev*, acknowledged that local Soviet officials matched Stalin's expansionist policy along the Northern Tier; they longed to increase the size of Georgia and Azerbaijan. By placating local officials, Stalin would find it easier to remain in power.³⁶

Jamil Hasanli's examination of the Soviet Archives in relation to both the Azerbaijan and Straits Crises tended to agree with Zubok and Pleshakov. Although Stalin did retreat from both Turkey and Iran, he was not bluffing in his demands. Only determined resistance from the U.S. prevented the Soviet annexation of Eastern Turkey and Northern Iran.³⁷ Natalia Yegorova's journal article, "The Iran Crisis: a View from the Russian Archives," suggested that Stalin did want Northern Iran for the oil it held as well as the prestige annexation entailed vis-à-vis with the Western Allies.³⁸

Even less is said in the existing literature about the various Turkish governments' influence in shaping U.S. foreign policy. As suggested above, the Turks were lukewarm over Truman's plan to diffuse the crisis by internationalizing the Dardanelles Straits in 1946. The plan was dropped and the Turks retained sovereignty. This suggested that their concerns and aims over the Straits was acknowledged and acted upon by the U.S.

The U.S. also influenced Turkish domestic politics. John M. Vanderlippe's book, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet Inonu and the Formation of the Multi-Party*

System, 1938-1950, suggested that the Turks emerged from World War II with the desire to promote multi-party democracy because of the perceived need to ensure U.S. support against Soviet aggression. The Turks abandoned its policy of neutrality because they recognized that in the bi-polar world that was emerging, neutral states would have to choose sides. The U.S. was seen as by far the best side to choose, given the traditional animosity felt between the governments in Moscow and Ankara.³⁹

By contrast, the Greek government was hardly in a position to exercise independent diplomacy after World War II. It was under the influence of the British government and unable to govern successfully. Greece had suffered Axis occupation during World War II and its government had been in exile. It had been restored by the British in 1944 and propped up ever since. Thanasis D. Sfkias, a Greek Civil War historian, noted that because of its close relationship with the British, the Greek government was seen as a British puppet. The British viewed the Greek Communist Party as being Moscow controlled. Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister until July 1945, and the Greek government, looked to annihilate the leftist guerillas.⁴⁰ The British were so determined to restore a discredited monarchist government, that they ignored the likelihood that the Greek regime would initiate wholesale slaughter of their opponents.⁴¹ The Greek government was determined to initiate a pogrom of its enemies, even though they were hardly in control of the country. British troops had been stationed in the country since 1945 and the Greek government felt confident of support in the suppression of any opposition.⁴²

C.M Woodhouse, who witnessed the brutality of Axis occupation in Greece and who later worked for the British Embassy in Athens, did not blame the Greek

government for the political murders that swept the country after December 1945. The rightist pogrom that led to the third round of the Civil War was in part allowed to happen because of the instability of the Greek government that was unable to defend its opponents from right-wing gangs.⁴³ The Greek Communist's uprising in March 1946 was due to "legitimate grievances, given that they were still a legal party."⁴⁴

Robert Frazier, author of the book, *Anglo-American Relations With Greece*, had a different interpretation. He did not blame the British for staying in Greece during the rightist pogrom of 1945. The British wanted to leave Greece at the earliest opportunity but felt that they had no choice but to support the government and intervene directly when the Greeks themselves found it impossible to govern.⁴⁵

Howard Jones' analysis of Truman's decision making in 1947 detailed how the Greek government tried to secure large amounts of reparations in 1945 as well as trying to secure U.S. support in annexing parts of Albania and Bulgaria in 1946. Both efforts failed. Similarly, Greek demands that the U.N. investigate northern border violations and foreign interference in 1946, only occurred once the U.S.S.R. abstained from voting. The investigation began in January 1947 because the U.S.S.R. withdrew its veto so that British interference in Greece and the repressive nature of the Greek government could be exposed.⁴⁶ As Acheson noted in his memoirs, the British decision to withdraw completely from Greece in February 1947 was a "shocker."⁴⁷

The existing literature of the origins of the Cold War in the Near East has mostly analyzed the role of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Iranian government diplomacy is hinted at, while the role of the Turkish government is hardly mentioned. The Greek Civil War and the British announcement of withdrawal caused Truman to announce his policy of

Containment. The Greeks, however, hardly exercised any influence on U.S. thinking. Chapters II and III will discuss the influence that the Iranians and Turks had upon U.S. strategic thinking. It will demonstrate that both the Iranian and Turkish governments continually warned the U.S. about the intentions of the Soviet government in the region. At times these warnings exaggerated the Soviet Unions diplomatic moves, so that the U.S.S.R. appeared aggressive. They did this to further their own security, but in doing so, they helped shape the growing determination in Washington to resist further Soviet territorial expansion.

- ¹ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, 1987 Edition ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1969), 196-197.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Robert McMahon, *Dean Acheson and the Creation of the American World Order* (United States: Potomac Books, 2009), 46.
- ⁴ Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), 29-32.
- ⁵ John O. Iatrides and Nicholas X. Rizopoulos, "The International Dimension of the Greek Civil War," *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000, 2000), 87.
- ⁶ Eduard Mark, "The War Scare of 1946." *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 3 (1997): 383-415.
- ⁷ Ibid., 411.
- ⁸ Ibid., 413.
- ⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 337.
- ¹⁰ Jonathan Knight, "America's International Guarantees for the Straits: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (May, 1977, 1977): 241-250.
- ¹¹ Henry William Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire 1918-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 39.
- ¹² Ibid., 311.
- ¹³ Jonathan Knight, "American Statecraft and the 1946 Black Sea Straits Controversy," *Political Science Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (Autumn 1975, 1975), 455-457.
- ¹⁴ Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 1st Edition ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 237.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 242-243.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 324.
- ¹⁷ Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2008), 58-59.; Lloyd Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Madison, Wis., 1964), ch. 11 and Lloyd Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).
- ¹⁸ Lloyd Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy*. (Wisconsin: Madison, 1964).
- ¹⁹ Henry William Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East, 1945-1993* (United States: McGraw Hill, 1994), 6-9.
- ²⁰ Fred H. Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 3 (Aug 1989, 1989), 309-310.
- ²¹ LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*, 41.
- ²² Thomas G. Paterson, "The Origins of the Cold War," *Organization of American Historians* 2, no. 1 (Summer, 1986, 1986), 7.
- ²³ LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*, 58-59.
- ²⁴ Fraser Harbutt, "American Challenge, Soviet Response: The Beginning of the Cold War, February-may, 1946." *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982, 1982): 623-639.
- ²⁵ Geoffrey Roberts, "Moscow's Cold War on the Periphery: Greece, Iran, and Turkey 1943-1948," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 1 (2011): 58-81.
- ²⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (United States: Oxford University Press, 1997), 33.
- ²⁷ James A. Thorpe, "Truman's Ultimatum to Stalin on the 1946 Azerbaijan Crisis: The Making of a Myth." *Journal of Politics* 40, no. 1 (1978).
- ²⁸ Gary R. Hess, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (March 1974, 1974): 117-146.; Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 350.
- ²⁹ James Clark, "Oil, the Cold War, and the Crisis in Azerbaijan of March 1946." *Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie*, no. 23 (2004), 563.
- ³⁰ Kristen Blake, *The U.S. - Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War* (United States: University Press of America, 2009), loc 419 of 3312.

³¹ Ibid., loc 603 of 3312.

³² Ibid., loc 412-917 of 3312.

³³ Stephen McFarland, "A Peripheral View of the Origins of the Cold War: The Crisis in Iran 1941-47." *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 4 (1980): 333-352.

³⁴ Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 8-35.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, ed. John Lewis Gaddis, Kindle Edition ed. (United States: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 10.

³⁷ Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006). See also Jamil Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, Kindle Edition ed. (New York: Lexington Books, 2011).

³⁸ Natalia I. Yegorova, "The "Iran Crisis" of 1945-1946: A View from the Russian Archives." Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFB51.pdf (accessed 15,8, 2013).

³⁹ John M. VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, Kindle Edition ed. (Albany, United States: State University of New York Press, 2005), Chapter 6.

⁴⁰ Thanasis D. Sfikas, *The British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949: The Imperialism of 'Non Intervention.'* (Keele: Ryburn Publishers, 1994).

⁴¹ Thanasis D. Sfikas, "Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations Commission of Investigation in Greece, January-may 1947," *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 3 (Nov 1993), 244-245.

⁴² Jon V. Kofas, *Intervention & Underdevelopment: Greece during the Civil War* (United States: Penn State Press, 1989), 37.

⁴³ C. M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1976) 163-164.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Robert Frazier, *Anglo-American Relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-47* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 75.

⁴⁶ Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 25.

⁴⁷ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, 1987 Edition ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1969), 217-218.

CHAPTER II.

Iranian efforts to secure U.S. support against foreign interference 1943-46.

The Russian and British governments had competed to dominate Southern Asia, since the 19th century.¹ At the beginning of the 20th Century, the Iranians wanted U.S. aid because they hoped that the U.S. would intervene if the Russians or British threatened their sovereignty. In 1922, the Iranian government invited U.S. officials to be privately employed in Iran as government advisors. The Iranians hoped that their presence would focus the U.S. government's attention in the region. Dr. Arthur Millspaugh, an advisor at the U.S. State Department's Office of Foreign Trade was invited by the Iranians to go to Tehran in 1922 and help organize the government's finances. In 1925 he clashed with Rezā Shāh Pahlavi, the new king in Iran because Millspaugh wished to reform taxation, which would hurt the landed gentry in Iran and undercut Pahlavi's powerbase. This led to Millspaugh returning home in 1927.²

The Iranians then turned to Germany in 1933 to act as the third power within Iran. The Germans expanded trade and increased their influence over the Iranian government through bribes and propaganda.³ The Iranians, by contrast, looked to Germany as a third counterbalancing power during the 1930s, rather than being overtly pro German per se.⁴ Iran's pre-war relationship with Germany led to its domination during World War II by the two powers it had always feared. The German invasion of the U.S.S.R. was rapid and in July 1941 this led both Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. to occupy Iran. Both powers wished to secure the Caucasian oil fields from being seized by the German Army and they mistrusted the sizeable German community in Iran.

The occupation was made official with the signing of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the Iranians in January 1942. The terms of the treaty allowed the U.S.S.R. to occupy the north of Iran, while the British occupied the south. The area around Tehran was left under nominal Iranian control. Both nations were to evacuate Iran six months after the defeat of Germany and her allies. In September 1941, Rezā Shāh Pahlavi was forced to abdicate in favor of his son Mohammed Shāh Pahlavi. Rezā Shāh Pahlavi was regarded by the British and the U.S.S.R. as too pro-German. The U.S. then joined the occupation to secure southern transport routes through Iran. The three occupying powers then agreed to respect Iranian sovereignty during their Tehran Conference in 1943.

The Iranians disliked the Tripartite Treaty and wanted all foreign troops to leave at the earliest opportunity, even if the war in the Far East was still ongoing. They viewed the European war with Germany as the only one that justified occupation. This was because the newly established supply route through Iran could not affect the outcome of the war with Japan.⁵

The U.S. viewed Iran as a test case of the Atlantic Charter that was signed in 1941. It stated that all countries could determine their own future without interference. U.S. policy was to halt any meddling in Iranian affairs by either Great Britain or the U.S.S.R.⁶ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt viewed U.S. support of Iran as an example of U.S. unselfishness.⁷ U.S. help, however, had come at a price. The U.S. wished to reform Iran's system of government and taxation against Iranian intransigence.⁸

The U.S. was also beginning to understand the economic and strategic importance of the Middle East. A strong Iran would be a useful buffer to protect U.S. oil interests in Saudi Arabia.⁹ On July 12th 1944, Edward Stettinus, the Acting Secretary of State, made clear that a stable and fully sovereign Iran would best further U.S. trade opportunities by peaceful means.¹⁰ U.S. interest in strengthening the independent sovereignty of Iran and securing oil supplies in the region began to increase steadily from 1941 and the U.S. diplomatic mission in Tehran went from having eighteen employees in 1941, to being in 1945 a full embassy with a staff of ninety-six.¹¹

U.S. policy was thus confused. Both the idealistic and oil driven foreign policies were mostly “mutually exclusive to each other.”¹² The State Department was also unsure of how the post-war world would operate.¹³ The lack of direction needed focusing. The Iranians, with much more experience of dealing with Russia (whether Soviet or Tsarist) attempted to shape U.S. foreign policy. They began to do this as soon as the U.S. began aiding the Iranians in 1943, and continued throughout 1946. The U.S. wanted to trade in Iran and saw it as a buffer in its oil security, but the Iranians also saw benefit from working with the U.S. Both sides seemed to have reasons for working with the other.

Iranian influence on shaping the direction of the U.S. missions 1943-4

At the request of the Iranians, the U.S. initiated three advisory missions in Iran. U.S. private citizens led the missions. The work of the missions was, however, scrutinized by Richard Ford, the U.S. Chargé in Tehran. This suggested that the U.S. was maintaining a fiction of not interfering in Iranian affairs. The three missions aided the

Iranian government in organizing its economy as well as leading its military and rural police (Gendarmerie).

Millspaugh returned to Iran in January 1943, to head the new U.S Economic Mission. He was determined to reform taxation as a basis for a more equitable distribution of wealth. Millspaugh created many new enemies from within the Iranian elite who were fearful of losing income and status. Almost everything he tried to reform was a subject of Iranian disapproval. On February 21st 1944, Ford advised Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, that Millspaugh had "upset the Iranians" and, in particular, the Minister of Commerce and Industry who tendered his resignation. Inquiries by Ford suggested that the Minister's resignation was in fact an official government protest against Millspaugh. His interference in the munitions industry was singled out as the main cause of concern. Millspaugh viewed Iranian arms factories as a commercial interest, whereas the Iranians viewed the factories as a political tool to smooth Soviet-Iranian relations. The Iranians acknowledged that they lost heavily in every economic deal with the U.S.S.R., but viewed good relations as more important than financial stability.¹⁴

The Iranian Cabinet also criticized Millspaugh's mission. Ford did not mention if he was present as a guest at the Cabinet meeting, but clearly he knew the details of the debate as he knew which subordinate members of the mission the Iranians had singled out for censure.¹⁵ Ford was worried that Millspaugh was harming U.S. interests because he continued to send reports back from the Iranian newspapers that attacked Millspaugh.¹⁶

Ford also attended a debate in the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) that discussed Millspaugh's work. He recognized that important deputies had lined up to criticize Millspaugh. The criticized Millspaugh vociferously, but they still supported the government with a vote of confidence.¹⁷ The Iranians needed to keep Millspaugh in Iran as they wanted a U.S. presence in the country, but they did not, however, want him to succeed.

The Iranians then changed their tactics. Abdolhassan Ebtehaj, the head of the Iranian Bank Melli, suggested that Millspaugh could stay but that his powers be diluted.¹⁸ The ploy was understood by the State Department. It sent a strongly worded note to the Iranians. It reminded them that assistance would be withdrawn if Iranians did not want it. The telegram made clear that the U.S. understood Iranian intentions of using U.S. advisors as "political buffers."¹⁹ The message was delivered to the Iranian Prime Minister Muhammad Sa'ed Maraghei (referred to in diplomatic records as Saed) but on June 8th, Saed expressed disappointment that the U.S. advisors had achieved so little and repeated his demand that Millspaugh's brief be curtailed.²⁰

Millspaugh called the Iranian's bluff. On June 23rd, he resigned just one day before a bill was introduced into the Majlis repealing his mission.²¹ On the same day, Major General Clarence Ridley, the U.S. head of the Military Mission, resigned as well. Ford communicated Ridley's decision to the Iranians on July 15th. The Iranians replied on August 3rd. Not surprisingly, given the Iranian strategy of wanting a U.S. presence in the country, they wished Ridley to remain for at least one further year. They expressed "complete satisfaction" with his work, which was in complete contrast to that of Millspaugh's.²² This was because Ridley's reforms, unlike Millspaugh's were not

threatening the wealth of the Iranian elite. Both the Departments of State and War agreed to extend the Ridley mission until March 1st 1945. No evidence from the State Department records suggested any Iranian disquiet over Ridley's work.²³ The Iranians also refused to accept Millspaugh's resignation. They needed to keep Millspaugh and his team in Iran, but they just did not want it to initiate any financial reforms. The Iranians were not to know that Ridley's resignation was in response to a routine recall from the State Department.²⁴ They conflated Ridley's resignation with that of Millspaugh's. The Iranians hurriedly worked out a compromise position with Millspaugh whereby the Majlis would oversee his work.²⁵ Millspaugh then felt confident enough to continue under the now "more favorable circumstances."²⁶ Tellingly though, Millspaugh's tax reforms, were never enforced.²⁷

Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf Senior was the Director of the Gendarmerie, the third U.S. mission in Iran. On March 28th 1944, Ford wrote to Hull that Schwarzkopf had many successes but was also frustrated by some Iranian officials. Schwarzkopf initiated the removal of the Gendarmerie from Iranian army control. He had, however, begun to notice that Iranian officials had lost interest in his mission, and more seriously, opposed his reforms. He suggested that this truculence was due to the Iranians being prepared to "co-operate with the mission only when it is in their interest to do so."²⁸ By initiating a turf war with the Iranian army over control of the Gendarmerie, Schwarzkopf found that Iranian officials lost interest in his reforms. It was not in the Iranian government's interest to loosen its control of the army .

Amidst the furor in Iran over Millspaugh's mission, the State Department inquired as to whether the Iranian government wished to retain Schwarzkopf. Saed was agreeable

to an extension despite his assertion that Schwarzkopf “had achieved nothing to date.”²⁹ The same pattern was evident for all three missions. The Iranians wanted the U.S. to be present in Iran, but they were not to achieve anything.

Iranian delaying tactics over the oil negotiations 1944

The same pattern of Iranian vacillation was apparent in their discussions with U.S. companies over oil exploration. The U.S. Standard-Vacuum Oil Company began negotiations with the Iranians in 1943.³⁰ Standard-Vacuum’s talks were soon stalled and representatives of Sinclair Oil, a second U.S. company began negotiations in May 1944.³¹

The negotiations were further strung out when the terms offered by both companies were leaked to the Iranian press. The offers were debated in the Majlis and in the newspapers. Saed promised to announce which company had won the contract within two weeks.³² He reneged on this; instead, he asked U.S. petroleum advisors based in Washington to come to Tehran and study the offers. Even the arrival of the experts from Washington did not end the impasse. Ford then suggested, in August 1944, that high-level executives from the companies should come to Iran in order to try and speed up the negotiations.³³ Ford did not seem to recognize that the Iranians had little interest in making a decision. This was compounded when the U.S.S.R., concerned with possible U.S. oil companies’ incursions into northern Iran sent its own commission to negotiate a deal in September.

Commissar Sergei Kavtaradze, the Soviet negotiator, demanded exclusive drilling rights over a five-year period covering 20,000 square kilometers of northern Iran; he pressured the Shah to make a quick agreement. The Iranians then decided not to grant a

concession to any country until after the war had ended. Before the official announcement was made, Hussein Ala, the Iranian Court Minister, met Leland B. Morris, the new U.S. ambassador, in an effort to ascertain how far the U.S. would be upset by the embargo on oil concessions.³⁴ The Iranians were relieved that the U.S. took a sympathetic line with the Iranian decision to halt further negotiations. Hull advised Morris that the U.S. understood that Iran “had acted in good faith.”³⁵ It was unclear from the records if the Iranians extended the same courtesy towards the U.S.S.R.

The muted response from U.S. officials over Saed’s decision to abandon negotiations was in stark contrast to the Soviet one. Morris did not cite his sources, but some of his information came from private conversations between Kavtaradze and members of the Iranian government. This implied that the Iranians leaked the details of these conversations to Morris. On October 13th 1944, Morris reported that Kavtaradze had warned that the Iranian decision “could have unhappy consequences.” The Soviet version of Kavtaradze’s meeting with Saed on September 13th was completely different to how the Iranians reported it to the Morris. The U.S.S.R. wanted to withdraw all troops, maintain friendly relations and raise the prestige of the current Iranian government. In return, the U.S.S.R. wanted to become “acquainted with the northern oil deposits.” Saed agreed to assist with securing this.³⁶ Either the Soviet account of the meeting was faulty or the Iranians exaggerated the Soviet proposals to further their own agenda.

One week later, Morris reported to Hull that “very considerable perturbation is being felt in Iranian official circles.” The Iranians told him that pro-Soviet members of the Iranian press and Majlis were calling for Saed to resign and that the campaign was

being orchestrated by the Soviet embassy. Soviet troops had marched through Tehran and past the Majlis.³⁷

By October 24th, Morris was again confident of gleaning the outcome of a private dinner between the Soviet ambassador in Iran, Mikhail Maximov, the Shah and Saed. The results of this meeting were duly reported back to Hull on the 25th. Again, the inference was that the Iranians were only too happy to report negative and threatening Soviet behavior. The Shah notified Morris of his intention to, “short of armed opposition,” resist Soviet pressure to have Saed replaced; however, this would only occur if “the American and British governments approve this policy.” The Shah then suggested that should he be forced to remove Saed, his replacement would be “pledged to the same policies as Saed.”³⁸

The Iranians were playing a clever game. First, they were again attempting to obtain direct U.S support for their policy of dealing with the U.S.S.R. Second, they had let it be known that they were acting reasonably and proportionally by ruling out the use of force. Third, by preparing to accept Saed’s resignation, the Iranians could show that the U.S.S.R. was interfering with their sovereignty; this was something that the U.S. had consistently opposed.

By the end of October, Morris reported back to Hull that the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) mustered 35,000 demonstrators in an effort to oust Saed. Morris was convinced that the rally was sponsored by the Soviet embassy; however, what was not mentioned by Morris was that later demonstrations led to the shooting of protesters by Iranian police and that 50,000 people turned up to mourn at one of the demonstrator’s funeral.³⁹

By contrast, Morris reported, via Saed, that Soviet inspired incidents were “Hitlerian.” These included the beating up of an Iranian officer by members of the Tudeh Party, the Soviet disarming of Iranian troops and police and the refusal of either Maximov or Kavtaradze to speak to the Shah or Saed. Settinus advised Averill Harriman, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow to inform the Soviet government that U.S. policy was “recognition of the sovereign right of an independent nation, such as Iran, acting in a non-discriminatory manner to grant or withhold commercial concessions within its territory.”⁴⁰ What Morris did not mention in his reports; however, was that the majority of the disturbances were in either Kurdish or Azerbaijani Iran. The U.S.S.R. supported the demonstrations, but they did reflect genuine local grievances felt by an alienated section of the Iranian population.⁴¹

The Iranian portrayal of the U.S.S.R.’s refusal to withdraw its troops

Saed bowed to the pressure and resigned on November 8th. Murtazagulu Bayat headed the new government. Saed’s resignation did not end the disturbances. On January 5th 1945, Morris cabled Stettinus, who had been promoted to Secretary of State on December 1st 1944, that striking workers in the Soviet zone had attacked gendarmes. Schwarzkopf reported that the gendarmes had fired over the heads of the workers but had been subsequently disarmed and humiliated by Soviet troops. The Iranians refused to grant permission for either Morris or Schwarzkopf to approach Mazimov to complain. Instead, the Iranians wished to take up the matter with the Soviet ambassador.⁴² This granted the Iranians the advantage of being able to relay their version of conversations between themselves and the U.S.S.R. back to U.S. officials.

On January 18th 1945, the Iranian Minister, Mohammed Shayesteh, made separate visits in Washington to Stettinius and George Allen, the State Department's Chief of Middle Eastern Division. His message was identical each time. The Iranians were afraid of Soviet designs on northern Iran and Shayesteh wanted U.S. support. Stettinius assured Shayesteh that Roosevelt would bring up the matter at the Yalta conference.⁴³ Despite Stettinius' assurances, this did not happen. The U.S.S.R. refused to discuss Iran at the conference.⁴⁴

Ten days after the end of the Yalta conference, the Iranians again tried to raise the issue of Soviet aggression with Morris. This time, they solicited the support of Monsieur E. Graeffe, the Belgian Minister in Tehran. Graeffe outlined how Kurdish raiders "pillaged towns" and "killed police stationed in them." The incidents took place in the Soviet zone, but they had refused to interfere. The Iranians wanted to send troops to re-establish control, but they also needed to secure U.S. and British support for such a move. Morris noted that this move was directly related to the outcome of the Yalta conference.⁴⁵ The U.S. was keen to avoid any entanglement with the U.S.S.R. Joseph Grew, the Acting Secretary of State, noted that the Iranians had the right to move troops anywhere but should seek permission with Soviet officials, in order to maintain friendly relations with the Soviets.⁴⁶

Despite this latest setback, the Iranians continued to furnish the U.S. further evidence of Soviet interference in Iranian affairs. On March 6th, Nasrollah Entezam, the Iranian Foreign Minister, reported to Morris that his ambassador in Moscow had had an interview with Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister. Molotov had suggested that the Iranian government had an "anti-Russian attitude" and that the refusal to allow

oil concessions was aimed squarely at the U.S.S.R.⁴⁷ Subsequently, the Iranian Chief of Staff, Afra and Entezam both saw Morris separately. They complained about the Soviet refusal to allow enough Iranian troops to be moved north into the Soviet zone of Iran to restore order. Afra suggested that the Kurds would annihilate the small unit allowed through by Soviets and that the Soviets would like to see that happen.⁴⁸

The Iranians then tried to enlist U.S. help in expelling Soviet troops by tempting the U.S. so that their troops would be allowed to stay. On May 10th, the Iranian delegation to the San Francisco Conference announced that because the U.S.S.R. had not declared war on Japan, Iran wished to see Soviet troops withdraw immediately. Mostafa Adl, the Iranian Minister of Justice, requested U.S. support in the matter. Mostafa added that Iranians “desired to collaborate closely with the U.S.A, not just in words, but by their vote, as they had already shown.”⁴⁹ Adl was pointing out that Iran had supported the U.S. in the creation of the U.N. and now expected support in return. In Tehran, Morris noted in an interview that touched on troop withdrawal with the Shah that “he did not mention withdrawal of American forces.”⁵⁰

The Iranians then delivered notes to both the Soviet and British governments that requested troop withdrawal from Iran. The U.S. received an identical letter; however, Anushiravan Sepahbodi the new Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, acknowledged privately to the State Department that this was just to keep up appearances as U.S. troops had already begun to withdraw.⁵¹ The U.S. War Department upset the Iranian stratagem. General Booth, commander of the Persian Gulf Command (PGC), was instructed to evacuate Iran completely by June 1st 1945. This led to an Iranian request that U.S. troops, that maintained the railway, continue in their work for “2-3 months.”⁵² Sepahbodi hoped

that U.S. troops would ultimately, not depart until both the Russians and British had left. Two days later, H. Hadjeb Davallou, First Secretary of the Iranian Legation in Washington repeated the suggestion to Loy Henderson, the Chief of the State Department's Near Eastern Division (N.E.A.).⁵³

Prior to the Potsdam Conference where Truman met Stalin to discuss the final peace settlement, the Iranians again complained to the U.S. about Soviet and British interference in its affairs. Muhsin Sadr, the new Iranian Prime Minister pleaded for U.S. support in ridding all foreign troops from Iran. Ala reiterated this message the day before the Potsdam Conference was due to begin. Ala was blunt in his appraisal of Soviet intentions. The U.S.S.R. was acting "like Nazi Germany up to 1939 winning bloodless coups."⁵⁴

But If the Iranian government had high hopes for the Potsdam Conference, then they were disappointed. Truman announced that U.S. troops would withdraw unilaterally from Iran by January 1st 1946. Further troop withdrawals were to be discussed at the Foreign Ministers Conference that was due to be held at London in September. Shortly after the Potsdam Conference, Japan surrendered. This meant that the deadline for all troops to leave was March 2nd 1946. Henderson was also disappointed with the outcome and took to writing a lengthy memorandum to the new Secretary of State James Byrnes, warning him about foreign intrigue inside of Iran.⁵⁵

Henderson was aware of the difficulty that Iran faced and he was determined to make sure the new Secretary of State was too. He certainly had more incidents to report because the Iranians continued to furnish the State Department with more evidence of Soviet interference. On September 18th, Wallace Murray, the new U.S Ambassador to

Tehran, reported that Sepahbodi had written on numerous occasions to the Soviet embassy complaining of increased Soviet interference in the north of Iran, but he had “not even received an acknowledgement.” A day later Murray sent two more telegrams outlining alleged Soviet interference. The Iranian Deputy Chief of Staff informed the embassy that he had been prevented by the Soviets from instigating martial law in the northern town of Maragheh.⁵⁶

On August 30th, Ja’afar Pishaveri created a new political party called the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan. Kurdish leaders as well as members of the Tudeh Party were asked by the U.S.S.R. to join.⁵⁷ Rumors went around Tehran of Soviet inspired uprisings and of the “Democratic Party’s efforts to seize control of the provincial government.”⁵⁸ Murray reported their activities to Byrnes. He regarded the support it had from the Soviet embassy as obvious and he further suspected that the Party was a cover for the Tudeh Party, should it be banned.⁵⁹ A day later he concluded that the ultimate aim of the U.S.S.R was to access the Persian Gulf and gain political control of northern Iran. He warned that the U.S.S.R. would replace the Iranian government with a ‘popular’ one akin to the communist one then in power in Rumania. Murray counseled for a strong positive response by the U.S.⁶⁰ Before the U.S. could act, a new government was formed on October 30th, led by Ibrahim Hakimi.

Murray continued his reporting of Soviet interference in November. He reported that the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan had seized control of all of the major supply routes into southern Azerbaijan. Murray conceded that the veracity of all his reports could not be vouched for, but that the situation was “unquestionably serious and may constitute open rebellion.” Between November 20th and 23rd, Murray sent nine telegrams

outlining the nature of the disturbances. All nine telegrams blamed the U.S.S.R and all of them were sourced from officials in the Iranian government.⁶¹

Byrnes responded to Murray's telegrams by informing Harriman in Moscow to remind the Soviet government of its obligations under the Tehran agreement of 1943 to respect Iranian sovereignty. It seemed that the U.S.S.R. took no notice of Byrnes because elections were held in northern Iran, which the Iranian government condemned.⁶² On December 15th, Murray warned that "if solution is not found we may expect early dismemberment of country with northern provinces eventually becoming integral part of the Soviet Union."⁶³

Byrnes, who was at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, stalled and asked for more information. Murray countered that the evidence presented was "voluminous" and was a "thorough indictment of Soviet activities in Northern Iran."⁶⁴ If the evidence was "voluminous" and "thorough," then this was due to Iranian persistence. The Iranian ambassador in Washington was more forthright. In a conversation with Dean Acheson, the Acting Secretary of State, he compared U.N. inaction as similar to what happened in Manchuria in 1931, Abyssinia in 1936 and Munich in 1938. He linked Iran's fate to that of Turkey and all the Near East.⁶⁵

In private, President Harry Truman was livid with Byrnes' diplomacy and rebuked him for failing to be tough with the U.S.S.R.⁶⁶ The first hint of the new U.S. policy emerged in a telegram from Acheson to Harriman on December 24th 1945. Acheson counseled that if the Iranians decided to raise the issue of Soviet interference at the U.N. Security Council, the U.S. "in view of the facts already known could not pursue any course other than to agree that a careful investigation be made of Iranian charges to

the effect that the Soviet Union infringed upon the territorial integrity or political independence of Iran.”⁶⁷ Acheson did not state which facts were already known, but because most of what was reported back to the State Department came via Iranian sources, it can be inferred that Acheson had accepted much of the Iranian version of events too.

Two days later Ala told George Allen, the new Deputy Director of the N.E.A. that the Iranians wanted to take the matter to the U.N. but had postponed any decision until they were assured of U.S. support. Although Allen refused to give a straight answer, he did hint that support would be given. Ala ended the conversation by stating that was going to advise his government to raise the issue with the Security Council.⁶⁸

Iranian diplomacy and the Security Council – January 1946

The Iranian delegation presented to the U.N. Security Council its protest against continued Soviet interference on January 19th 1946. On the same day, Murray met Hakimi. Murray urged him to begin negotiations with Azerbaijani dissidents because a failure to negotiate would facilitate the Azerbaijanis to declare full independence. Hakimi refused; he called the dissidents “scoundrels.” Murray persisted and hinted that the U.S. would back the Iranians. Offering a “public gesture” would “show the world that Iran Government was doing what it could to solve its own problems and that “some benefits were to be expected even if negotiations came to nothing.”⁶⁹ This suggested that the U.S. wanted the Iranians to appear before the U.N. as the injured, yet conciliatory party.

Before, Hakimi could act on the advice, Qazi Mohammed, the Kurdish separatist leader, donned a Soviet uniform and proclaimed an autonomous Kurdish Republic in

Mahabad. This led to the fall of Hakimi's government and to the selection of Ahmad Qavam as Prime Minister. It was believed at the time that Qavam would make conciliatory moves towards the U.S.S.R.⁷⁰

Andrei Vishinsky, the head of the U.S.S.R.'s delegation at the U.N. presented the Soviet version of events on January 24th. The Iranians presented their rebuttal two days later. The Iranians countered that the U.S.S.R. submitted an "incredible distortion" as evidence.⁷¹ Murray was certainly repeating the Iranian version of events because he dismissed the Soviet version out of hand. Murray sent a report to Byrnes that ripped apart the evidence submitted by the Soviets. He pointed out that "only Soviets and their stooges would be cynical enough to assert that presence Russian troops in Azerbaijan has no connection with recent events in that province."⁷²

Qavam continued to keep Murray abreast of Iranian strategy. He showed Murray his instructions to the Iranian delegation in London. It ordered them not to weaken their case. At the same time, Qavam proposed direct negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and asked advice from Murray should the U.S.S.R. demand oil concessions. Murray refused a direct answer, but referred to Roosevelt's announcement that oil should be developed for the benefit of Iranians and not foreigners. Qavam's suggestion of negotiations with the U.S.S.R was not appeasement. His offer of talks with the U.S.S.R was aimed at forcing the U.S.'s hand. Qavam was offering Murray a choice. Either the U.S. would help to rid Iran of Soviet troops or they would lose any chance of developing their oil concession.

At the same time, Ala advised Stettinus (now the U.S. representative at the U.N. in London) that he was prepared to offer direct bilateral negotiations with the U.S.S.R. as long as the dispute remained on the agenda of the Security Council. The Iranians tried to

tie the U.S. closer to Iran by asking the U.S. to make this proposal. The U.S. refused, and the Iranians were forced to submit their proposal of bilateral talks on January 30th.⁷³ At the insistence of the U.S.S.R., the Azerbaijan issue was allowed to be called back at any time by the Security Council, rather than have the issue remain formally on its agenda. The Iranians were not impressed and questioned who would raise the issue and when at the Security Council. Richard Hare, the political advisor to Stettinus had to remind Hassan Taqizadeh, the Iranian Ambassador at the U.N. that Stettinus had made clear that the crisis would remain a continuing concern until a satisfactory solution was reached.⁷⁴

Iranian diplomacy February- April 1946

Throughout February 1946, the Iranian crisis was surrounded by other events that seemed to confirm the belief that the U.S.S.R. was expansionist. The first round of discussions at the Security Council had failed to solve the Azerbaijan crisis and put the onus on the Iranians and the U.S.S.R. to conduct bilateral discussions. As the talks between Qavam and Molotov were set to get underway, Pishevari, declared the creation of an Azerbaijani national army. Robert Rossow, the U.S. Vice Consul in Tabriz, interpreted this as an excuse to allow the U.S.S.R. to stay in northern Iran.⁷⁵ On the same day, Stalin made his election speech in Moscow. Justice William O. Douglas told James Forrestal, the Secretary of the Navy, that the speech was "the declaration of World War III."⁷⁶ Ten days later, George Kennan, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow sent his "Long Telegram" that seemed to explain the nature of a paranoid Soviet foreign Policy. Byrnes then gave a speech that seemed to indicate a much firmer U.S. attitude towards the Soviet Union.⁷⁷

The new U.S. position, however, was still not backed up by either military or financial support. Qavam was left in a rather difficult position. The U.S.S.R. could leave the north of the country permanently occupied if they felt threatened.⁷⁸ Qavam could not negotiate from a position of strength.

Qavam could only try to garner open U.S. support and he did this by portraying the Soviet negotiations as unreasonable. In Moscow, Kennan obtained a list of the Soviet demands from their talks with Qavam. How he got it, was not stated, but it is hard not to assume that it was the Iranians who forwarded it to him. On March 4th, Kennan visited Qavam in Moscow. Qavam appeared depressed. He confirmed that he had not been able to make any headway in his negotiations. Kennan reported that Soviet demands included autonomy for Azerbaijan, granting of oil concessions and the continued presence of Soviet troops in the north of the country. He suggested that Qavam had been under “tremendous pressure” from Molotov to agree. Qavam then inquired why the U.S. had not made a formal complaint to the U.S.S.R as the Soviet troops had remained in Iran past their March 2nd deadline for withdrawal. Kennan claimed that no official request had been received in Washington. Within 24 hours the Iranian government sent one. On the same day Rossow saw “exceptionally heavy troop movements” heading in the direction of Tehran. He asserted “it is further reported that Kurds are preparing to assert claim to Turkish Kurdistan and plan to commence military operations to that end soon.”

Qavam’s version of the negotiations coupled with Rossow’s report influenced Byrnes. On March 5th he sent the note of protest to the Soviet Government.⁷⁹ But Qavam’s account of the negotiations was different from that reported by the Soviet sources. According to the Soviet version, on February 23rd Qavam offered amnesty to any

Azerbaijani connected with Peshavrai's Democratic Movement, local elections to provincial councils and levying of local taxes by Azerbaijanis. Qavam still held out against autonomy for Azerbaijan, but suggested that once Soviet troops withdrew the "Soviet leadership could lay down a basis for cooperation in the oil issue and other economic areas." The U.S.S.R. rejected this because Qavam had not indicated a willingness to organize a joint Soviet-Iranian Oil Society. Qavam, however, said he would be more than happy to organize such a company immediately after Soviet troops had withdrawn. Qavam then met with Kennan on the same day to discuss his apparent lack of progress. His offer of oil concessions was not communicated to Kennan.⁸⁰

Qavam's tactics appeared to have paid off. On March 7th, Henderson and his team from the N.E.A. presented a map to Byrnes that outlined the thrust of Soviet troop movements. Byrnes responded to the report with the promise that "Now we'll give it to them with both barrels." Charles Bohlen, the Soviet expert at the State Department and Acheson suggested that a statement of any strong U.S. action would only be a bluff and that the U.S. had to allow the U.S.S.R. a graceful way out.⁸¹ Byrnes was determined to support the Iranians but as yet, the U.S. was unable to show any practical demonstration of force to persuade the Soviets to withdraw. The 2nd U.S. telegram of March 8th was not "giving it to them with both barrels." It informed the U.S.S.R. that the U.S. was aware of Soviet troop movements and that the U.S. wanted to know if the U.S.S.R. was going to keep its side of the bargain and withdraw its troops as previously agreed, however, the subtext of the second telegram was clear. The U.S. was fully aware of what the Soviets were up to and it needed to stop.⁸²

Amidst the increased tension in Iran, Qavam returned from Moscow on March 11th and was immediately met by Murray who questioned him on his negotiations. The U.S. was clearly worried about rumors of Qavam's policy of appeasing the U.S.S.R. Murray wanted the issue again to be brought before the Security Council. This time though he wanted it to be "in parallel action" as joint requests by both the U.S. and the Iranians, but that there "should be no sign of weakening or haziness with respect to Iran's determination." Qavam, ignored this and cut straight to the point and asked what "America or Britain could or would do in case Soviet government ignored our present protests." Murray claimed it was not possible to give a precise answer and Qavam then outlined his version of the negotiations in Moscow. He explained that he asked for Soviet troop withdrawal, a settling of the Azerbaijan issue and the appointment of a new Soviet ambassador in Tehran. He did not mention that he had offered Soviet oil concessions; indeed, he suggested that Molotov had demanded it as a price for ending the crisis. Qavam did however, quote an alleged remark made by Stalin that seemed to indicate that the U.S.S.R. did not believe that the U.S. was serious in its foreign policy and that the U.S.S.R. was not afraid of the U.S. Murray was alarmed that Qavam would not state that Iran's next step would be through the U.N. solely. On the same day as Qavam's return, Ala in Washington inquired if the U.S. would bring up the issue of Iran at the Security Council should Qavam feel unable to do so.⁸³ By looking to waver and suggesting that the U.S.S.R. knew the U.S. was bluffing, Qavam was hoping to force the U.S. into making its position public.

On March 14th Qavam met Murray again and offered him five possible Iranian policies that the Iranian government was considering. Qavam wanted to know which one

the U.S. supported. Murray suggested that the appeal to the Security Council and notification to the U.S.S.R of the illegality of the presence of Soviet troops was the most favored. Of the five options this corresponded to Iranian thinking. The three days of wavering by Qavam had clearly shook Murray and he was determined to see that Qavam had the issue raised at the U.N. Qavam solicited Murray and Sir Reader Bullard, the British ambassador, asking what support the U.S. and British would give if the Iranians went ahead and brought up the issue at the Security Council. Qavam's suggested that even if he did indeed delay an appeal, the U.S.S.R. would engineer an overthrow of his government. Thus the urgency of any support was made clear to both Murray and Reader. In reply, on the same day, Byrnes requested that Murray repeat the U.S. position that the Iranians should "immediately file an appeal with the Security Council" and that the U.S would fully support it.⁸⁴

With guaranteed support from U.S. government, the Iranians lodged their second complaint on March 18th. Six days earlier, The Iranians, through General Ridley, then made a formal request to buy surplus U.S. military equipment. The rejection of this request on March 22nd must have left Qavam in a quandary over just how far the U.S. were prepared to support the Iranians and this explained the hesitation over Iranian policy between March 23rd and 25th. Qavam appeared to retreat somewhat and he blamed Ala for overstepping his brief in bringing the issue before the Security Council.⁸⁵ The U.S.S.R. then proposed to Qavam the withdrawal of Soviet troops from all Iranian territory. The offer contained three caveats. First, the offer was valid if "if nothing else happened." Second, Iran had to agree to the creation of the Irano-Soviet Oil Company with 51% control to the U.S.S.R., and third, Iranian Azerbaijan was to be granted

autonomy. Murray feared that Qavam would concede oil concessions to get the U.S.S.R. to withdraw.⁸⁶ On March 27th Qavam discussed with Murray his counter proposals to the Soviet offer. Murray felt resigned to the fact that Ala would continue debating at the U.N. until Qavam had quietly settled the negotiations with Sadchikov; furthermore, Qavam suggested that the details of these negotiations would now be kept secret. Acheson was not impressed by this Iranian tactic. He foresaw the U.S. would end up championing Iran for its own ends if the Iranian government did not include the U.S. in its deliberations.⁸⁷

Despite U.S. misgivings, the Iranians and the U.S.S.R. agreed to end the crisis on April 4th. They both agreed to the formation of a Majlis ratified joint Irano-Soviet Oil Company, six months after withdrawal of Soviet troops; in addition, Azerbaijan was to be an Iranian affair to solve. The U.S supported the resolution as long as the issue remained upon the Security Council's agenda.⁸⁸ The agreement did not please Acheson. In his memoirs he described it as "dubious."⁸⁹ Qavam then inquired how far the U.S. would support the removal of the issue from the Security Council's agenda or indeed, whether if they did, could it ever be returned. Byrnes sent an immediate response and argued that it should remain. Qavam could hardly fail to notice that whenever he appeared on the verge of conceding demands made of him by the U.S.S.R., the U.S. went a little further in offering outright support. On May 11th the U.S. sent George Allen as the new ambassador to Iran. He attempted to move Qavam towards a more pro-U.S. policy. Without economic or military aid, this was a difficult task.⁹⁰

Iranian Diplomacy: May-December 1946

On May 20th, the Iranians reported to the U.N. that all Soviet troops had departed and that the issue was to be dropped from the Security Council's agenda. According to

Allen, Qavam alerted the U.S. that should the Iranians find further evidence of Soviet interference, they would deal directly with the U.S.S.R.⁹¹ This meant that the U.S. would be excluded from any negotiations and the U.N's nascent authority would be undermined. This clearly frightened Stettinus. He telegraphed back immediately and suggested that regardless of any Iranian decision to drop the issue from the Security Council, the U.S. would keep it on the agenda and would likely set up a commission of investigation to ascertain how far the Soviets had withdrawn. Byrnes concurred and instructed Stettinus to keep the matter on the agenda.⁹² On June 10th, Allen held a conference with Qavam "in all frankness" where he outlined which of Qavam's policies had upset the U.S. He highlighted Qavam's "warm expressions of friendship for the U.S.S.R without any reference to any other nations."⁹³ This kind of rebuke by a U.S. official was certainly new and indicated how far the U.S. was now concerned and involved in Iranian affairs. Allen certainly mistrusted Qavam. On June 17th, he reported to Byrnes that "more and more observers are beginning to suspect that Qavam has gone so far over to the pro-Soviet camp he cannot retract."⁹⁴ Especially damaging to U.S. credibility was Qavam's suggestion to terminate both the U.S led Military and Rural Policing missions. Acheson was adamant that they should remain but conceded that there would be little alternative if Qavam demanded their withdrawal.⁹⁵ To make matters worse, on August 1st, amidst rioting in Tehran, Qavam appointed three Tudeh members into his cabinet.⁹⁶

Qavam, though, was not as pro-Soviet as Allen suspected. Throughout the summer, Qavam quietly solicited U.S. aid. He asked for direct military or economic aid on July 31st, August 13th and 24th as well as September 29th.⁹⁷ Finally, on September 30th, Qavam appeared to concede to the U.S. that his policy of conciliation towards

Azerbaijani separatists and Tudeh Party members throughout the summer of 1946 was a failure. Qavam asked Allen for direct economic assistance to help create "conditions of permanence." By suffering a summer of U.S. complaints about his apparent pro-Soviet policies, Qavam was in effect gambling that the U.S. would now at long last offer direct help to keep the U.S.S.R. out of Iran.

There is evidence that Iranian tactics of informing the U.S. about Soviet intentions had paid off. In July 1946, Truman asked his close advisor Mark Clifford to prepare a report outlining when, where and how the U.S.S.R. had broken its recent promises and agreements with the U.S. Clifford consulted widely within the State and War Departments in drawing up his report. Clifford twice used the anecdote about Iranian troops being blocked from entering the north of the country. He saw this as an example of how the U.S.S.R. had broken its promise made at Tehran in 1943 for the "maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran."⁹⁸

No mention was made of any Azerbaijani grievances with the Iranian government. Clifford claimed that the U.S.S.R. wanted to secure Azerbaijani oil at the expense of the British. He did not mention Qavam's offer of oil concessions to Molotov in Moscow, nor did he mention that the U.S.S.R. had begun talks over oil after the U.S. had been negotiating for oil rights at the behest of the Iranians and that the Iranians had offered northern oil drilling rights. This was bound to upset the U.S.S.R. who had made clear their existing interests in securing these oil fields.⁹⁹ Evidence of the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran despite assurances to the contrary, from both Qavam and the U.S.S.R. were also mentioned by Clifford.¹⁰⁰

Under such changed circumstances, Acheson agreed to Qavam's September 30th request and warned that if they did not offer aid another party (i.e. the U.S.S.R.) would. Acheson immediately asked Byrnes (who was in Paris) for his comments. Byrnes agreed to give economic but not military aid. This was a departure from the State Department's policy of not granting economic credits to Iran.¹⁰¹ On October 6th Qavam reported to Allen that Sadchikov had been pressuring him to hold the Majlis elections and thus ratify the Irano-Soviet Oil company agreement from April. Qavam noted that he could not delay the election much longer. This certainly hinted that oil concessions would go to the U.S.S.R. at the possible exclusion of U.S. companies. Ala followed this up in a meeting with Henderson and Acheson, to ask for more assistance. Henderson prepared a memorandum for Acheson outlining the same message. The U.S. could not afford to allow Iran to become a Soviet puppet and that the West's oil supplies were dependent upon a sovereign Iran.¹⁰² Acheson and Byrnes were still not quite able to offer what the Iranians wanted.

One final crisis pushed the U.S. into direct aid for Iran. Allen discovered that an Iranian cabinet member was forwarding to the U.S.S.R. information about a pending aviation agreement; the agreement was, according to Allen, breaking international rules. The Shah demanded a cabinet reshuffle that went through on October 20th and was accompanied yet again with a direct appeal for U.S. assistance. Qavam was reappointed Prime Minister and Henderson feared that Qavam would not be able to withstand Soviet pressure to resign.¹⁰³ Allen noted that "Iranian frequent demands for credits" was becoming "embarrassing."¹⁰⁴ This time, Byrnes agreed to the military credits. On November 4th, Byrnes directed \$10 million credits for materiel.

Qavam sent troops into Azerbaijan to restore order on December 7th. Allen was quoted in the Iranian press when asked to comment on Iranian troops being deployed in Azerbaijan as "an entirely normal and proper decision."¹⁰⁵ By the end of December 1946, the Azerbaijani government had collapsed and Tehran was in control of its rebellious province. Instead of hints and promises of support at the U.N., the U.S. had promised military and economic aid. Iranian long-term goals of involving a third power as a counterbalance against the Great Britain or the U.S.S.R. had succeeded. Qavam, unlike his predecessors had apparently leaned towards the friendship with the U.S.S.R. in a deliberate attempt to alarm the U.S. This succeeded in removing Soviet troops from its soil and left the Iranians in control of its northern provinces and oil.

Conclusion

The Iranians attempted to keep the U.S. in Iran from 1943 onwards. They blocked U.S. attempts at reforming the machinery of government, and retreated whenever the U.S. threatened to end the Missions' work. Once it became clear that the U.S.S.R. was unwilling to leave Iran, the Iranians sent report after report to the U.S. outlining Soviet acts of aggression. U.S. attempts at interceding with the U.S.S.R. over alleged incidents were blocked by the Iranians. They always preferred to report back their versions of events so that they controlled the narrative.

The Iranians had stuck to a fairly consistent version of events from 1943 onwards. The U.S.S.R. wanted at the very least to control the northern oil fields and most probably wanted a government in Tehran that was under Moscow's control. By 1946, the Iranians had convinced the U.S. that Iranian sovereignty was in jeopardy. The U.S. supported the Iranians in the U.N. but the Iranians sought direct support. By appearing to be pro-Soviet

in the summer of 1946, the Iranians successfully altered U.S. policy into directly funding military equipment so that the Iranians could regain control of its rebellious northern provinces. The U.S. rarely, if at all, questioned the veracity of the Iranian reports. They seemed to accept them verbatim. This allowed the Iranians to portray the U.S.S.R. as aggressive and untrustworthy. By the end of 1946, the U.S. had accepted fully the Iranian narrative and had pledged to support the Iranian government.

- ¹ Bruce R. Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 1st Edition ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980)130-132.
- ² Kristen Blake, *The U.S. - Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War* (United States: University Press of America, 2009), loc 193 of 3312.; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (London: Penguin Books, 1981)15.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Henry William Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East, 1945-1993* (United States: McGraw Hill, 1994),9..
- ⁶ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*,157
- ⁷ D. McKinzie, *Oral History Interview with Loy W. Henderson* (Harry S Truman Library.Independence MO.: Harry S Truman Library.,[1973]), <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/henderson.htm>.
- ⁸ Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*, 22.
- ⁹ Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East, 1945-1993*, 8.
- ¹⁰ *Stettinus to Ford 711.91/7-1244 Telegram 462*, FR, 1944, V, 343-345. (Hereafter, all references to this series will be cited in the following format: Title, catalogue reference, FR, Year, Volume Number in Roman Numerals, pages.)
- ¹¹ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 168.
- ¹² Ibid., 168.
- ¹³ James Chace, "1945, Year Zero," *World Policy Journal* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1995/1996, 1995),61.
- ¹⁴ *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/101 Telegram 116*, FR, 1944, V, 390-392.
- ¹⁵ *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/1087 Telegram 249*, FR, 1944, V, 395-6.
- ¹⁶ *Ford to Hull. 891.20/Mission/11a Telegram 243*, FR, 1944, V, 396.
- ¹⁷ *Ford to Hull 891.51A/1120 Telegram 922*, FR, 1944, V, 398-399.
- ¹⁸ *Ford to Hull 891.51A/1120 Telegram 302*, FR, 1944, V, 400.
- ¹⁹ *Hull to Ford 891.51A/1120 Telegram 303*, FR, 1944, V, 402
- ²⁰ *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/Telegram 381*, FR, 1944, V, 407; *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/1155 Telegram 394*, FR, 1944, V, 407-408.
- ²¹ *Ford to Hull. 891.20/1181 Telegram 450*, FR, 1944, V, 412.
- ²² *Ford to Hull. 891.20/Mission 8-344/ Telegram 567*, FR, 1944, V, 423-424.
- ²³ *Stimson to Stettinns. 891.20/Mission 12-2744/ FR*, 1944, V, 444.
- ²⁴ *Stimson to Hull. 891.20/Missions 17*, FR, 1944, V, 412.
- ²⁵ *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/6-2744 Telegram 457*, FR, 1944, V, 414.
- ²⁶ *Ford to Hull. 891.51A/6-3044 Telegram 470*, FR, 1944, V, 416.
- ²⁷ Blake, *The U.S. - Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War*, loc 264 of 3312.
- ²⁸ *Ford to Hull. 891.20/Missions/ 11 Telegram 899*, FR, 1944, V, 393.
- ²⁹ *Hull to Ford. 891.20/Missions/ 1 1a Telegram 243*, FR, 1944, V, 396; *Ford to Hull. 891.20/Missions/ 12 Telegram 317*, FR, 1944, V, 399.
- ³⁰ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 193.
- ³¹ *Hull to Ford 891.6363/835f Telegram 347*, FR, 1944, V, 401; *Ford to Hull 891.6363/835f Telegram 192*, FR, 1944, V, 446.
- ³² *Ford to Hull 891.6363/8354 Telegram 342*, FR, 1944, V, 449; *Ford to Hull 891.6363/860Telegram 432*, FR, 1944, V, 450.
- ³³ *Ford to Hull 891.6368/8-4444 Telegram 577*, FR, 1944, V, 452.
- ³⁴ *Morris to Hull 891.6363/10-944 Telegram 744*, FR, 1944, V, 455.
- ³⁵ *Hull to Morris 891/6363/10-1044 Telegram 749* FR, 1944, V, 456; *Morris to Hull 891.6363/10-2544 Telegram 781*, FR, 1944, V, 459.

- ³⁶ Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), loc 1256 of 9677.
- ³⁷ Morris to Hull 761.91/10-1344 Telegram 779 FR, 1944, V, 457-8.
- ³⁸ Morris to Hull 891/6363/10-1344 Telegram 756 FR, 1944, V, 456; Morris to Hull 891/6363/10-1344 Telegram 756 FR, 1944, V, 456; Morris to Hull 761.91/10-3544 Telegram 782 FR, 1944, V, 460.
- ³⁹ Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan*, Loc 1351 of 9677.
- ⁴⁰ Stettinus to Harriman 891/6363/10-3344 Telegram 2566 FR, 1944, V, 462; Morris to Hull 891.00/11-144 Telegram 804 FR, 1944, V, 464;
- ⁴¹ Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan*, Loc 1377 of 9677.
- ⁴² Morris to Stettinus 761.91 /1-445: Telegram 6, FR 1945 VIII, 359-60.
- ⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 761.91 /1-1845: FR 1945 VIII, 360-61.
- ⁴⁴ Memorandum by Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews): 740.0011 EW/2-2745, FR 1945 VIII, 362-3.
- ⁴⁵ Morris to Stettinus 891.00 /2-2245: Telegram 112, FR 1945 VIII, 361-362.
- ⁴⁶ Grew to Morris 891.00/2245: Telegram 106, FR 1945 VIII, 363-4.
- ⁴⁷ Morris to Stettinus 761.91 /3-645: Telegram 154, FR 1945 VIII, 364.
- ⁴⁸ Morris to Stettinus 891.00 /3-1745: Telegram 188, FR 1945 VIII, 365; Morris to Stettinus 891.00 /3-1945: Telegram 194, FR 1945 VIII, 366-367.
- ⁴⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the United States Delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization, , FR 1945 VIII, 369-370.
- ⁵⁰ Morris to Stettinus 740.0011 /E.W-1845: Telegram 333, FR 1945 VIII, 370.
- ⁵¹ Chargé (Ward) to Stettins 811.24591 /5-2145: Telegram 341, FR 1945 VIII, 371; Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Middle Eastern Affairs (Minor) 800.24591/5-1245, FR 1945 VIII, 372-3.
- ⁵² Chargé (Ward) to Stettins 891.77/5 /29-45: Telegram 356, FR 1945 VIII, 373
- ⁵³ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Division of Middle Eastern Affairs (Henderson) 800.24591/6-145, FR 1945 VIII, 374.
- ⁵⁴ Murray to Stettinus 891.00 /6-2045 Telegram 416, FR 1945 VIII, 383; Murray to Stettinus 891.00 /6-2645 Telegram 428, FR 1945 VIII, 384-386; Murray to Stettinus 891.00 /7-1645 Telegram 501, FR 1945 VIII, 386-388.
- ⁵⁵ Henry William Brands, *Inside the Cold War: Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire 1918-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 137.
- ⁵⁶ Murray to Byrnes: 761.91/9-1845 Telegram 741, FR 1945 VIII, 411; Murray to Byrnes: 761.91/9-1945 Telegram 746, FR 1945 VIII, 412.
- ⁵⁷ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 274.
- ⁵⁸ Gary R. Hess, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (March 1974, 1974) 126.
- ⁵⁹ Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan*, Loc 1850 of 9677.
- ⁶⁰ Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/9-2445 Telegram 768, FR 1945 VIII, 417-419.
- ⁶¹ Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/11-1945 Telegram 959, FR 1945 VIII, 431-432; Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/11-1945 Telegram 961, FR 1945, 433; Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/11-2045 Telegram 965, FR 1945 VIII, 436-7; The nine telegrams refer to Murray's correspondence from Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/11-2045 Telegram 970, FR 1945 VIII, 436-7 to Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/11-2345 Telegram 983, FR 1945 VIII, 447.
- ⁶² Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/12-1345 Telegram 1118, FR 1945 VIII, 492.
- ⁶³ Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/12-1545 Telegram 1134, FR 1945 VIII, 496-7.
- ⁶⁴ Murray to Byrnes: 891.00/12-1545 Telegram 1135, FR 1945 VIII, 498.
- ⁶⁵ The Acting Secretary of State (Acheson) to Harriman (Moscow) 891.00/12-2145 Telegram 2611 SECDEL 31, FR 1945 VIII, 508.
- ⁶⁶ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 296-297.
- ⁶⁷ Acheson to Harriman 740.00119 Council/12-2445 Telegram 2630 Secdel 41. FR 1945 VIII, 512.

⁶⁸ *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs Allen*, 891.00/12-2645, FR 1945 VIII, 513.

⁶⁹ *Murray to Byrnes* 891.00/1-2146 Telegram 92, FR 1946 VII, 305.

⁷⁰ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 305-307.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Murray to Byrnes* 891.00/1-2846 Telegram 127, FR 1946 VII, 315; *Murray to Byrnes* 891.00/1-2946 Telegram 130, FR 1946 VII, 318-319; *Byrnes to Murray* 891.00/1-2446 Telegram 74, FR 1946 VII, 317.

⁷³ *Stettinus to Byrnes* 891.00/1-2946 Telegram 1064, FR 1946 VII, 320; *Memorandum by Charles Noyes, Special Assistant to the United States Representative at the U.N (Stettinus)* 501.BC/1-146, FR 1946 VII, 322.

⁷⁴ *Memorandum by Stettinus* 761.91/1-3046, FR 1946 VII, 322; *Memorandum by Hare* 501.BC/1-146, FR 1946 VII, 327.

⁷⁵ *Rossow to Byrnes* 891.00/2-1146 Telegram 20, FR 1946 VII, 332.

⁷⁶ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 308.

⁷⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21.

⁷⁸ Mark Hamilton Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance 1941-1953* (University of Michigan: Holmes & Meier Pub, 1987), 164.

⁷⁹ *Kennan to Byrnes* 761.91/3-446 Telegram 642, FR 1946 VII, 337; note at the bottom of page 337 details Kennan's understanding of the Soviet proposals made on the 2nd March; *Rossow to Byrnes* 761.91/3-546 Telegram 40, FR 1946 VII, 340; *Byrnes to Kennan* 861.24591/3-546 Telegram 385, FR 1946 VII, 340.

⁸⁰ Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan*, Loc 5166 of 9677.

⁸¹ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 321-322.

⁸² *Byrnes to Kennan* 861.24591/8-846 Telegram 425, FR 1946 VII, 348; Brands, *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East, 1945-1993*, 11.

⁸³ *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs Allen* 861.24591/3-1146, FR 1946 VII, 349; *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24591/3-1146 Telegram 315, FR 1946 VII, 350-354.

⁸⁴ *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24591/3-1446 Telegram 315, FR 1946 VII, 354-356; *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24591/3-1546 Telegram 343, FR 1946 VII, 356; *Byrnes to Murray* 861.24591/3-1546 Telegram 214, FR 1946 VII, 360.

⁸⁵ *Byrnes to Murray* 891.24/3-1246 Telegram 236, FR 1946 VII, 372. See note 38 at the bottom of page 372 for the 'formal request' by General Ridley; Kunniholm (1980), 329.

⁸⁶ *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24591/3-2546 Telegram 395, FR 1946 VII, 379-380; *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24591/3-2346 Telegram 387, FR 1946 VII, 373-375.

⁸⁷ *Murray to Byrnes* 861.24/3-2746 Telegram 411, FR 1946 VII, 385-387; *Acheson to Murray* 861.24591/3-2746 Telegram 248, FR 1946 VII, 390.

⁸⁸ *Byrnes to Stettinus* 501.BC/4-846 Telegram 11, FR 1946 VII, 411-412.

⁸⁹ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, 1987 Edition ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1969) 196.

⁹⁰ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* 343-344.

⁹¹ *Allen to Byrnes* 861.24591/5-2146 Telegram 726, FR 1946 VII, 469.

⁹² *Stettinus to Byrnes* 501.BC/5-2146 Telegram 217, FR 1946 VII, 470; *Byrnes to Stettinus* 501.BC/5-2146 Telegram 67, FR 1946 VII, 470-471.

⁹³ *Allen to Byrnes* 891.00/6-1046 Telegram 821, FR 1946 VII, 496.

⁹⁴ *Allen to Byrnes* 891.00/6-1746 Telegram 850, FR 1946 VII, 500.

⁹⁵ *Acheson to Byrnes* 891.105A/6-1746 Telegram 552, FR 1946 VII, 503-4.

⁹⁶ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 385.

⁹⁷ *Allen to Byrnes* 711.91/7-3146 Telegram 1049, FR 1946 VII, 509; Kunniholm (1980), 384.

⁹⁸ Elsey Clifford, *American Relations with the Soviet Union "Clifford-Elsey Report"*, September 24, 1946. (Harry S Truman Library. Independence MO.: Conway Files, Truman Papers,[1946]), http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/sectioned.php?documentid=4-1&pagenumber=1&groupid=1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰¹ *Allen to Byrnes 891.00/9-3046 Telegram 1293, FR 1946 VII, 518-520; Acheson to Byrnes 740.00119 Council/10-146 Telegram 5214, FR 1946 VII, 520; Byrnes to Acheson 740.0119 Council/10-346 Telegram 4962, FR 1946 VII, 520.*

¹⁰² *Allen to Byrnes 891.00/10-546 Telegram 1324, FR 1946 VII, 521; Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) 891.00/10-846, FR 1946 VII, 523-525.*

¹⁰³ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 392.

¹⁰⁴ *Allen to Byrnes 891.51/10-2246 Telegram 1400, FR 1946 VII, 539.*

¹⁰⁵ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 395.

CHAPTER III

Turkish Efforts to Secure U.S. Support Against Foreign Interference 1945-46

Turkish-Diplomacy During World War II

To understand the nature of Turkish-U.S. relations immediately after World War II, it is necessary to appreciate the delicate diplomacy Turkey practiced from 1939. The decisions that Turkey took during the war directly influenced their relations with the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. afterwards. Turkish foreign policy during World War II went from non-belligerency to neutrality, and finally to a belated declaration of war against Germany. Turkey aimed to "survive the war by means of establishing a cautious balance in foreign relations."¹

On October 19th 1939, Turkey signed the Treaty of Mutual Assistance with both France and Great Britain. The British saw this as an extension of their military capability in the Balkans, whereas, the Turks saw it as an "insurance policy in case of dire need."² Turkey then refused to aid the Allies following the German invasion of the Low Countries in May 1940, because the U.S.S.R. and Germany were technically allies and Turkey was afraid of any possible Soviet invasion.³

From 1941 onwards, Turkey, fearful of German hegemony in Europe, declared its neutrality and mobilized its troops to defend the homeland. The Turks were also glad of the growing German-Soviet tensions in the first half of 1941 and this led to an improvement of Turkish-Soviet relations. In March 1941, the U.S.S.R. confirmed their neutrality should the Turks be involved in a war with Germany. Three days prior to the German invasion of the U.S.S.R., the Turks signed a similar agreement with Germany

confirming neutrality in the event of a war with the U.S.S.R. By doing this, Turkey was ensuring themselves against all possibilities.⁴ The German invasion of the U.S.S.R. in June 1941 placed Turkey in a difficult position. Turkey disliked the size of German power on the continent but feared the U.S.S.R. far more. Some politicians in Turkey were elated that their traditional foe was being attacked by Germany.⁵

Overspending on the military in Turkey, led to economic stagnation and inflation.⁶ On November 7th 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. President declared that Turkey's defense was vital to U.S. foreign policy.⁷ One month later, the U.S. offered Lend-Lease aid and Turkey started receiving materiel in 1942 via British shipping. On March 16th 1943, the U.S presented Turkey with the Draft Agreement, Accompanying Notes and an Aide-Mémoire regarding her obligations for future deliveries of Lend-Lease, as well as for the goods already received. The U.S. pointed out that the Lend-Lease Agreement was almost identical to agreements reached with other countries. The accompanying notes, however, made clear that foodstuffs for civilian purposes was to be bought by the Turks in advance. The U.S. Aide-Memoire also pointed out that the Turks were financially liable for all previous, current and future deliveries of Lend-Lease materials. The British were to transfer their portion of the debt to the Turks for all U.S. goods received to date via British shipping.⁸ The Turks refused to sign this agreement, but Lend-Lease goods were still delivered because the Allies wanted Turkey to declare war on Germany.

From 1942 onwards, the Turkish government was under pressure from the U.S. and the British to declare war on Germany and help relieve the U.S.S.R. As Germany started to retreat in the U.S.S.R. after the Battle of Stalingrad ended in 1943, the necessity

of aiding the U.S.S.R. lessened. Turkey, however, was forced to seek closer ties with the U.S. and Great Britain as a counterweight to the now growing Soviet power in the region.⁹ The Allies, in return demanded that Turkey declare war on the Axis powers, but Turkey asked for an increased supply of materiel before any such declaration. They cautiously broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on August 2nd 1944, but the Turkish government, was reluctant to start hostilities with Germany and their vacillation continued into 1945.

Soviet Attempts to Weaken Turkish Sovereignty: October 1944

The U.S.S.R. first broached changing the regulation of passage through the Dardanelles Straits in October 1944 when Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Premier and Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, met in Moscow. Stalin perceived a need to modify the 1936 Montreux Convention. The Convention stated that Turkey had control of the Dardanelles Straits and would close them to all foreign warships during times of war. Soviet warships wanted passage into the Mediterranean and Stalin claimed that the Turks had allowed German shipping through the Straits during the war. Churchill agreed that the treaty needed revising and he blamed the Turks for their reluctance to declare war. According to Churchill, in a telegram to Roosevelt, any Soviet suggestions to the Turks would be moderate. Roosevelt indicated in reply that any discussion should await the forthcoming Yalta Conference.¹⁰ The U.S.S.R., however, thought of scrapping the Convention completely. Stalin even indicated to Vasil Kolarov, the Bulgarian Communist leader that, “There is no place for Turkey in the Balkans.”¹¹ Although this was unknown to the Turkish government, it indicated that a threat from the U.S.S.R. was imminent.

Germany's defeat would leave a power vacuum in Europe and Turkey was aware that the U.S.S.R. would be well placed to dominate after the war was over. Because of this, Turkey began to ally itself with the U.S. in the hope of forestalling any Soviet aggression.¹²

Turkish-U.S. Relations January-March 1945

At the beginning of 1945, the U.S. and Turkey were in dispute over two issues. First, the U.S. continued to put pressure on Turkey to declare war against the Axis. In 1942, this would have benefitted the Allies strategically, but by 1945 Turkey could offer little to help defeat Germany. The U.S. was more concerned with building a coalition for the post-war world within the umbrella of the United Nations. Second, the U.S. wanted Turkey to agree to her financial obligations with regard to the as yet unsigned Lend-Lease Agreement. The agreement was the subject of a discussion between Laurence Steinhardt, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, and Sürkrü Saraçoğlu, the Turkish Prime Minister, on January 1st 1945.

The Turks proved to be very difficult and stubborn negotiators. Steinhardt reported back that he had a two-hour discussion with Saraçoğlu, without any success. Steinhardt did not mention the length of other meetings in telegrams filed in the State Department's records and one is left with the impression that he was left exasperated at the lack of progress. Saraçoğlu wanted an agreement without the accompanying notes over food payments or a commitment to have to pay for Lend-Lease equipment already received. Steinhardt was unable to agree and left the meeting. He requested instructions from Edward Stettinus, the Secretary of State.¹³ Stettinus replied, stating that that the

implication of Turkish acquisition of goods for which they would not be financially liable was “utterly unacceptable.” The Turkish clause could allow for eventual non-payment of goods already received.¹⁴ Hitherto, the materiel had not been used, and under the terms of Lend-Lease, unused goods had to be paid for. Thus the Turks would have received two years of Lend-Lease materiel gratis.

Almost four weeks later, Steinhardt sent a telegram back listing the three meetings he had had with the Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Office, Cevat Açıkalın and the four sessions he had conducted with Saraçoğlu regarding the proposed Turkish Lend-Lease Agreement. Açıkalın showed “undisguised satisfaction” in assuming that the U.S. had abandoned the demand for retroactive payment. Steinhardt was reduced to “appealing” to Saraçoğlu to intervene on the matter and he concluded that the Turks were stalling and had very little intention of signing any agreement with the U.S. This was because Saraçoğlu had now included the suggestion that Lend-Lease materials delivered by the British fell under the aegis of British goods that was covered by a prior 1938 Anglo-Turkish Armaments Credit Agreement. Saraçoğlu claimed that the U.S. materiel had, thus, already been paid for.

Steinhardt developed a compromise position. He would forward a letter from the Turkish Foreign Minister to the State Department that outlined Turkish agreement to pay for all future goods delivered, while at the same time making past deliveries the subject of further discussion. As Steinhardt pointed out, with his forthcoming departure from Ankara, he assumed that the Turks would decline to discuss the matter with Edwin Wilson, the incoming U.S. Ambassador. By accepting the Turkish letter, Steinhardt advised that, “we will at least have a mutual aid agreement.” His compromise was hardly

a success. The Turks had not signed the Lend-Lease Agreement and he had almost agreed to what the Turks had been pressing for since January anyway. All he had managed to negotiate was that there should be future discussions on payment for past deliveries.¹⁵ On February 20th, Steinhardt warned that Açıkalın had indicated that he was due to be in London on February 23rd and that no more discussion could take place.¹⁶

In Washington, Joseph Grew, the Acting Secretary of State, rejected the Turkish claim that the British delivered Lend-Lease goods had already been paid for; nevertheless, the U.S. State Department sought clarification from the British Foreign Office over the exact nature of materiel hitherto transported to Turkey.¹⁷ This meant a further delay in any signing of the Lend-Lease agreement with the Turks. Grew certainly thought that Saraçoğlu was stalling; he was angered by Açıkalın's offhand comment to Steinhardt that "agreement was unlikely as a visit to London was imminent." Grew noted that Açıkalın's comment was a "casual indication of further delay." Grew's annoyance with Açıkalın and Saraçoğlu's delays resulted in a veiled threat. The Lend-Lease agreement "was in Turkey's best interest to sign."¹⁸

Although Grew did not explain why, it was apparent as to what he was referring to, since he concluded the telegram by stating that the Mutual Aid Agreement was "too important to be left dangling at this time."¹⁹ "At this time" referred to the ultimatum Turkey had been given at the Yalta Conference by Great Britain, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.²⁰ The Turks would be excluded from the forthcoming San Francisco United Nations Conference (U.N.), due to begin on April 25th, unless they declared war upon the Axis by March 1st 1945. This was communicated to the Turks via the British Foreign Office on February 20th.²¹

The Turkish government was jittery after the Yalta Conference anyway. The Turks feared that the Allies would negotiate secret arrangements at Turkey's expense.²² The U.S position at the Yalta Conference on revision of the Montreux Convention had been to delay any decision and to hope that the point would not be raised. The U.S thought of securing its own strategic interests by allowing Turkey to retain control of the Straits. The revision of the Montreux Convention would likely lead to changes in the governance of the Panama Canal, which the U.S administered.²³ The U.S. position of procrastination held sway at the Yalta conference. The Big Three of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill agreed that the issue of the Montreux Convention would be discussed at the subsequent, but as yet undetermined, Foreign Minister's Conference. The Turks interpreted this wrongly and assumed that the U.S. was disinterested in any Soviet moves against Turkey.²⁴

The British communicated the threat of exclusion from the U.N. to the Turkish government, three days after the conference ended. The reaction in Ankara was rapid. The Turkish National Assembly voted to declare war on Germany, and they signed the Lend-Lease Agreement a day later on February 24th. The Turks also sent the accompanying letter to the State Department that outlined the need for future talks on goods already received.²⁵ The Turkish Government recognized that Turkish exclusion from the U.N. would place it outside the umbrella of collective security and at the mercy of any Soviet aggression.²⁶

Steinhardt sent a telegram back to Stettinus explaining how he managed to get the Turks to sign the Lend-Lease Agreement. He suggested that Saraçoğlu acted in haste. On the evening of February 24th, Steinhardt had called on Saraçoğlu only as a courtesy

because Steinhardt was about to leave his ambassadorship. Steinhardt expressed regret at not having been able to reach an agreement with the Turkish Government over Lend-Lease. Saraçoğlu “expressed surprise” and demanded that his Foreign Office make a further effort. Even so, at the eleventh hour the Turks haggled over the retroactive payments for goods received and Saraçoğlu’s legal advisors suggested to him that he did not have the right to sign it.²⁷ Steinhardt’s reporting of Turkish stalling bordered on the sarcastic and one concludes that he was unsure if the agreement would ever be signed. The agreement, however, was eventually signed late in the evening on the 24th February.

Despite the urgency, the Turkish government had managed to postpone accepting liability for any of the Lend-Lease goods that they had already received, but the issue remained. The U.S. Embassy in London replied belatedly on March 9th to the State Department’s question of the status of U.S. goods already delivered to Turkey. The delay was caused by the difficulty John Gilbert Winant, the U.S. Ambassador, had in finding out the “details of this rather complicated matter.” The British confirmed that all Lend-Lease materials delivered by them to Turkey fell under the Aegis of Lend-Lease and were outside the scope of the existing Anglo-Turkish Armaments Credit Agreement of 1938.”²⁸ The British duly communicated this to the Turkish government. In the event, the British clarification came too late because the Turkish government had already signed the compromise agreement anyway. The ease with which the status of the goods was forgotten on February 24th, despite the last minute delays, suggested that the Turkish government only used the issue as an excuse not to sign. This is confirmed further when it is realized that the final agreement signed on May 5th 1946 included the clause that Turkey was liable financially for all goods received from 1941 onwards.²⁹

Soviet Threats to Turkish Sovereignty and Turkish Efforts to Solicit U.S. Support: March-June 1945

Despite the Turkish declaration of war on Germany, the U.S.S.R. continued to threaten Turkey. On March 19th, the U.S.S.R. informed the Turks that they no longer wished to renew the 1925 Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression, claiming it no longer conformed to current conditions and that it needed serious improvement.³⁰ The U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, William Averell Harriman, explained that although the Turks had been expecting a denunciation, the manner in which it happened was unexpected. It was likely that Harriman's information had come from Selim Sarper, the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow, because he repeated Sarper's version of how the U.S.S.R. tore up the treaty. On March 19th, Sarper told Sergey Kavtaradze, the Soviet Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, that as he was due to leave his post, he wanted to call on Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister to say goodbye. Sarper was immediately invited to a meeting instead. At that meeting Molotov asked the ambassador how the Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression Treaty might be improved. Thus, the initiative for the revision had been placed with the Turkish Government and would allow the Soviet government latitude in accepting any Turkish suggestions. Harriman was clear to point out that the U.S.S.R. had the advantage in any negotiations and that if bilateral talks were established then they could be used to deny other powers a say in any new treaty.³¹

To affect a change in U.S. policy and to receive U.S. support, Turkish Foreign policy would have to mirror U.S. foreign policy closely, given the assumption that the

U.S. was abandoning any interest in its affairs. The Turks would also have to frame any support within the language of the United Nations (U.N.), because the U.S. stated repeatedly that disputes in the future were to be solved at that forum.

In February 1945, the U.S. appeared to be in favor of negotiation over the Straits issue at the upcoming Foreign Ministers Conference rather than confrontation with its Soviet ally. Steinhardt, therefore, reported that the Turks were open to diplomatic talks with the U.S.S.R. The Turkish government also attempted to link the success of the U.N. with Turkish reasonableness while at the same questioning Soviet integrity. The San Francisco Conference was due to begin on April 25th and it was expected to create the United Nations' Charter. On February 26th Steinhardt reported that the Turks took the denunciation "philosophically" and that they thought the Soviet timing was designed not to coincide with the San Francisco Conference.³² The Turkish government then followed this line of reasoning and suggested that the U.S.S.R. was deliberately keeping the issue of the Straits outside of the U.N.'s remit.³³

Steinhardt agreed mostly with Harriman's analysis in Moscow. In his opinion, Soviet tactics were designed to exclude non Black Sea powers from any negotiations. Steinhardt also reported that the Turks were "pugnacious," determined to resist Soviet aggression and that their neutrality during the war was a long-term plan to conserve strength. Steinhardt warned that the Turkish protestation of wanting to better "Turkish-Soviet relations in order there would not be a hindrance in any way to the best possible Anglo-Soviet relation," was just a nod to the language of the U.N. Steinhardt's description of the Turkish determination to resist was hardly complimentary.³⁴ Clearly,

the Turks had not won over Steinhardt. It was fortunate for Turkey that he was preparing to depart Ankara and Edwin Wilson, the new ambassador due to take his place.

Wilson was also skeptical about Soviet foreign policy, but he seemed to have a far cozier relationship with the Turks than Steinhardt did.³⁵ Wilson met President Truman before departing for Ankara. Wilson warned Truman that the Turks would resist Soviet aggression if attacked by the U.S.S.R. but also that Turkey should receive U.S. support.³⁶

Sarper returned to Ankara and spent two months preparing for the talks in Moscow. His instructions were to agree to bilateral negotiations initially, and to retain the friendly relations that the 1925 Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression had produced.³⁷ The U.S. did not want bilateral talks to take place regarding the Straits and on March 31st, Hasan Saka, the Turkish Foreign Minister reassured Steinhardt that the Turks preferred the option of multilateral talks, but were prepared for bilateral talks up until the San Francisco Conference was due to begin. At that point, Saka would ask for U.S and British advice.³⁸

The Turks were under no such illusion about Soviet intentions. After the Soviet request for Turkish proposals, they continued to warn the U.S. of Soviet tactics. Their interpretations of Soviet moves were always in the worst light possible. On April 27th, Sarper suggested to Earl L. Packer, the U.S Chargé in Ankara, that the U.S.S.R. had planned on sending fifth class negotiators to the conference. The implication being, that the U.N., which was so important to the U.S., would be snubbed by the U.S.S.R. In the end Molotov did attend; however, the Turks continued to denigrate Soviet sincerity by suggesting that Molotov would return to Moscow before the conference ended.³⁹

Two days before he left for Moscow, Sarper talked again to Packer. At this meeting Sarper was less sanguine over the upcoming talks. Sarper said that no definite conclusions had yet been reached on a treaty between Turkish and Soviet negotiators and that he doubted the Soviets would be reasonable. Sarper also suggested that the matter of "Big Power relations was a matter far more transcending in importance" than the Turkish-Soviet negotiations. Again, the Turks were attempting to link U.S. interests with their own security by downplaying their troubles and by appearing to be reasonable, while casting a poor light on Soviet intentions. Ominously, and in the same conversation, Sarper stressed Turkish steadfastness and a willingness to confront an enemy.⁴⁰ The Turks were consistently reiterating to their U.S. audience the demand for self-determination, yet it was cleverly coupled with an apparent reasonableness to negotiate a friendly treaty.

Sarper arrived in Moscow on May 24th and met Molotov on June 7th. The talks were strained.⁴¹ In return for a new treaty of friendship, the U.S.S.R. wanted naval bases on the Dardanelles Straits and agreement on a new Montreux Convention to circumvent any multilateral discussions. They also wanted the two Turkish Provinces of Kars and Ardahan. These had been Russian up until 1921.⁴² The Turks had not been prepared for such "extreme demands" as they had been led to believe by Sergei Vinogradov, the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara, that the Turks should seek out Molotov and that a satisfactory outcome was in the offing. After the meeting, the Turks were left in shock.⁴³ The Turks reported the demands to Wilson in Ankara, although they did not go into details. They instead suggested that the Soviet offer "smells bad" and that time was

needed to respond to them. The Turks, however, disclosed the details of the Soviet negotiations to the British.

The British informed the State Department and as a consequence, the Turkish version of events was then disseminated to the State Department by an established ally. To make sure the U.S. understood the nature of the Soviet demands, the Turks then suggested that the Soviets would want a regime change in Turkey so that it would be 'reoriented' in a manner similar to the regime changes that had taken place in Bulgaria and Romania.⁴⁴ Stalin's tactic of shaping friendly governments was also being used at this time in Iran,⁴⁵ so the Turkish comment was consistent with their policy of linking the Straits issue with the wider Near East and U.S. interests in general.⁴⁶

In the aftermath of the June 7th meeting between Sarper and Molotov, the U.S. changed its position on the Straits. From not wanting the issue raised at Yalta, they committed the U.S. to resolve the issue within multilateral negotiations. Grew, in a meeting with the British Ambassador declined to make any commitment or protest before the conclusion of the ongoing San Francisco and upcoming Potsdam Conferences. Grew did however, have private sympathy for the Turkish position and it was noticeable that he only balked at the timing and did not rule out a protest. This was because he concluded the meeting by suggesting that should action be taken, there "was plenty of time between the meetings."⁴⁷

On the June 18th, Molotov met Sarper for a second time. At this meeting, Molotov again demanded bases on the Straits and a bilateral revision of the Montreux Convention of 1936 to exclude other powers. Nurullah Esat Sümer, the Acting Foreign Secretary, gave the Turkish version of this meeting to Wilson, four days later. Sümer made clear,

that Turkey was threatened because Molotov had also suggested that the U.S.S.R. would sponsor other Balkan States' demands of Turkey. The Turks were unsure whether these demands were economic or territorial in nature. More ominous was Molotov's frequent references to how Poland had benefitted from a weak U.S.S.R. after World War I and that the Poles had now "repaired this injustice." The Turks understood all too well that this was an attempt to link Poland's new borders with the demands made of Turkey, for both the Kars and Ardahan provinces. As the Turks were well aware, Poland was now under total Soviet domination and that made the Turkish plight all the more clear. Molotov had ended the discussion with Sarper by saying, "think it over; let us see if we cannot work out something useful." Wilson finally asked Sümer if the Turks were mobilizing their troops. Sumer, noted that no additional mobilization would take place before the Potsdam Conference.⁴⁸ The Turks were quick to present their version of events, show restraint and yet at the same time, note the provocative nature of Soviet diplomacy.

One week later, Sarper met Harriman in Moscow and outlined the same construct. Sarper suggested that the week's silence since the June 18th meeting meant that the U.S.S.R. had been given pause for thought, but that they were not bluffing; the threats to Turkey had merely been delayed.⁴⁹ Wilson was certainly convinced, even if the State Department was awaiting the Potsdam Conference to discuss the Straits issue. Wilson sent a telegram back to Grew on July 2nd. He outlined almost exactly what the Turks had been suggesting since March. First, Wilson recognized that the demands made by the U.S.S.R. on Turkey affected the strategic balance in the area. Second, the demands made for Turkish territory were serious and not a bargaining point to be discarded over control of the Straits. Third, the U.S.S.R. had pledged fidelity to the Montreux Convention in

1941 and was now denouncing it. Wilson suggested that the U.S. should make the U.S.S.R. aware of its obligation to the principles of the U.N., that it was pledged to support.⁵⁰

Officially, the Turks were disappointed with the U.S. decision to await the outcome of the Potsdam Conference. Saraçoğlu informed Wilson on July 3rd that he could not understand the U.S. hope that discussions between Turkey and the U.S.S.R. would have mutual respect, but that in any case, Turkey would abide by the new international security principles. Saraçoğlu again linked Turkish reasonableness in abiding by the U.N. Charter while condemning the U.S.S.R. Saraçoğlu left Wilson in no doubt. He outlined the strategic implications of Soviet domination of the Near East and the threat that this entailed to U.S. oil supplies. Wilson's attempt to emphasize the importance of the upcoming Potsdam Conference was brushed aside by Saraçoğlu. He warned that the U.S.S.R. was "mad" on world domination and that the U.S., more than Britain, would have to stop the U.S.S.R. It seemed that Saraçoğlu's warning had some effect because two days later, Wilson reminded Grew of the conversation that Wilson and Truman had in April. Truman had offered support to Turkey if she was threatened and he wanted Grew to bring the "menacing situation" to the attention of the President. Thus, it seems that Wilson was trying to circumvent Grew's vacillation on the subject and was advocating the same warnings that the Turks had been imparting for months.⁵¹

The Issue of the Montreux Convention at the Potsdam Conference

Between July 17th and August 2nd 1945, Stalin, Churchill (later Clement Attlee) and Truman met in the Berlin suburb of Potsdam to conclude the terms of the peace

settlement with Germany. The issue of the Straits was discussed, but if the Turks thought that they had influenced a change in U.S policy to directly defend Turkey at the beginning of the conference with regard to the Straits, then they were disappointed. U.S. policy was still in flux. The State Department view, as outlined by Policy Paper 681, noted that the U.S would not object to any base of a foreign power built on the Straits if Turkey agreed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, did not want any foreign base being built. They suggested that neutralization of the Straits would be in U.S. interests if Turkey came under the influence of the U.S.S.R. The difference was noted and accepted by George Allen, the U.S State Department's Near Eastern Affairs (N.E.A.) Deputy Director, with the caveat that neutralization should be resisted, unless Turkey freely agreed to it.⁵²

On the whole, the U.S. expressed that it had "no special objectives with regard to Turkey,"⁵³ and the U.S. felt that they did not want to be drawn into a conflict with the U.S.S.R. that had been started by any provocative move made by the Turks.⁵⁴ This was a possibility because Wilson warned that the Turks had received British backing. He reported the Turkish view of bilateral talks held between Sir Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister and Saka, prior to the Potsdam Conference. The Turks were "thoroughly satisfied" with the talks and that the British had "encouraged" the Turks to maintain their position over the Straits and their eastern provinces.⁵⁵

Truman initially did not enter into a discussion on the topic at the Potsdam Conference, as he felt unprepared and he allowed Stalin and Churchill to take the lead.⁵⁶ The Soviet proposal was exactly what the Turks had suggested would happen; regional powers were to be excluded from discussion and the Straits issue should be solved by

bilateral talks.⁵⁷ At the seventh session, however, Truman brought up the idea that the Straits, along with other inland waterways, should be internationalized.⁵⁸ This was a change from Yalta, where Roosevelt's notes had indicated that internationalization of the Straits would lead to the same result for the Panama Canal.⁵⁹ Stalin did not want internationalization of the Straits and he quietly dropped the topic claiming he needed time to study the proposal more closely.⁶⁰ Truman did, however, have the satisfaction in getting all the powers to agree to have direct conversations with the Turks with regard to the revision of the Montreux convention.⁶¹ Still, no official U.S. support had been given and the U.S. was still proposing internationalization of the Straits.

In Ankara, the British passed on a summary of their talks with the Turks to Wilson. The British linked Stalin's threat against Kars and Ardahan with Truman's guarantee of internationalization of the Straits. The British urged the Turks to accept Truman's proposal.⁶² It was only with great reluctance and British pressure that the Turks modified their stance to countenance internationalization of the Straits with a U.S. guarantee of Turkish sovereignty.⁶³ Truman's interest was a qualified relief to the Turks. Internationalization of the Straits was not what they were hoping for, but they welcomed it as it indicated U.S. willingness to be a partner in the region. Their acceptance came alongside the caveat that any revision would not mean a loss of Turkish sovereignty.⁶⁴

Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Secure Direct U.S. Support Over its Border Dispute With the U.S.S.R.

Once the Turks had secured U.S. interest in the Straits issue, their next task was to convince the U.S. that Soviet threats to Turkish sovereignty over Kars and Ardahan

provinces were linked to Soviet demands for bases on the Straits. The Turkish ambassador in Washington made these points to George Allen on August 24th. The Ambassador criticized the apparent U.S. position of treating Soviet demands of Kars and Ardahan separately to that of the Straits. Allen replied that Kars and Ardahan should be settled through the U.N., a body to which the U.S. was committed. Allen stressed his government's support for the Turks in their "present difficulty."⁶⁵

By early September there had been a slackening of the anti-Turkish news campaign in Moscow. Since the opening of the Soviet archives in 1991, it was discovered that the U.S.S.R. concentrated upon events in Iran as opposed to Turkey.⁶⁶ Harriman, who was unaware of the U.S.S.R.'s pre-occupation with Iran, was unsure why the press reports had toned down their inflammatory articles. He suggested that their silence could have represented a new moderation with regard to Turkey or it was just a calculated lull in overt verbal attacks.⁶⁷ This did not stop the Turks from trying to influence the U.S in its follow up to the agreements made at the Potsdam Conference. Indeed, there appeared to be an intensification of Turkish efforts in ascertaining U.S. views. Questions over sovereignty, the meaning of internationalization and supposed U.S. guarantees were brought up by Turkish officials.⁶⁸

With the upcoming Conference of Foreign Ministers, scheduled for September in London, the Turks were anxious to find out what the position of the U.S. would be. Dean Acheson, the Undersecretary of State, was keen that the U.S. should not discuss the issue as at the conference because all three powers had agreed to direct negotiations with the Turks as a basis for further talks. This was communicated to the Turks and although it was accepted, they immediately inquired as to what Truman meant by "international

guarantee.”⁶⁹ The Turks also increased their efforts in persuading the U.S. of the seriousness of the situation by giving Wilson estimates of Soviet troop concentrations in Bulgaria.⁷⁰

Turkish diplomatic efforts seemed to have paid off in November when the State Department presented its suggestions on the revision of Montreux Convention as agreed at the Potsdam Conference. These new proposals omitted all references to internationalization of the Straits.⁷¹ James Byrnes, the new Secretary of State, removed it because he wanted the Russians “to show their hand.” The Turkish position of ownership of the Straits had been agreed upon and Byrnes had begun to distrust Soviet motives.⁷²

Discussions were held with the British before it was handed to the Turks. This again suggests that although the British and the U.S were meant to hand separate notes, a beginning of an alliance to thwart Soviet ambitions was developing. The British cautioned delay, but the U.S thought that given Turkish nervousness since Potsdam, the note ought to be delivered sooner rather than later.⁷³ This appreciation of Turkish sensitivities suggested that Turkish diplomatic efforts since the Potsdam Conference had concentrated the minds in Washington. The Turks were delighted with the U.S. proposal. Everyone Wilson spoke to was “very happy.” Turkey would be the sole military power on the Straits and its sovereignty would be guaranteed by international agreement at the United Nations.⁷⁴

The Turks, although happy, were determined to keep the U.S. mindful of Soviet aspirations. They therefore continued their efforts, in attempting to keep the Straits issue in the public eye, by appealing for it to be on the agenda of the Foreign Minister’s

meetings. The U.S. resisted these efforts primarily because they were awaiting suggestions from the other parties, as agreed at the Potsdam Conference.

This generated a flurry of diplomatic activity by the Turks to ascertain if the U.S. had abandoned interest. Turkish nervousness increased because of the negative Soviet campaign that began again in December. Despite noting the lack of a Soviet military buildup, Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington, reported that there was “an appreciable intensification of the Soviet war of nerves against Turkey.”⁷⁵ The press campaign was part of a new Soviet policy to achieve its goals in Turkey as it now pursued them through its Georgian and Armenian Socialist Republics. The U.S.S.R. was aware how its policies were interpreted in Washington, hence the change in emphasis in its Turkish policy.⁷⁶

The Turks also understood why the U.S.S.R. was promoting its southern republics’ irredentist aspirations and were quick to explain to the U.S. what was occurring. Reports came from Wilson, via the Turkish government of the Soviet offer to repatriate Armenians living abroad (i.e. mainly Turkey) back to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (S.S.R.). The ultimate aim of this plan was to show that the Armenian S.S.R. was overcrowded and needed more space (i.e. the Kars and Ardahan provinces). Wilson advised that U.S. consulates in countries with large Armenian minorities to closely monitor the situation.⁷⁷ Wilson, by suggesting State Department vigilance, seemed to accept the Turkish explanation of Soviet motives. The U.S.S.R. attempted this crude and rather unsubtle population shift because it was fearful of being accused of expansionism.

Despite this new Soviet tactic, Byrnes placed Iran and the Azerbaijan Crisis as a more important issue than the Straits Crisis. He claimed that the two were not linked. This was not how the Turks viewed Soviet policy in the Near East. The Turks contradicted Byrnes' assessment of the Straits Crisis by directly linking Soviet aims in Iran and Turkey together. The Turks had assumed from June 1945 that the events in Iran were linked to those in Turkey and that the U.S.S.R. was playing a long-term war of nerves.⁷⁸ By linking the two, the Turks attempted to tie in U.S. national interest in securing oil supplies with Turkish concerns over a loss of any sovereignty.

Turkish Diplomatic Efforts to Shape U.S. Policy – 1946

If Byrnes still needed convincing in December 1945 then the Turks could count on the support of Wilson to pass on their version of events. Wilson always sought out Turkish advice as they were more versed in the intricacies of Turco-Soviet relations than he was.⁷⁹ The recent opening of the Soviet archives suggests that Wilson's concern was well founded; the U.S.S.R. saw the Turks as an aggressive and a dangerous neighbor and their location a target for expansion southwards towards the Middle East.⁸⁰ There was a genuine Soviet desire to reward emigrant organizations and introduce them to the Soviet sphere of influence.⁸¹ Whether it was the need for security, expansionism, or the strengthening the loyalty of southern Soviet republics through territorial acquisition, Soviet actions posed a threat to Turkey and the Turks looked to move the U.S. away from relying upon the U.N. to solve the issue.

The Turks watched the first session of the General Assembly anxiously on January 10th 1946. They were upset that the Straits Crisis was not mentioned.⁸² Turkish

diplomacy, therefore, between January and August 1946 when the Crisis reached a crescendo, was aimed to convince the U.S. of the nature of Soviet threats and move the U.S. from keeping faith in the U.N. to resolve the issue. Wilson met Feridun Erkin, the Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Office. He reported that the Turks, unlike “some other nations” were not “despairing over U.N inaction.” This seemed to be a big hint that the Turks had little faith in the U.N. as a body to secure Turkish sovereignty. The Turks, however, did stress their appreciation of “U.S. and U.K. supreme efforts to draw the U.S.S.R. back into world co-operation.” The contrast was clear, the Turks preferred U.S. and British support to end the crisis to international guarantees of peace.⁸³

Erkin also reported that the Turks expected further Soviet provocations and that this would undoubtedly lead to Turkish patriotic protest. Erkin, explained that any anti-Soviet demonstrations in Turkey would not be provocative. This suggested a level of planning, that the demonstrations were not to be spontaneous and that the U.S. should recognize this. The Turks were again appearing to be reasonable and moderate, considering, the real threat to Turkish sovereignty in their eastern provinces, but at the same time they blackened the image of the U.S.S.R.⁸⁴

The Turkish pattern of appearing to be reasonable while suggesting the worst of Soviet intentions continued. Wilson reported back to Byrnes that Nicola Antanoff, the Bulgarian Minister to Moscow, had suggested to Sümer that difficulties with the U.S.S.R. could be avoided if the Turks replaced their government. Antonoff also suggested that Soviet demands of Kars and Ardahan might be dropped if an agreement on the Straits could be achieved. Far from welcoming this proposal, the Turks reported it to Wilson as a

new attempt to initiate direct negotiations over the Straits, rather than an international one.⁸⁵

In February, the Soviet Press stopped its attacks on Turkey. This had been continuous from December. The Turks downplayed the significance of the new reporting in Soviet newspapers. Sümer reported that Vinogradov had announced that despite the new attitude, the U.S.S.R still wanted bases on the Straits and the provinces of Kars and Ardahan. Vinogradov allegedly told Sümer that, “we waited a long time regarding arrangement we wanted with Poland and we finally got it; we can wait with Turkey.” This was passed on verbatim to Wilson.⁸⁶

On March 1st Sümer continued to demonstrate to Wilson the nature of Soviet diplomacy by way of explaining a conversation he had had with Vinogradov. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary made a speech in the House of Commons that was taken by Vinogradov to be an announcement of a British-Turco alliance; Sümer denied that this was the case. Vinogradov said that if Turkey wanted an alliance then Molotov’s offer from June 1945 still stood. Sümer replied that it was the U.S.S.R. that wanted a new treaty, not the Turks. The sparring continued and Sümer concluded his conversation with Wilson by stating that, “that is the way the Soviets twist everything.”⁸⁷

By comparison, Wilson always emphasized Turkish restraint in the way they dealt with the crisis. On March 11th, Wilson reported that, despite criticism from newspapermen, Saraçoğlu had urged the press to tone down their coverage of the Soviet demands.⁸⁸ The Turks reported to Wilson that they were happy to accept newspaper criticism of this request, because Churchill was keeping Soviet aggression alive in the public eye. Turkish silence would only “strengthen their cause.”⁸⁹ The reference to

Churchill was presumably because Churchill (now leader of the opposition in the House of Commons) had just delivered his Iron Curtain speech on the March 5th. Explaining why the Turks had stopped journalists from reporting freely was important because the Turks were also discussing the prospect of multi-party elections and more freedoms as a nod to U.S. ideals of democracy.⁹⁰

The Turks also reported to Wilson that the U.S.S.R. had suggested a quid pro quo for territory and that they would be compensated if they gave up Kars and Ardahan. The Turks reported to Wilson that in their reply, Turkey did not want territories at “others’ expense,” and that they were sticking to the Potsdam agreement of wanting international negotiations.⁹¹ Wilson’s next telegram again highlighted the juxtaposition between Soviet aggressiveness and Turkish reasonableness. On March 18th, Wilson reported back alleged Soviet troop numbers in Romania as passed on to him by a visiting colleague from Bucharest. Wilson conceded that the State Department would already have this information, and if that were the case, then it is suggestive of the narrative of Soviet aggression he (and the Turks) wanted to build.⁹²

The Turks closely monitored any signals emanating from Washington that might suggest a new U.S foreign policy. On March 20th, Erkin sought an interview with Wilson and demanded to know if the “Brianova” press report in Washington, that suggested that the U.S. would stand by Turkey and Iran in face of Soviet aggression, were true. Wilson denied that a guarantee had been given and reaffirmed that U.S. foreign policy was based upon the obligations of the U.N.⁹³ While this may have been the official line that Wilson was forced to give to Erkin, in private Wilson was much more open in his assessment of Soviet intentions. He disagreed with the State Department’s appraisal that the U.S.S.R.

only wanted to regulate passage of the Straits, and he seemed irritated that the Turks had been offered support through the U.N., but that ultimately the nature of that support had yet to be defined.⁹⁴

When the battleship U.S.S. Missouri arrived in Istanbul on April 6th, Wilson reported that the Turks were hopeful that this demonstrated a new foreign policy that defended Turkey's interests and that these interests were bound within the principles of the U.N.⁹⁵ The arrival of a U.S. warship in Turkish waters later convinced the Turks that the U.S. had decided to support them.⁹⁶ But if the visit was meant to dissuade the U.S.S.R. from further aggression, it failed. Throughout May and June, reports came to the U.S. of Soviet troop movements in Bulgaria.⁹⁷ Evidence of a change in U.S. policy was apparent on May 2nd. Erkin reported to Wilson that Byrnes, who was in Paris, had apologized for the previous lack of U.S. understanding of Turkish problems. Byrnes assured Numan Menemencioglu, the Turkish Ambassador in Paris, that the U.S. was well posted with events in Turkey.⁹⁸

By the early summer of 1946, having failed to stir the Turkish Armenians and Georgians into demanding a "return" to the U.S.S.R., or to threaten the Turks into submission with provocative troop movements, the Soviets tried to incite the Turkish Kurdish population instead.⁹⁹ Walter Bedell Smith, the new Ambassador in Moscow, informed Byrnes of this tactic on June 17th.¹⁰⁰ What was interesting from an inspection of the U.S. State Department records is that from May 1946 onwards, despite the increased Soviet war of nerves, there appeared to be little further effort from the Turks in warning the U.S. of Soviet aggression. Only once, on June 26th, did Erkin describe a conversation between Saraçoğlu and Vinogradov. Erkin warned that the messages contained in the

Ambassador's replies to Saraçoğlu's questions were designed to lead Turkey into bilateral talks and cause friction between the U.S, Great Britain and Turkey.¹⁰¹ No other Turkish warnings or indeed telegrams from Wilson were sent to the State Department before the belated Soviet proposals for the Straits were conveyed on the August 7th. It can be surmised that the lack of any further diplomatic effort by the Turks, between May and the beginning of August, suggests that the Turks were satisfied that the U.S. was prepared to defend the sovereignty of Turkey directly.

During June, the U.S. had been planning for war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the President had discussed the possibility of war. By July, the British had been consulted and joint plans with the Royal Air Force had been drawn up. When the Soviet proposals for the revision of the Montreux Convention arrived on August 7th, their proposals were not seen as a "bolt from the blue."¹⁰² Indeed, the proposals were almost identical to the ones offered by Molotov in June 1945.

The Turks consulted heavily with their allies. They prepared a formal response and showed it privately to both the British and the U.S. Wilson sent a lengthy telegram on August 12th that outlined the Soviet motives and subsequent Turkish response. It was apparent from his telegram that he had had a lengthy conversation with Erkin. The Soviet's motives were exactly what the Turks had been suggesting since March 1945. According to Wilson, the Soviet proposals were simply a way of destroying Turkish independence. Wilson directly linked Turkish independence with "vital" U.S. interests in the Middle East.¹⁰³ In response, Acheson acting on Byrnes' behalf during Byrnes' absence at the Paris Foreign Minister's Conference noted that the State Department

"appreciates the helpful comments." The State Department was now thinking along similar lines to Wilson.¹⁰⁴

On August 15th, Erkin showed Wilson a draft response to the U.S.S.R. It rejected Soviet complaints of apparent breaches in the Montreux Convention during World War II, the call for Soviet bases on the Straits and the joint Turco-Soviet organization for the defense of the Straits. Erkin also noted Turkish determination not to participate in any conference where Turkish sovereignty would be up for discussion. On the same day Acheson sent a telegram to Byrnes in Paris, describing the meeting in the White House that had just taken place. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, State Department Officials and Truman all agreed that the Soviet objective was to control Turkey. It was agreed that, if attacked, U.S. forces would back Turkey. Acheson conveyed to Byrnes the President's comments that he was prepared to pursue it "to the end."¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

By August 1946, the U.S. had changed its foreign policy several times. Beginning with wanting to internationalize the Dardanelles Straits; transitioning to working within the framework of the U.N. to find a collective solution; to finally threatening war to defend Turkey. The issue of the Straits had been placed firmly within U.S. vital interests and Soviet objectives were seen as being aggressive and expansionist. By comparison, Turkish diplomacy had remained fairly consistent. They had warned the U.S. from March 1945 of the nature of Soviet diplomacy. They had increased their diplomatic activity whenever the U.S. had appeared to falter in its support for Turkey. Whether the U.S. was wavering throughout this period is immaterial. The Turks saw their security as being bound with the U.S. and this meant that they had to constantly warn the U.S. of Soviet

actions whenever the Turks perceived a faltering U.S ally. The Turks never described Soviet motives as anything other than conspiratorial. Soviet diplomacy was explained as an act against Turkish sovereignty and the Turks constantly pointed out the danger of Soviet expansion southeastwards into the Middle East. At the Potsdam Conference it was stated that the U.S had no special interest in Turkey. By August 15th 1946, the Turks had convinced them otherwise.

¹ John M. VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, Kindle Edition ed. (Albany, United States: State University of New York Press, 2005), loc 640 of 3660.

² Selim Deringil, "The Preservation of Turkey's Neutrality during the Second World War: 1940," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 1 (Jan, 1982), 30.

³ VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, loc of 776 of 3660.

⁴ Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 1st Edition ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 22-27.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, loc 911 of 3660.

⁷ Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 28.

⁸ *Department of State Aide Mémoire, 867.24/619a*. U.S. Department of State., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, Volume IV. the Near East and Africa*. (Washington D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, [1964]),

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1946v07;1096-1097>. (Hereafter, all references to this series will be cited in the following format: Title, catalogue reference, FR, Year, Volume Number in Roman Numerals, pages.)

⁹ VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, Loc 1191 of 3660.

¹⁰ The Montreux Convention was signed on 16th July 1936 and governed the use of the Straits in peacetime and war. A copy of the text of the convention is held by the U.S State Department, even though it was not a signatory. League of Nations Treaty Series Vol CLXXIII, pp. 213-241. Churchill to Roosevelt FR, 1945, *Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, 328.

¹¹ Jamil Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, Kindle Edition ed. (New York: Lexington Books, 2011), 30-34.

¹² Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 69-70.

¹³ *Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, 867.24/1-145 Telegram 1*. FR, 1945, VIII, 1293-1294.

¹⁴ *Stettinus to Steinhardt. 867.24/12-2944 Telegram 11*, FR, 1945, VIII, 1294.

¹⁵ *Steinhardt to Stettinus .867.24/1-2745 Telegram 143*, FR, 1945, VIII, 1294-1298.

¹⁶ *Steinhardt to Stettinus .867.24/2-2045 Telegram 240*, FR, 1945, VIII, 1300.

¹⁷ *Grew to Winant 867.24/2-545 Telegram 901* FR, 1945, VIII, 1299.

This telegram was dated the 5th February and took over a month for Winant to reply. On the 9th March he confirmed back to Grew that the British had made it very clear to the Turks that U.S goods were excluded from the Anglo Turkish Armaments Credit Agreement. See 867.24/3 -945 Telegram 2454 in FR, 1945, VIII, 1305.

¹⁸ *Grew to Steinhardt 867.24/2-2045 Telegram 225*, FR, 1945, VIII, 1300.

¹⁹ Ibid.,

²⁰ The Yalta Conference was held between the 4th and 11th of February 1944 and was watched nervously by the Turkish government. Allied shipping was allowed through the Straits and that their refusal to declare war on Germany would produce secret pacts between the Allies at Turkish expense. Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 37.

²¹ Ibid., 42.

Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Premier at the Yalta conference, first suggested the threat of Turkish exclusion from the United Nations. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the U.S. President compromised and argued that they would be barred unless they declared war by March 1st 1945 (Kuniholm page 221)

²² Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 37.

²³ *Memorandum regarding the question of the Turkish Straits*, FR, 1945, *Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, 329.

²⁴ Ibid.

- ²⁵ U.S. Department of State., "Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on the Principles Applying to Aid Under the Act of March 11, 1941," Department of State, photos.state.gov/libraries/turkey/.../11be1158.pdf
- ²⁶ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 255.
- ²⁷ Steinhardt to Stettinus. 867.24/2-2455 Telegram 260, FR, 1945, VIII, 1303-1305.
- ²⁸ Winant to Stettinus. 867.24/4-2145 Telegram 2454, FR, 1945, VIII, 1305.
- ²⁹ U.S. Department of State., "Agreement on Lend-Lease and Claims between the Governments of the United States of America and of the Republic of Turkey may 7th 1946." Department of State, photos.state.gov/libraries/.../461177/pdf/11be1158.pdf
- ³⁰ Harriman to Stettinus 761.6711/3-2145 Telegram 835, FR, 1945, VIII, 1219.
- ³¹ Harriman to Stettinus 761.6711/3-2245 Telegram 390, FR 1945, VIII, 1221-3.
- ³² Steinhardt to Stettinus 767.68119/3-2145 Telegram 3200, FR 1945, VIII, 1220. Steinhardt also sent a further telegram expressing the views of the Turkish President Ismet İnönü, whereby he suggested that negotiations could proceed if Soviet demands did not impinge on Turkish sovereignty. Steinhardt to Stettinus 761.6711/3-2245 Telegram 390, FR 1945, VIII, 1223-24.
- ³³ Steinhardt to Stettinus 761.6711/3-2645 Telegram 418, FR 1945, VIII, 1228.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 356.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 257.
- ³⁷ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 75.
- ³⁸ Steinhardt to Stettinus 761.6711/3-3145 Telegram 440, FR 1945, VIII, 1229-30.
- ³⁹ Chargé in Turkey (Packer) to Stettinus 761.67/4-2845 Telegram 578, FR 1945, VIII, 1233.
- ⁴⁰ Chargé in Turkey (Packer) to Stettinus 761.67/5-2245 Telegram 671, FR 1945, VIII, 1233.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 258.
- ⁴³ Eduard Mark, "The War Scare of 1946." *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 3 (1997), 388.
- ⁴⁴ Wilson to Stettinus 761.67/6-1245 Telegram 786, FR 1945, VIII, 1234; Winant to Stettinus 767.68119/6-1445 Telegram 6019, FR 1945, VIII, 1234; Winant to Stettinus 767.68119/6-1845 Telegram 786, FR 1945, VIII, 1236.
- ⁴⁵ See chapter 3, page 30. The U.S.S.R. had refused to remove its troops from northern Iran and was sponsoring breakaway governments.
- ⁴⁶ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 81.
- ⁴⁷ Kunniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 258.; Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State. FR Potsdam I: 1017-1019; Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.6711/6- 2245 Telegram 844. FR Potsdam I: 1024-1026.
- ⁴⁸ Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.6711/6- 2245 Telegram 844. FR Potsdam I: 1024-1026.
- ⁴⁹ Harriman to Acting Secretary of State. 761.67/6- 2545 Telegram 2263. FR Potsdam I: 1029-1030.
- ⁵⁰ Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.6711/7- 245 Telegram 893. FR Potsdam I: 1033-1034.
- ⁵¹ Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.6711/7- 345 Telegram 898. FR Potsdam I: 1034-1036; Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.6711/7- 545 Telegram 916. FR Potsdam I: 1041-1042.
- ⁵² Revised Briefing Book Paper No 681: Memorandum Regarding The Montreux Convention. FR Potsdam II: 1013; Deputy Director of the NEA (Allen) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Dunn): FR Potsdam II: 1425.
- ⁵³ Briefing Paper No 682: United States Policy towards Turkey. FR Potsdam I: 1015-1017.
- ⁵⁴ Kunniholm. *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 260.
- ⁵⁵ Wilson to Acting Secretary of State. 761.67/7- 1945 Telegram 990. FR Potsdam II: 1426.
- ⁵⁶ Sixth Plenary Meeting, Sunday, July 22nd, 1945, 5 pm. FR Potsdam II: 256.
- ⁵⁷ Kunniholm. *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 260.
- ⁵⁸ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 100.

- ⁵⁹ Memorandum regarding the question of the Turkish Straits, FR, 1945, *Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, 1945, 329.
- ⁶⁰ Kunniholm. *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 263.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 265.
- ⁶² Wilson to Byrnes 767.68119/7-2745 Telegram 1018, Potsdam II 1437.
- ⁶³ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 99.
- ⁶⁴ Anthony R. De Luca, "Soviet-American Politics and the Turkish Straits," *Political Science Quarterly* 92, no. 3 (Autumn 1977, 1977), 513.
- ⁶⁵ Memorandum of Conversation by Deputy Director NEA (Allen) Ankara Embassy Diles: 1945:720 Straits. FR, 1945, VIII, 1238.
- ⁶⁶ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 97.
- ⁶⁷ Harriman to Byrnes 761.67/9-1045 Telegram 3228 FR, 1945, VIII, 1245.
- ⁶⁸ On September 14th, Açıkalın questioned Wilson over Truman's radio comments, that according to Açıkalın had created "some disquiet in Turkey." Truman had stated that he had not been in communication with the Turkish Government over internationalization of the Dardanelles. See *The Chargé in Turkey (Packer) to the Secretary of State: 767.68119/9-1445 : Telegram 1226* :FR, 1945, VIII, 1246.
- ⁶⁹ Acheson to Wilson 767.68119/ 9-2045 Telegram 931: FR, 1945, VIII, 1247; Wilson to Byrnes 767.68119/22-45 Telegram 1243: FR, 1945, VIII, 1248; Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/25-45 Telegram 1252: FR, 1945, VIII, 1248-49; Kennan to Byrnes 761.67/9-2745 Telegram 3387: FR, 1945, VIII, 1251.
- ⁷⁰ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/10-2045 Telegram 1371: FR, 1945, VIII, 1260-1262; Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/11-145 Telegram 1399: FR, 1945, VIII, 1268.
- ⁷¹ Jonathan Knight, "America's International Guarantees for the Straits: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (May, 1977, 1977), 246.
- ⁷² Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President 767.68119/10-1945: FR, 1945, VIII, 1255.
- ⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation by Deputy Director NEA (Allen) 767.68119/10-3145.
- ⁷⁴ Wilson to Byrnes 767.68119/11-645 Telegram 1371: FR, 1945, VIII, 1271; Wilson to Byrnes 767.68119/11-1245 Telegram 145: FR, 1945, VIII, 1275.
- ⁷⁵ The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Secretary of State, Telegram 761.67/12-1145, FR, 1945, VIII, 1283.
- ⁷⁶ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 124.
- ⁷⁷ Wilson to Byrnes 760J.67/12-1945 Telegram 1593: FR, 1945, VIII, 1284.
- ⁷⁸ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 138.
- ⁷⁹ Kunniholm. *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, 376.
- ⁸⁰ Artiom A. Ulunian, "Soviet Perceptions of Turkey and Greece 1945-58," *Cold War History* 3, no. 2 (January 2003, 2003), 39-40.
- ⁸¹ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 124.
- ⁸² Ibid., 180.
- ⁸³ Wilson to Byrnes 867.014/1-346 Telegram 8: FR, 1946, VII, 805-806; Acheson to Wilson 767.68119/1-946 Telegram 28 :FR, 1946, VII, 808.
- ⁸⁴ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/1-946 Telegram 42: FR, 1946, VII, 806.
- ⁸⁵ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/1-2246 Telegram 91: FR, 1946, VII, 810-11; Winant to Byrnes 761.67/1-2546 Telegram 940: FR, 1946, VII, 812.
- ⁸⁶ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/2-1346 Telegram 195: FR, 1946, VII, 815.
- ⁸⁷ Wilson to Byrnes 867.00/3-146 Telegram 255: FR, 1946, VII, 817-818.
- ⁸⁸ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/3-1146 Telegram 303: FR, 1946, VII, 818.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi Party System, 1938-1950*, loc 1571 of 3660.
- ⁹¹ Wilson to Byrnes 867.00/3-146 Telegram 255: FR, 1946, VII, 817.
- ⁹² Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/3-1846 Telegram 341: FR, 1946, VII, 818-819.
- ⁹³ Wilson to Byrnes 761.67/3-2046 Telegram 348: FR, 1946, VII, 820.
- ⁹⁴ Wilson to Byrnes 711.00/3-2346: FR, 1946, VII, 820-822.
- ⁹⁵ Wilson to Byrnes 701.6711/4-1246 Telegram 423: FR, 1946, VII, 822.

⁹⁶ Knight, *America's International Guarantees for the Straits: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine*, 245. A more belligerent tone is reported by Wilson back to Byrnes on the 7th May 1946. Erkin told Wilson that the Turks would fight if invaded. 1945, *Wilson to Byrnes* 761.671/5-746 Telegram 516: FR, 1946, VII, 823-824.

⁹⁷ Mark, *The War Scare of 1946.*, 396.

⁹⁸ *Wilson to Byrnes* 711.67/5-446 Telegram 507: FR, 1946, VII, 823.

⁹⁹ Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War 1945-1953*, 209.

¹⁰⁰ *Smith to Byrnes* 761.67/6-1746 Telegram 1907: FR, 1946, VII, 824.

¹⁰¹ *Wilson to Byrnes* 867.00/6-2646 Telegram 702: FR, 1946, VII, 825-827.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Wilson to Byrnes* 767.68119/8-1246 Telegram 856: FR, 1946, VII, 836-838.

¹⁰⁴ *Acheson to Wilson* 767.68119/8-1246 Telegram 577: FR, 1946, VII, 838.

¹⁰⁵ *Wilson to Byrnes* 767.68119/8-1546 Telegram 874: FR, 1946, VII, 838-840; *Acheson to Byrnes* 740.00119/8-1546 Telegram 4122: FR, 1946, VII, 840-842.

CONCLUSION

Separate studies of the Soviet archives by Jamil Hasanli and Vassili Zubok suggested that Stalin was in part, trying to increase his domestic popularity by annexing some Iranian and Turkish provinces. This would have created homogeneous homelands for the Azerbaijanis and Kurds and bolstered Stalin's prestige in the U.S.S.R.'s southern republics.

The hitherto overlooked cause of the Cold War in the Near East emphasized domestic and local politics over interpretations that concentrated solely upon the clash of the two superpowers. The U.S.S.R. was not the only superpower influenced by regional governments into changing its foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II. This thesis has demonstrated that the Iranian and Turkish governments influenced U.S. foreign policy in a similar manner to which the Azerbaijanis and Kurds influenced Soviet Policy.

Both Iran and Turkey wanted direct U.S. military and economic aid. Both countries had a traditional fear of southward Russian expansion. They defined their diplomacy in the terms of the United Nations (U.N) in an attempt to secure U.S. support and they also explained Soviet actions in the worst possible light. Their influence help convince the U.S. that a Soviet dominated Iran or Turkey would pose a significant threat to its oil supplies in Saudi Arabia, and wreck the nascent United Nations' chances of keeping the peace.

Iranian efforts at securing U.S. protection began in 1943 when U.S. private citizens were employed in the country as advisors. The U.S. agreed to this arrangement, but for different reasons than what the Iranians wanted the advisors for. The U.S. wanted

to help the Iranians reform their government and Iran should have served as an example of the Atlantic Charter at work. U.S. foreign policy in Iran was not all philanthropic. U.S. national interest demanded the securing of Middle Eastern Oil supplies and a strong Iran would facilitate this.

The Iranians recognized that the U.S. wished to have good relations with the Iranians, but the Iranians needed a much stronger commitment from the U.S. than that. The Iranians kept a U.S. presence in the country and stalled any reforms that were not in their elites' interests. An analysis of the State Department records suggests that the Military, Rural Policing and Economic Missions all had difficulties in dealing with the Iranians. Whenever either the Rural Policing or the Military Missions initiated reform, they found themselves being ignored and sidelined by the Iranian government, despite protestations to the contrary. The Iranians found it useful to have U.S. citizens as heads of its rural police and army because from the Iranian viewpoint, it sent a signal to the U.S.S.R. that the U.S. was directly securing Iranian sovereignty. From 1944 onwards, both these Missions lobbied to end their contracts with the Iranian government and return home. They stayed because it was in the interests of both governments for them to remain. By contrast, the Iranians from almost the beginning disliked the Economic Mission and they demanded a curtailment of its powers. Until U.S support of Iran was secured; however, they were careful never to end the Economic Mission.

The Iranians also used U.S. interest in securing its oil as leverage in their diplomacy. The Iranians had allowed U.S. oil companies to compete for oil rights without ever looking like making a final decision. The U.S. did not get its oil concession in October 1944, mainly because the U.S.S.R. clumsily tried to grab exclusive rights in the

north of Iran, thus giving the government in Tehran an excuse to call off all negotiations indefinitely. The promise of oil rights; however, after World War II had ended, was still left open by the Iranians. The oil negotiations and Iranian stalling kept the U.S. in the country with the promise of a lucrative future agreement left dangling.

By keeping the U.S. present in Iran, the Iranian government was able to draw to the U.S.' attention the aggressive moves made by the U.S.S.R. This occurred once the U.S.S.R. had begun supporting an autonomous Azerbaijan that was allied to Moscow. Genuine Azerbaijani grievances that centered on the perceived minority status of Azerbaijanis within Iran and heavy-handed Iranian tactics of dealing with Azerbaijani protestors were not part of the U.S. embassy's reports back to the State Department. This was deliberate. Nearly all of the evidence of alleged Soviet interference in Iranian affairs, which was transmitted from the U.S. embassy back to the State Department, came via Iranian sources. Only Robert Rossow's reports from Tabriz were independent of the Iranian narrative and they corroborated much of the Iranian version of events. On the one occasion that the U.S. wanted to approach the U.S.S.R. directly over an alleged incident which involved Colonel Schwarzkopf's Iranian gendarmerie and Soviet troops, the Iranians refused to allow the U.S. to contact the Soviet embassy on the matter.

Iranian efforts continued throughout 1945 and into 1946 to warn the U.S. and also to solicit direct U.S. aid. The Iranians were skeptical of the U.N. as a body that could remove Soviet troops from its territories. They only brought the issue to the Security Council, once prior U.S. support had been secured. The selection of Ahmad Qavam as the new Iranian Prime Minister in January 1946 forced the U.S. to drop the pretense of working within the U.N. and offer outright support to Iran. Qavam had initially followed

his predecessor's policies of informing the U.S. of conversations between Iranian and Soviet officials and hoping that this would influence the U.S. into offering direct support. After his March 1946 talks in Moscow with Vyacheslav Molotov, Qavam appeared to change this tactic. From then on, Qavam was seen to support the U.S.S.R. and excluded the U.S. from his deliberations and decision-making. This worried the U.S., but Qavam was clever enough to keep asking for U.S. aid. Once Qavam suggested in September 1946, that his policies of appeasement had failed, the U.S. stepped in with economic, and then military aid two and a half months later.

The Turkish government also influenced post-war U.S. foreign policy. The Turks, unlike the Iranians had to alter their foreign policy completely to affect this support.

The contrast between U.S.-Turkish and U.S.-Iranian relations during World War II was stark. Unlike the Iranians, the Turks were in dispute with the U.S. over the former's refusal to declare war on Germany. Turkey had received Lend-Lease Materiel from 1942, but by 1945 had refused to sign any agreement that made them liable financially for the goods received.

These disputes quickly dissipated following the Yalta Conference in February 1945, where Turkey was pressured in declaring war. Turkey bowed to the will of the Allies, but only because they recognized the danger a victorious U.S.S.R. held for the sovereignty of Turkey. Turkish fears were quickly confirmed when the U.S.S.R. demanded that the longstanding Treaty of Friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Turkey be ripped up. The price for any new treaty would be a separate agreement that replaced the 1936 Montreux Convention and gave the U.S.S.R. control of the Bosphorus; in addition, the provinces of Kars and Ardahan were to be ceded to the U.S.S.R.

Turkey put its faith in the Potsdam Conference to solve the crisis and they were upset to find that President Truman advocated internationalizing the Straits as a way of neutralizing the issue. They lobbied the U.S. over Soviet intentions and consistently warned officials in the State Department the dangerous and provocative Soviet foreign policy. Shortly afterwards, the U.S. presented to the Turks their suggestions for revising the Montreux Convention. The Turks were delighted that the U.S. had decided that Turkey was best placed to control the Straits, but they, like the Iranians were upset to find the territorial demands were to be solved through the auspices of the U.N.

Throughout 1946, the Turkish government aimed to link both the issue of the Straits with that of Kars and Ardahan provinces. Just like the Iranians, the Turks presented their efforts at maintaining peace in the language of the U.N. The Turks always appeared to be reasonable and open to discussion, but at the same time they warned the U.S. of Soviet intentions. Whenever the U.S.S.R. toned down its press campaign against Turkey, it was explained as just a pause. Soviet efforts at repatriating Armenian and Kurdish minorities living abroad were highlighted by the Turks as a way of undermining their sovereignty. James Byrnes' apologized to the Turkish ambassador in Paris on May 2nd over previous U.S. foreign policy in the region. The government in Ankara saw this apology as heralding a change in U.S. Policy. This seemed to be confirmed when the battleship U.S.S. Missouri visited Istanbul a short while later in June.

Once the Turkish government was convinced that it had affected direct U.S. support in the summer of 1946, their diplomatic effort subsided and there was lull of reports from the U.S. embassy in Ankara back to the State Department outlining alleged Soviet threats.

The scaling back of Turkish efforts was well before the Soviet note of August 7th that officially put forward the U.S.S.R.'s proposals for the revision of the Montreux Convention. The proposals were essentially the same as had been mooted a year before by Molotov and were unacceptable to the Turkish government. The nature of those proposals induced the U.S. to offer direct support to Turkey and make clear to the U.S.S.R. that any aggression would be resisted.

Both Iran and Turkey were assured of direct U.S. support in their disputes with the U.S.S.R. The thesis has suggested that the Orthodox, Revisionist and Post-Revisionist interpretations that concentrate solely upon the motives and the actions of the two superpowers are incomplete. Smaller nations influenced the actions of both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Both Iran and Turkey deliberately set out to secure U.S. support in their disputes with the U.S.S.R., and both ultimately succeeded.

Further study might look at the implications for the longer-term impact of Iran and Turkey's coveting of U.S. aid and protection. Turkey was already looking to embrace western ideals of democracy and a free press in 1945. They then joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.) in 1952. They did this to enlist U.S. support in their struggle with the U.S.S.R. Turkey has since looked to join the European Union (E.U.). Turkey's post World War II history appears to be that of modernization and liberalization and it is pertinent to ask, if that would have been the case if the imperative for seeking U.S. support in 1945 was not necessary. By contrast, Iran only sought U.S. aid without reforming its institutions of government. Dr. Arthur Millspaugh's efforts at reforming taxation to make it more equitable failed completely. The Rural Policing and Military Missions had limited successes in making reforms but both suffered from marginalization

because the Iranians had little interest in what the Missions proposed. The U.S. did not seem to recognize that Iran had suffered from centuries of foreign interference and jealously guarded its sovereignty. Cold War politics led to a more assertive U.S. foreign policy, and then led to the overthrow of the Iranian government led by Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953. The suggestion that the Iranian refusal to reform its government in 1944-6 and the U.S. led coup in 1953 being linked deserves further study. Did the U.S. lose patience with Iran over its inability to reform the institutions of its government as well as fearing a loss of its oil supplies? Perhaps the Islamic Revolution in 1979 can be traced back to Iranian sensitivities over lost sovereignty more than any religious re-awakening that might otherwise be ascribed?

The Cold War cannot be viewed simply as a contest between two powers for world domination. Smaller countries also practiced diplomacy and both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. needed client states in their struggle. Other countries could seek support of one of the superpowers at the expense of the other.

What is implied by the thesis is that the Cold War was not simply a clash of two great powers over a combination of ideology, security or economic concerns. The aims and objectives of other nations need to be taken into consideration also. There are some studies that have analyzed this. Robert Frazier, who has been much quoted in this thesis, wrote an article examining the role of Aneurin Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary in 1946, but he concluded that Bevin attributed too much credit to himself in persuading the U.S. to take over the British commitment in Greece.¹ As suggested in the start of this chapter Hasanli and Zubok have identified Soviet domestic politics as a factor in Stalin's clumsy foreign policy in the Near East. Speculating further, it would interesting to visit

the U.S. State Department's records for Saudi Arabia. The U.S. negotiated oil rights and was permitted to build a military airfield in Saudi Arabia in 1944-5. Questions need to be asked of what were Saudi aims at that time, because there could well be evidence of Saudi foreign policy aims being achieved alongside that of U.S. strategic aims in the region.

To sum up, the origins of the Cold War cannot be written simply as a power struggle between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. To do so ignores the important role that smaller nations made in influencing the two powers for their own ends.

¹ Robert Frazier, "Did Britain Start the Cold War? Bevin and the Truman Doctrine," *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 3 (September, 1984, 1984): 715-727.

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97

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