

EPILOGUE

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The overall theme that binds these essays is a large picture of Atatürk's Turkey from the founding years of the nation-state to the death of its founder in 1938. This picture is based mostly on U.S. official, academic, personal, and popular record. The American dimension is significant not only because all the essays rely on hitherto untapped original sources, but also because Americans and Turks had not been enemy combatants in World War I. They had no vital scores to settle.

Although wartime and post-war anti-Turkish propaganda flourished in the U.S.A., American policymakers, with advice from their official representatives and non-official agents, made a distinction between the "new Turks" and the "old Turks." This approach may be construed as pragmatic foreign policy on the part of Washington, but Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his colleagues, military as well as civilian, were definitely made of different mettle from that of the previous ruling elite, the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) leaders.

The collection of essays in this volume is a first in foreign relations between Turkey and the United States of America, which gives credit, long overdue, to official and unofficial diplomats. Contributing authors believe that observers of and envoys to Atatürk's Turkey (1919–1938) shed light on the worldviews, policies, and modes of interaction from both sides of the Atlantic. The essays employ official documents, but also consult diaries, memoirs, personnel records, society pages of newspapers, and archival sources recently made available to the public. Thus, the experiences and observations of the not-so-famous people help reconstruct time, space, and mentalities.

The Cold War and its variants, strategy, geopolitics, military alliance in NATO, containment, and crises dominated 20th century historiography. Consequently, students of foreign affairs today can hardly imagine that the United States figured in Ottoman/Turkish history before 1946. The essays presented here are about an epoch in American history as much as they are about the history of the formation and early Republic of Turkey.

The first Chargé d'Affaires (U.S.A.), David Porter, was appointed to the Ottoman Empire in 1831, and was promoted to Minister Resident in 1839. American representation at the highest level was changed to Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in 1882 with the appointment of Lewis Wallace.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the U.S. had two consulates general in the Ottoman Empire, one in Constantinople and the other in Cairo. American consulates in the Empire were situated in İzmir (Smyrna), Kandiye (Candia, Crete), Beirut, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Trabzon (Trebizond), Samsun, Adana, Ayıntab, Rhodes, the islands of Chios, Cos and Mytilene (Lesbos), Sivas, Sidon, Kale-i Sultaniye (Çanakkale, Dardanelles), Suez, Portsaid, Latakia, Philipopolis, Salonica (Thessalonica), İskenderun (Alexandretta), Bursa, and Aleppo.

In 1901, the U.S. representative was entitled Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Assigning ambassadors abroad marked a turning point in U.S. diplomatic history as the Great Powers symbolically began to acknowledge the U.S.A. as another Great Power. The official title of U.S. ambassadors in Turkey remained the same to this day except for the cessation of official diplomatic relations between 1917 and 1927. Ankara reciprocated in 1927 by sending an ambassador to Washington, D.C. after the ten year interregnum to continue representation at that level, which had begun in 1859 when the Ottoman Empire sent its first ambassador there. In 1940, Lewis Heck, who had been one of the two (the other being G. Bie Raundal) trade commissioners in Istanbul in 1918, wrote:

Direct conflict between two nations so widely separated has naturally been rare. During the episode of the Emperor Maximilian the State Department had to protest against his efforts to recruit troops in Egypt, and only some 900 in all actually left for Mexico. During our civil War the Porte was strongly sympathetic to the Northern cause, and it was also one of the few pro-American governments in Europe during the war with Spain. In fact, the Sultan sent a message to the Moslems of the Philippine Islands urging their submission to the American forces of occupation, and in 1912 provided, at the request of the Philippine Government, a man learned in Moslem religion and law to teach the Moros how to behave in a more peaceful manner.¹

¹ Lewis Heck, "Sidelights on Past Relations between the United States and Turkey," *American Foreign Service Journal* 17:2 (February 1940), pp. 61–111.

That the Sublime Porte (Ottoman government) was supportive of the Northern cause during the American civil war is not surprising, because its foreign policy orientation was to uphold the rights of legitimate governments. But for the Sultan-Caliph of Muslims, to send a message to the Muslims of the Philippines, asking to submit to U.S. forces of occupation is puzzling. Assuming that this gesture was made by Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909), whose rule was contemporaneous with the American-Spanish War, the matter becomes more intriguing. On the one hand, the sultan used pan-Islam as a foreign policy tool against European imperialism. On the other hand, he was in search of alliance(s) with those countries which did not covet Ottoman territory. So, this gesture might have been yet another diplomatic effort to win favor with the United States.

In 1912, the Committee for Union and Progress leadership was desperately searching for international support. The leaders indiscriminately approached every Great Power. The CUP government may well have extracted such a call from the elderly and pliable Sultan Mehmet Reşat (r. 1909–1917) with potential American support in mind, because what Heck refers to as the Philippine government was hardly a sovereign entity.

There was a peculiar trend to reach out to the United States on occasion. An interesting little book, published in 2007 was entitled *1889/1894 Afetlerinde Osmanlı-Amerikan Yardımlaşmaları* [Ottoman-American Mutual Aid during the 1889/1894 Natural Disasters].² Based on U.S. archival records, the author tells the story of how Sultan Abdülhamid II sent substantial aid in gold from his personal account to the victims of the Jonestown/Pennsylvania disaster in 1889, and again to victims of forest fires in what should be very obscure places to İstanbul, such as Wisconsin or California. In return, when a terrible earthquake hit İstanbul in 1894, American people reciprocated in sending aid to the people of İstanbul. Humanitarian aid also has diplomatic/political overtones and consequences. Then, the worst disaster of all times, World War I came. Had it not been for the American Near East Relief Organization (NER) which distributed aid to the victims of war, the U.S. Congress might have voted to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The U.S. administration argued that NER's work would be cut off if war was declared.

² Fatma Ürekli, (İstanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2007).

Upon United States entry to the war, President Wilson referred to this conflict as “the war that will end all wars.”³ However, “After the young men had taken part in the war which was to make all future war impossible, the old men applied themselves to making the peace which would render all future peace impossible.”⁴ Consequently, although conventional usage refers to the Paris conference of 1919–1920 as a peace conference, this is misleading. Treaties of Versailles with Germany, St. Germain with Austria, Neuilly with Bulgaria, Trianon with Hungary, and Sèvres with the Ottoman Empire were all dictated, with the intent to punish the vanquished. Of all these countries only Turkey was able to reverse the *diktat*. Hence, Turkey had no reason whatsoever to fight in World War II; Ankara had made its peace with the West at Lausanne.

Building up and enhancing relations with the U.S.A. was part and parcel of Atatürk’s diplomacy to strike a balance in Ankara’s Euro-Atlantic relations. This pattern underlies Turkey’s foreign policy pattern to this day, however overlooked. A similar pattern may be detected in U.S. foreign policy, with the objective of involvement in world affairs. Turkey and ironically the Soviet Union became listening posts for the U.S.A. on European affairs as of 1933 because of the Nazi threat, long before the Cold War set in. And even with the Cold War behind us, Turkey’s relations with the United States continue to draw strength from these enduring factors.

³ *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, ed. Charles Seymour, 4 vols. (London: Ernst Benn Ltd, 1926), vol. 2, p. 474.

⁴ Andrew Ryan Papers, St. Antony’s College, Oxford. Epigram from a personal letter to Andrew Ryan from Aubrey P. Edgcumber, in Criss, *Istanbul under Allied Occupation, 1918–1923*, *Ibid.*, p. 1.