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## BETWEEN GREAT AND SMALL: TURKEY'S STRUGGLE DURING EARLY YEARS OF SECOND WORLD WAR<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Is the destiny that the small states would become passive aimed at the great powers on the international stage? Is it possible not to become the meat in the sandwich among political strife of great powers? Or are there states that stand somewhere amid small and great? Turkey's standing during Second World War can be evaluated as a reference for this sort of example. Amid other small-scale states, during the war years, Turkey becomes prominent due to her adept diplomacy depended on balancing policy. This research investigates a weak state's existence relied on geopolitical location and diplomatic capability in a fragile, complicated and uncertain equilibrium in terms of military and economic. The study will analyse the diplomatic strife of a non-belligerent state during the war through a theoretical approach benefitting from balancing policy and middle-power context. In order to understand Turkey's policy during the early years of World War II, this article builds a hypothesis on a non-belligerent policy in the context of threats. Our hypothesis informs why Turkey employed non-belligerent policy even facing some threats, instead of the bandwagon.

**Keywords:** Balancing, Middle Power, Turkish Foreign Policy, World War II.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an enormous academic literature with regard to the foreign policy made by Turkey during World War II (WW II) and, thus, the overall inclination has concentrated on shedding light on the range of the occurrence in this epoch of history. Hence, in our research, we attempted to combine the historical developments via the convenient theories in the international relations discipline, namely the balance of power as a theory and middle power as an approach. We keep in mind the reality that Theoretical studies always cannot match well with the historical events in the area of social sciences. Nonetheless, it is not to remark that scholars and students being interested in international politics ought to ignore the theories. Theories in international relations would represent a new point of view on the subject we examine if they are being utilized in a convenient text. For this reason, we will attempt to do so. We will emphasize the issue by benefitting from the balancing in general terms and balance of threat suggested by Stephen Walt.

Besides, we will attempt to use the concept of middle power (sometimes we use it as equal to secondary state). The strategies utilized by secondary states in conducting their relations with great powers have been seen as a hot discussion in the study of relationships amid secondary and great powers (quoted by Küçükdeğirmenci -Zandamela, 2020; Greitens, 2016:1-8; Levick and Schulz, 2020:1-19; Gunasekara,

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2015). Amid the reasons to endorse this, the most significant is the existing myriad of converged terms trying to capture secondary states' strategies with regard to great powers (Levick and Schulz, 2020). The most known of these strategies are balancing and bandwagoning suggested by Waltz (1979), buck-passing, appeasement or accommodation suggested by Mearsheimer (2001), and institutional binding suggested by Ikenberry (2001). However, by using the balancing and middle power concept, we attempted to underline which elements made the Turkish state distinct from those that are corporeally near to her. Besides, our aim is not to put Turkey's position into a certain and clear description by theories of international relations, but to make a description through the historical events.

Post World War I (WW I) paved the way for great shifts in the globe regarding the balance of power as well as the Republic of Turkey. This led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that symbolized the new republic and its political action emanated from a realist perspective. Thenceforward, the new republic adopting nation-state altered the foreign policy from the imperial impetus to moderate and pro-status quo approach in which the basic objective was to provide the survival in demarcated territories and so as to do so, Turkey preferred a balancing action that rather had been their conventional attitude since the last period of the Ottoman empire except for the period of WW I (1914-18). The balancing policy fitted to the method of survival, which new republic had prevented a great power from threatening her with another great power by making alliances (Hale, 2013:12). All in all, taking this driving force into consideration, we will look at closer Turkish foreign policy maneuvers between 1939 and 1942.

Before the war, one of the most important strategic principles was to avoid getting involved in one side on which the adverse experiences of WW I had a significant influence (Hale, 2013:56). So as to conduct this, Turkey tactically used a balancing policy, in which the framework of Turkey's balancing consideration, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) became a constant actor, while others had shifted from time to time as we will see later. In other words, to give an example, when Nazi Germany would create a security menace to Turkey, Great Britain would immediately show up as a balancing actor, hence, at any rate, the Soviets' manner would be paid regard to by Turkish policy-makers. This is what the approximately balancing policy corresponds to. When it comes to the reason behind the USSR had such a significance in the evaluation of Turkish foreign policy, geographical closeness plays an important role to explain this, which was seen as one of the most fundamental criteria in alliance formation put forth by Stephen Walt (Walt, 1987:vi). Shortly, Turkey had to count the USSR's objectives in each stride she made, and also one crucial goal was to conserve the European balance of power in which no great state ought not to dominate continental Europe.

The first effort to ally started in the inter-war period (1918-39). After Germany and Italy had become the countries posing security threats, Turkey had to take action aimed at potential expansionism of these states, in particular, along the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Thus, in contrast to Great Britain which embraced the appeasement policy, especially, towards Nazi Germany, the new republic had sought for alliance-building to make provision against threats by suggesting and embarking on the Balkan Pact in 1934 and the Mediterranean Pact in 1936 respectively. By 1939, Italian aggression and expansionism in the Mediterranean provided an appropriate opportunity for alliance formation among Turkey, Britain, and France. For that reason, by doing so, Turkey accomplished to provide its security in the throes of WW II. However, on one hand, it ought to be pointed out that Turkey did not get belligerent, even though it appears as if she took a side among rival camps. Rather, Turkey attached certain articles by which she hindered the possibility of her being belligerent whereas, on the other part, via her adept diplomatic maneuvers, by means of the Tripartite Treaty, Turkey put the first pillar of her treaties into practice soon before the WW II.

In 1941, when German expansionism and aggression came to Turkey's frontier, she achieved alleviating the threat through the non-aggression pact with Nazis, which became the second pillar of her treaties. Thence, it can be said that Turkey was implicitly gotten involved in the war, even though she did not participate in any conflict militarily. The new condition was evaluated and called active neutrality, which mentions that Turkey closed Germany out of her geo-strategically crucial areas. Furthermore, Turkey succeeded to garner support, as happened by earlier treaties. This time, the non-aggression pact carried with it economic benefits via chrome sale to Germany, which it was in serious need under war conditions.

This research, beyond the introduction, is categorized into three sections. The first section, as a theoretical framework, gives information about balancing and a middle power in international relations literature and shows us a road map of this research by offering a discussion over Turkey as a middle

power. The second section sheds light on the general lines of Turkish foreign policy during the pre-war years starting from 1923 to 1939. The last section focuses on Turkish foreign policy throughout the early years of WW II, and especially, on relations between Turkey and great powers, namely, Great Britain, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's (USSR), and Germany, and discusses Turkey's diplomatic maneuvers between 1939 and early 1942. By the end, as a case study, this research demonstrates how well a middle power can benefit from conflicts and contradictions among great powers by making adept diplomatic maneuvers.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Balancing**

The basic logic of balancing policy is that states participate in coalition to escape domination by stronger states. The hypothesis points out that nations participate in coalitions to preserve themselves from either states or states of coalitions whose wherewithal could create a serious danger to its existence. Therefore, states opt to balance for two reasons. First, states may create a real risk for their existence and survival if they do not achieve to obstruct a potential hegemon from being dominant before it becomes so powerful. Creating an alliance with dominant power means putting "one's trust in its continued benevolence" (quoted by Küçükdeğirmenci -Zandamela, 2020; Edward, 1967:62). For that reason, the more appropriate strategy is to create an alliance with those who cannot dominate other allies, so as to escape being dominated by those who can. Second, an alliance with the weaker side enhances the new member's effect in a coalition because the weaker party is in more need of aid and assistance. However, making an alliance with the stronger side restrains the new member's effect in an alliance, since it has little capacity to contribute to the alliance, and so leaves it defenseless to the priorities and preferences of the stronger ally. Accordingly, it can be said that making an alliance with the weaker party is a more convenient and preferred option (Waltz, 1979:127).

When it comes to types of balancing acts, there are two ways of balancing; one is internal balancing whereas another one is external balancing. A country choosing internal balancing as a strategy, builds its military capabilities by its own efforts, that is building an army, and it is a kind of self-reliance strategy, and the country does not rely on others for its own security. The second balancing act is external balancing that is to create a coalition with other countries and aims at increasing the power of allies to meet a common enemy or threat (Fattouh, 2018:264-278; Waltz, 1979). Unlike internal balancing, this strategy reduces costs and domestic losses that internal balancing can cause, for it shares and distributes the burden to other countries in an alliance for reliable deterrence. Yet, external balancing also has its own risks, which is that in case of war, crisis, or conflict, an ally can withdraw its support from another ally (Snyder, 1997; Fattouh 2018:264-278).

### **2.2. Middle Power**

From the different perspectives in the area of international politics, the term of middle power alters from one school of thought to another school of thought, and most notably known ones are the realist school of thought and liberal school of thought. However, in this research, the concept will be compiled from the realist school of thought because its scope is more convenient to our study than that of the liberal school of thought, which is a relatively recent phenomenon and especially focused on Canada and Australia's role in the international system. Yet, before it, what power means in international politics is a considerable question to ask whilst analyzing the middle power.

In the realist school, the middle power is measured by material elements, which a state has, like the economy, military, population, and geographical location as well as Gross National Product (GNP) (Yalçın, 2012:197). In the realist school, the position among states is calculated in conformity with those components. Put it differently, the realist approach intends to describe a country's position through her stance amid great powers and small powers. As Carsten Holbraad pointed out, the middle power has sufficient material resources to put herself ahead of small states in the international system, whilst these sources place her behind the great powers (Holbraad, 1984:4). For that reason, a middle power, compared to small power, has much more room to make maneuvers in contesting with great power. In other words, a middle power is a state that can be able to follow its national interests at the rate of its relative capability. Thereby, it can be assumed that her gain is restrained. Hence, what the realist perspective emphasizes is a middle power's capability to possess room for talks aimed at great powers. Middle power is a country that has a relative influence on the developments around her (Handel, 2016:28-29). It can be deduced from all these that the realist approach to middle power takes a bright

view of detailing the term of middle power over concrete data, and concentrates on whether or not, a state can be described as a middle power (Scott, 2013:128).

In the realist school, Carsten Holbraad holds a considerable place in describing the term of a middle power. He, thus, would shed light on the middle power by benefitting from a hierarchy-based approach. Holbraad specifies that middle power is a country that positions in the middle of the order with regard to material resources, which means power. Put it differently, he characterizes the middle-scale power as stronger than small power, yet a weaker position in comparison with major/great states in the international system. Besides that, he claims that the GNP also can be paid regard to a state to be defined as a middle power. However, Holbraad does not find GNP adequate to label a country as a middle power. He highlights the regional criteria, which means that the geopolitics of a country plays an important role so as to categorize it as a middle power (Holbraad, 1984:126).

Moreover, Holbraad points out that the multi-polar structure of the international system, in comparison to the unipolar structure, is much more advantageous regarding middle states' maneuverability. Put it differently, he refers to that middle powers gain pressure in the event of competition or enhances in balancing politics (Holbraad, 1984:88). Therefore, to Holbraad, middle powers would assume a mediator role in the event of rivalry among great powers. Furthermore, in such a complex condition, middle powers take the chance to become efficient regionally, which means that they function in some way as a local agent of great powers in a certain region, and also situates themselves in line with the great powers. On the whole, Holbraad pays attention to such criteria as "geographical location, political tradition, the nature of the issue and norms of the state system" (Holbraad, 1984:121).

Furthermore, Bernard Wood mentioning material resources persists mainly on the GNP as the only component that makes a state a middle power. Wood states that the other elements such as demography, military capacity, and economy emanate their importance from this basic factor, that is to say, GNP (Wood, 1987:5). Besides that, another realist-oriented definition of the concept originates from Martin Wight. To begin with, he intends to categorize two distinct states in terms of regional great power and middle power. Wight defines regional great powers as states having a substantial impact on regional politics. In other respects, Wight considers regional great powers as a possible middle power in the international system. When it comes to how he describes the term of middle power, he put military power forth as the basic factor of being called a middle power. Put it differently, Wight points out that "a middle power is a power with such military strength, resources, and strategic position that in peacetime the great powers bid for its support, and in wartime, while it has no hope of winning a war against a great power, it can hope to inflict costs on a great power out of proportion to what the great power can hope to gain by attacking it" (Wight, 2002:63).

### **2.3. Middle Power Debate Over Turkey**

In international relations, states cannot be defined by the same title all the time. Middle power descriptions, with a similar line, cannot totally match up with each state. Historical proves show that states' power would not remain unchanged, and the power of states shifts from some time to another time. To give an example, while calling a great power in a century, a country could evolve into a middle power or even a small power in another century because of her failure of accommodation of existing paradigms. Thereof, as abovementioned, measurement pertains to circumstances of a certain period of history. In the event of Turkey, although she was considered as an important power in the European balance of power during the 20th century, later new republic was taken into account by great powers as a more moderate state concerning power. In that case, to what title can we define Turkey at the beginning of the 20th century? William Hale whose departing point is realism with evaluating material capabilities points out that Turkey can be labeled as a medium or even small power. The reason why he depicts Turkey like this is that she mainly shows the features of a middle power, hence, middle powerless cannot be enough to define Turkey, Hale said. (Hale, 2013:1). Similarly, Baskın Oran indicates that Turkey could be called a middle power with respect to her political actions throughout WW II. In other respects, Dilek Barlas thinks of Turkey throughout previous years of WW II as a middle power with her ability of coalition-building (Barlas, 2005:433). Contrary to those views, Annette Baker Fox opines that Turkey is a small state, it is valuable to note her successful efforts throughout WW II (Fox, 1959: vii). As a consequence, a wide variety of views draw attention while describing Turkey's position at the outset of the 20th century and during WW II.

It seems that Turkey's middle power definition is consistent with the realist school in that they characterize middle powers relied on periodic developments, but instead evaluate concrete sources that

cause us to identify a state as a middle power. Allow us to demonstrate Turkey during WW II. First of all, Turkey was an insufficient country in terms of economics and military in comparison to that of great powers throughout the war years. Nonetheless, Turkey's geopolitical position became one of the components constituting her power. Meanwhile, that geographic position could be considered as a handicap that makes her available for an enemy assault. In other respects, even though Turkey did not materialize to mediate amid Great Britain and the USSR, she followed very enviable diplomacy so as to keep away from the war. That is because her geographic position was a significant element that orientated Turkey and was a crucial source of her diplomatic achievement. Moreover, Turkey took advantage of disagreements among the great powers which opened an area for Turkey to use via diplomatic maneuvers.

On the whole, assessing all information up to now, Turkey can be considered as a weaker state in comparison with great powers in spite of powerful enough not to be easily invaded. Thus, does it make Turkey a middle-sized power? Turkey, throughout WW II, was especially apprehended with her survival, but not on global matters. The realist perspective provides sound choices as it pays attention to material elements like military, economy, population, geographic position, and so on while calculating a country's caliber, which is far more related to Turkey's foreign policy throughout WW II. Hence, amid those elements realists set forth, one particularly explains the basic component of Turkish foreign policy, which is her geographical vitality. Morgenthau underlines geographical position as one of the most considerable elements of national power (Morgenthau, 1948:107). As Robert Kaplan argues, whilst he refers to the significance of a state's geopolitics, "Geography does not disappear in this scenario, it just becomes even more critical." (Kaplan, 2012:47). We will extensively contain that topic in the following section. As a result of that thesis, it could be brought forward that Turkey is situated, from a realist hierarchal point of view, amid great powers and small states. Put it differently, Turkey was in a weaker position than that of great powers like Great Britain, Germany, and the USSR, while stronger than states such as Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Greece. For that reason, a comparative viewpoint becomes meaningful to clarify Turkey's position in the international system, and by this level of analysis, Turkey was somewhere in between great and small powers. In other respects, we can additionally say that Turkey was a comparatively small power in comparison with great powers in terms of assessments made by taking military and economic capacity into consideration, yet geopolitically essential and more significantly was able to take advantage of her geographic significance by means of adept diplomacy. Thus, the next sections of the article will analyze Turkish foreign policy within that direction.

### **3. AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN 1923-1939**

Beforehand we examine the historical events, we consider that it is noteworthy to define the main driving points for Turkish foreign policy from 1923 to 1939. The concept of balance of power can be thought that it is one of the terms to explain the nature of interstate relations best. From a traditional context, the balance of power can be founded between at least two states who's material sources ought to be, approximately, close or equal to each other. Put it differently, regarding military capacity, technological development and, economy, they should become close to each other, which they could prevent each other from dominating others. Hence, in addition to the fact that balance of power occurs when, at a minimum, two approximate states exist in the system, it could also happen among a group of states that are in the absence of advanced capacity a strong nation. In situations such as this, the geographical location where a state is placed could keep a nation alive relied on its capable and adept decision-makers. Turkish foreign policy strife was, within this context, an outstanding sample of a nation lacking concrete sources.

In other respect, geopolitics has been one of the most significant components while analyzing a country's foreign policy. Conducting a foreign policy by taking geographical facts into account is called geopolitics. Turkey's geographical position forced her to become vigilant towards her neighboring countries. In that case, what were the basic pillars of that attraction? Due to Turkey's crossroads position between Europe and Asia, her appeal in the minds of great powers has constantly been crucial. Furthermore, Turkey was located on so important geography that she links the Middle East, the Caucasus, Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans to Europe. Besides this, she has very significant straits that tie the Black Sea to the Mediterranean by the Aegean Sea (Aydın, 2004). This amounts to that Turkey, anyway, was lured to foreign policy assessments of great powers, and so cannot be indifferent to their policies and actions. For these regions we pointed out as Turkey's periphery had been carved up great powers' sphere of influence. Thereof, geopolitically in this delicate region, Turkey must

have kept in mind her bilateral relations with her neighbors and the great powers which gave particular importance to Turkey's periphery region for the sake of their self-interests. That means many doubts which were come in for her predecessor (Aydin, 2004). Even if her neighbors could not pose a security menace, they might have been provoked and manipulated by the great powers. Herewith, Turkish foreign policy ought to have been ideated prudent as well as suspicious.

For that reason, in the inter-war period, the USSR, as a constant and important component on the security agenda of Turkey, would have, all the time, been a non-ignorable element in Turkish foreign policy thinking, owing to her geographical proximity. This amounts to a constant great power positioning in the northeast border. By possessing an amicable relationship with the Soviets, Turkey frequently benefitted from the balance of power among the great powers to achieve to keep them alive. The relations amid both countries throughout the national struggle of Turkey became the latter example of that assertion. Thereby, as to emphasizing continuity in Turkish foreign policy, one of her basic pillars from the early 1920s onward had been attempting to consider ways to maintain good and friendly relations with the USSR.

In addition to the USSR, from a geopolitical perspective, the Balkans and the Mediterranean carried always critical significance for Turkey's existence and survival. What makes the Balkans considerable was its very strategic position for a European power, which it could serve as a point of departure to give an assault on Turkey. Therefore, regional stability was a safe word that makes the public Balkans' assessment of the new republic. Within this context, during the tense atmosphere of the 1930s, Turkey made great efforts to provide stability and order over the Balkans. In other respects, the Mediterranean was an important passage point allowing the great powers to reach their colonies. Moreover, how great powers positioned themselves towards Turkey was another significant issue related to the national security of the new republic. It was an external determinant that can be damaging for Turkey's existence and survival, in a situation where, at the same time, two or more great powers would have compromised on her. Therefore, Turkey played upon different interests and objectives of the great powers that became one of the basic determinants of Turkish foreign policy. There were certain great powers that Turkey had to keep in with from some time to sometimes such as Britain, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union, because of her geographical proximity.

Irrespective of their strength, it is expected that rational states would function by relying on a strategy. Put it differently, they would calculate such factors as geographical location, military capability and situation, and economic power to explore a way that guarantees them to keep away from a military clash in the event of tension. Herewith, they determine and set forth certain tactics and strategies. Concordantly, Turkey being conscious of her challenges attached priority to diplomatic maneuvers, namely, making alliances gained prominence since the 1930s when the signs of tension became appear. As we will shortly mention below, Turkey concluded and signed a series of pacts and treaties during the 1930s. In the same direction, Turkish decision-makers in foreign policy, amid the years 1939-1945, substantially paid regard to diplomatic strife for keeping away from the destructive war (Hale, 2013:56). However, in this research, due to limitations on an article, the scope of the study covers a limited period starting, in particular, from pre-World War II to 1942 the year in which Turkey completed its alliances with both sides of the war.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the new republic's main focus was to set up pacts along with her neighboring countries following the basic rule of her policy of defending soils on hand. It ought to be illustrated which the resting soils were one of the outstanding elements which caused the Turkish decision-makers to act more closely compared to their antecedents. It was a fact that Turkey could not cope with such wide land of the Ottoman Empire because of her relative weaknesses. Hereby, the current soils involving Anatolia and some parts of Thrace were far more unified, manageable, but also delicate regarding geopolitics. To begin with, the new republic had a sincere relationship with the USSR during the 1920s and early 1930s, which was reassured by the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, signed in 1925 between them. Accordingly, Turkey strengthened her security via amicable relations with her giant neighbor. Secondly, the longstanding Mosul issue amid Great Britain and the new republic was dissolved, although the consequence did not make Turks satisfied with the Ankara Agreement signed in 1926 (Hale, 2013:56).

At the outset of the 1930s, Turkey also developed an amicable relationship with Greece, and as a result, they formed the Entente Cordiale in 1930. Those were remarkable efforts for a country desiring to enjoy the stability and order in her periphery. Possessing amicable relations with the USSR would have, all

the time, provided a great benefit in her relation with other great countries. It was pretty crucial for Turkey's national security and territorial integrity because the Soviets had always been an undeniable actor and, sometimes partner, in the balance of power calculations made by Turks. Therefore, the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality concluded in 1925 came to mean to ensure security for northeast frontiers of Turkey. Nonetheless, it would be better to demonstrate that cautious was one of the basic rules that Turkish policy-makers could, by no means, abandon. Corresponding with analog thinking, advocating and bolstering relations with Greeks was one of the most important efforts that resulted in ensuring the security of Turkey's northwest frontiers. Moreover, an invitation from the League of Nations in 1932 was a remarkable chance to reinforce and consolidate her ties with the Western world (Çalış-Bağcı, 2003:213). That chain of treaties as well as participation in the League of Nations could pave the way for two significant advantages. First of all, Turkey could manage the combination of relations, which means with her periphery countries as well as the European great powers, which had been one of the basic and eventual objectives of foreign policy since her creation. Second of all, she could have the right to mention in such an extensive organization that can permit her to preserve regional stability, order, and status quo. Shortly, the new republic as a war-ravaged state must have stabilized her borders to recover herself. Therefore, those agreements with the international ambiance amid the 1920s and early 1930s resulted in a reformist movement in Turkey. Put it differently, in compliance with the mainstream of the post-WW I period Turkey had attempted to reinforce her national security via regional and extensive treaties, as below; Balkan Pact with Greece, Romania, and Yugoslavia, against mainly Italian threat in 1934; Montreux Convention in 1936; Sadabat Pact with Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq in 1937 (Sönmezoğlu, 2011:334-363); Anglo-French Pact with Turkey against Italian threat in 1939 (Flandin, 1939).

#### **4. SUBTLE DIPLOMACY: TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DURING WORLD WAR II**

##### **4.1. Tripartite Treaty in 1939 or The First Pillar of Treaty System**

As we examined the developments and situation up to 1939, Turkey had given Britain the courage to ally Italian and German aggression. Turkey's estimation was on the brink of occurring. However, she had, all the time, faced unwilling of Britain. Rather, Britain was conscious of a possible menace emanating from these two aggressive powers, hence the viewpoint that Turkey and Britain adopted the situation was a bit distinct.

One important reason why efforts of allying failed before 1939 was the appeasement policy Britain adopted against Germany. Therefore, during the 1930s, Britain preferred to stay away from joining military alliances with the European countries. Besides that, it did not react so much to such significant issues as the rearmament of Rennes by Germans and the annexation of Austria and Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia by Germans (Sander, 2015:50). Instead, the Sudetenland event was an obvious violation of the Locarno Treaty signed in 1925, which aimed at preserving France's eastern borders, that is to say, Germany's western border from any German incursion. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain had the opinion that Germany would have focused on her eastern frontiers through which it can cope with the USSR. Yet, occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia resulted in a fundamental change in his policy, and following that event, he grasped well that Britain ought to have veered Germany via a coalition.

Meanwhile, events in the Mediterranean were the basic determinant that led to an alliance between Turkey and Britain. By 1939, Italy's occupation of Albania made Turkey worried. Therewith, Turkey, Britain, and France embarked on talks for the security of the Mediterranean. Herewith, the first pillar of the tripartite treaty among them took shape on the issues of the Mediterranean and Balkans. Corresponding with the national security of Turkey, a reconciliation was inescapable because Turkey was not able to withstand any incursion launched by Either Germany or Italy. Then, a Turkish diplomat Cevat Acıkalın points out from his conversation with the Turkish President, İnönü, that "Turkey could not ensure her security by herself in such a geographical position due to lack of tangible resources, hence she must have allied for her survival" (Açıkılın, 1992:1000). When Italy occupied Albania, as a first reaction, Britain proposed a security guarantee just as it had given Poland as well as Romania and Greece. In other respects, what instead Britain wished was that Turkey should get involved in military intervention in the event of an assault on Romania and Greece. Owing to that, Britain aimed to turn Turkish influence into an advantage over the Balkans (Deringil, 2015:77). Meanwhile, in terms of military power, Turkey was considered as an important actor via which Mediterranean security could be ensured. However, Turkish decision-makers assessed that they must become very prudent by

considering past experiences. Put it differently, one of the basic objectives of Turkish foreign policy was not to join in any engagement which could peril the national security and territorial integrity of the new republic. For this reason, in each phase of talks, Turks evaluated the situation very carefully (Deringil, 2015:77). Accordingly, when the Turkish Prime Minister Sukru Saracoglu gave a speech in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, he emphasized Turkey's sovereignty and national interest. He more or less stated that Turkey could not maintain its neutral stance in the wake of adverse events in the Mediterranean and Balkans. Thereof, these who tried to strengthen the peace ought to have gathered.

One another significant question was the distinction between Turkey and Britain aimed at Italian and German expansionism. From a British point of view, Italian fortification in the Dodecanese could be overcome and it could not pose a serious issue. Rather, Britain reposed in France because of their alliance, which they thought that would have been enervating for Nazis. At that time, Turkey was still very concerned concerning Italian and German aggression. Hence, according to Turkish policy-makers, such a coalition must have been valuable, since historical proves showed that incautious and improvident engagement in a coalition during WW I brought to grief the Turks. For this reason, Turks considered two crucial matters to ally with France and Britain: Turkey ought to have been persistently talked about and forestalled anything which could deteriorate her relationship with the USSR (Önder, 2010:29). Besides that, caution played an important role in Turkish foreign policy during this epoch. Yet, Turkey had demanded many times civil and military materials and equipment ensure her security (Deringil, 2015:78). This was a successful tactic which Turks resorted many times through which she could maintain her neutral position. In other respects, for Turks, the ideal view was that all states should participate in a security organization or treaty. Yet, because Turkey was a middle-scaled power, there were issues that Turkey could not be overcome easily. In the end, the first phase of the British-Turkish reconciliation concluded on May 12, 1939, within the frame of security risks in the Mediterranean.

In addition to Britain, France was also a necessary country to ally with, from Turkey's perspective. Hence, Hatay's matter remained as a question impending to resolve amid them before they reached an agreement. The issue dated back to the Ankara Agreement signed in 1921 between France and the new Turkish Republic. According to this agreement, Hatay province remained in the territory of the Syrian state with a special status, which was under French mandate at that time. Yet, a treaty reached between Syria and France in 1936 terminated the French mandate over Syria, and the treaty stipulated that France delegates her rights and authority to Syria over Hatay. This was seen as unacceptable by the Turkish Republic. Thus, Turkey and France concluded an agreement that consisted of two phases. Firstly, Hatay declared its independence from Syria and became an independent state, and secondly, by April 1939, the Hatay legislature approved the unification and participation to Turkey. The new republic rectified this historical moment by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Metintaş-Kayıran, 2011:295-96). It is noteworthy to say that this development illustrates that a middle-scaled power like Turkey could have an impact on a great power like France under such circumstances. The agreement paved the way for the tripartite treaty between Turkey, Britain, and France. If the talks had lengthened out, then developments would have deteriorated much more, since, at this time, Germany had already embarked on the occupation of Poland. Herewith, the allied powers were looking for stability in the south as soon as possible (Deringil, 2015:87). Thus, Turkey added Hatay province to her soils by taking advantage of the worsening situation in the international system. Consequently, the treaty resulted in the French-Turkish phase of the allied-Turkish reconciliation, and the joint declaration between France and Turkey was released in June 1939 in a similar framework with that of the British-Turkish declaration published earlier (Metintaş-Kayıran, 2011:296).

As pointed out, an agreement between Britain and Turkey ought not to have turned Turkish-Soviet relations sour. The initial Soviet reaction was not negative. Thence, the eventual stage of the reconciliation relied on the USSR manner. Yet, the relationship between the USSR and Great Britain had a very significant dimension to which must to paid regard. The major issue amid them was the absence of reciprocal confidence. According to British policy-makers, the USSR created a serious menace ideologically as well as via its expansionist aims which could demolish the balance of power in continental Europe and British's preponderance. Thus. The concessionary manner embraced by Britain against German expansionism was comprehended as a sort of buck-passing action, by the USSR, so though both states attempted to consider the ways out to prevent and halt Germany with the possibility of a war heaved in sight, there was an insidious uneasiness amid them. When Germany had become menacing for Poland, talks accelerated among the allies and the USSR. Yet, the USSR was, all the time, worried about the British attitude against itself towards Germany. During the talks, the central topic of



Britain's suggestions impelled the USSR against Germany. Hereupon, what the USSR did determine the tone of Turkey's and allies' foreign policy visions?

#### 4.2. Molotov-Ribbentrop Meeting

The USSR's involvement in the reconciliation among Turkey, France, and Britain aimed at Germany would have been a vital development from Turkey's perspective, which she wished to benefit from amicable relations with the USSR and the allies. In the meantime, Britain was a competitor of the USSR's participation. Besides that, British decision-makers considered that Turkey could become a means for reconciliation with the Soviet Union (Ataöv, 1965:11). According to Turkey, a friendly relationship with the USSR become a basic principle of Turkish foreign policy. For that reason, the USSR ought to have joined in the coalition towards Nazis. Hence, there was another reason which president Inonu set his opinion forth in the wake of his visit to Moscow in 1930. Inonu pointed out that the USSR was seeking security in its western borders. Thereof, whilst reinforcing its borders, it desired to run good relations with Turkey. However, in other respects, if the opposite took place, then it could have pursued an assertive policy towards its eastern neighbors, which included Turkey as well. By 1939, Turkey was still persistent on the USSR's participation in the allied powers. Instead, the first response coming from the USSR was quite affirmative. Yet, the sense of insecurity prevailed in relations among the allied powers and the USSR. Ultimately, the German-Soviet pact took shape, which symbolized a new balance of power in Europe. The reconciliation between both countries could result in important risks for Britain's and France's designs over the Mediterranean because the idea that Turks could take a side in the Germans come into view. This possibility provided Turks with sufficient pressure to use aimed at allied powers (Deringil, 2015:82). Furthermore, a non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR could cause Britain and France to undertake Nazis in western Europe (Açıklalın, 1992: 997). Put it differently, the USSR obligated Britain and France to implement a buck-passing strategy.

When it comes to Turkey, she did not welcome the German-Soviet pact due to the reason abovementioned. The USSR managed to ensure the security of its eastern border via that pact. In other respects, even though developments were getting worse, due to Nazi's leverage, the statement "every cloud has a silver lining" clarify best Turkey's stance, following the German-Soviet Pact (Deringil, 2015:87-88). However, a new condition bolstered up Turkey's hand in the talks with allies. Since the German-Soviet pact resulted in the assessment of whether or not, Turkey could join in the German-Soviet pact, and that provoked Britain and France to conclude the treaty with the Turkish Republic. Yet, Turkish decision-makers embraced and implemented a kind of wait-and-see policy. For this reason, the condition led Turkey too, in a sense, outmaneuver towards the Allies. Within this context, Turkey brought 15 million sterling together with a certain amount of military equipment and aid forward as a pre-condition. Besides that, Turkey persisted on an appendix suspending article, without which she was reluctant to conclude the treaty, to provide financial assistance. The reason behind Turkey's persistence was depended on what had occurred in Poland before, which was the direct consequence of Britain's and France's breach of faith, and thus it set an example for the Turkish Republic. Therefore, Turkey ought to have been waiting patiently for the support and assistance to be provided by her alliance partners to deal with her shortages and challenges in terms of the military (Deringil, 2015:90).

When Turkey set forth German leverage during the negotiation process, hereupon, Britain asserted an Italian threat so as to force Turkey to take side with the allies. At that time, Italy was a neutral country that kept Turkey in the dark. Britain acquired information that Italy would have maintained her non-belligerent position, yet in other respects, it would have been better to keep Turkey in suspense to enhance her worries. Meanwhile, Turkey was sustaining her bargaining abilities. Furthermore, WW II began following the German occupation of Poland. For that reason, under these very tense circumstances, allied powers started to become more adjuratory compared to Turkey. The amount that Turkey requested was somewhat challenging, yet logically, Britain determined that losing Turkey totally was more harmful in the long run than granting 15 million sterling (Deringil, 2015:90). In addition to these developments, the German-Soviet non-aggression pact applied leverage on Britain and France, and at this juncture, Turkey could become a trigger factor so as to entice the USSR's participation in allies. As abovementioned, at the outset, Turkey made some efforts in order to form a kind of coalition that could guarantee the security of her both eastern and western borders, yet it appeared to be fell down in comparison to the new conditions. Henceforward, Turkey attempted to watch whether or not, the USSR would have been a menace or eager to make cooperate with Turkey. Upon the matter, Britain, France, and Turkey in the final analysis appeared to conclude the Tripartite Treaty, yet heretofore Turkey had to be sure of the USSR's ambitions.

### 4.3. The Last-Ditch Effort: 1939 Meeting Between Turkey and the USSR

In the wake of a mutual treaty with the ally powers, Turkey was inevitably seeking an opportunity to conclude a rapprochement with the USSR. From the Turkish point of view, if the USSR cannot be enticed to join the Tripartite Alliance, at a minimum, a bilateral treaty was thought of as an alternative choice. For that reason, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, went to Moscow to negotiate the Turkish proposal with Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs. Beforehand Turkish delegation reached Moscow, they had prepared for submitting a proposal consisting of three clauses: in the event of an assault in the straits and the Black Sea region, both countries will make a cooperate and support to another side, since the treaty depended on the earlier clause, each state will come together, and analog clauses to the Soviet reservation in the Tripartite Treaty will also be attached to the treaty amid Turkey and Soviets. (Açıklan, 1992: 1007).

In fact, Soviet requests were entirely distinct and troubling for the Turkish's stance. Stalin initially set forth two conditions with respect to the bilateral treaty to make it coherent with the Tripartite Treaty; The third clause through which Turkey assures Greece and Romania together with France and Great Britain ought to be rectified. In addition to assurance, Turkey ought to consult and negotiate with Britain and France; The second Protocol containing the Soviet reservation, also, ought to be rectified. Thus, in the event of war between the Allies and the USSR, Turkey could not be forced to take part in such a deadly war. Besides that, Stalin suggested an additional term, which the USSR would not be a side of Turkey, in the event of a Nazi assault on Turkish soil (Açıklan, 1992: 1007). Except for those demands, the Soviets suggested some unexpected changes associated with the Montreux Treaty. Approximately considered, Molotov stipulated that these countries having no coast on the Black Sea would not be allowed to pass their warships through the Black Sea for the sake of common defense of the Straits. Though the Soviets were pretty persistent on their wants during the sessions of negotiations, the Turkish side under the leader of Saraçoğlu illustrated Turkey's intolerance to any changes and amendment to the Montreux Convention. Furthermore, Turkey turned down the demand for change with regard to the Tripartite Alliance treaty. Herewith, the meeting ended in a disagreement between sides. If Turkey would have admitted the USSR's requests, it would have paved the way for a bandwagoning policy for Turkey, which it should not be forgotten that she had persistently avoided. For Turkey, sharing sovereignty of the straits meant sharing national sovereignty. Nonetheless, Turkey caught a chance for a balancing act via the Tripartite Alliance which made and confirmed her middle power position.

The whole Soviet request showed that Turkey was going to lose her giant neighbor with which she possessed an amicable relationship since the mid of 1920s. Furthermore, this new condition also demonstrated that Turkey's eastern border was in danger because of the imminent Soviet threat. When the Poland event was shed light, Turkey, following the misconducted talks in Moscow, must have officialized the Tripartite Alliance Treaty so as to secure her western soils and borders. In the meantime, Turkey started to evaluate the USSR as a threat perception as well as Italy. As a consequence, the Tripartite Alliance was eventually emerged by including the following terms:

- “In the event of assault originating from a European state to Turkey, Great Britain, and France would help and support Turkey” (Akşin, 2002:287-88).
- “If an assault coming from a European state on Great Britain and France expands to the Mediterranean region, Turkey would advocate Britain and France. Yet, if the war merely would occur in Europe, Turkey pursues benevolent neutrality in favor of Britain and France” (Akşin, 2002:287-88).
- “If Britain and France would fight war owing to their assurance to Greece and Romania, Turkey would participate in and give support to them” (Akşin, 2002:287-88).

Besides those clauses, protocol II was probably the most crucial term being the key aspect of the treaty through which Turkey managed to stay away from the conflict. Protocol II refers that these obligations and liabilities emanating from the treaty would not cause Turkey to fight the war with the USSR. Meantime, article six points out that Turkey's commitments could merely be operated so long as the Allies discharge their obligations and liabilities (Oran, 2001:424). Put it differently, via this clause, Turkey could manage to maintain her non-combatant position.

By the end of 1939, it seems that there was a balance being formed, namely, the Allies-Turkey and Germany, Italy, and the USSR. Great Britain was evaluating Turkey as a military

assistance component in the event of a conflict in the Balkans and Mediterranean regions, whilst Turkey was going to seek circumstances not to be dragged on military conflict. At this time, Italy was maintaining its non-combatant status, yet if Italians joined in the war, this would have forced Turkey to fight war towards Italy along with the alliance. This amounted to that Turkey would have taken a side on Nazis. Meanwhile, the USSR was the most menacing state on threat perception considered by Turkish policy-makers, and so it ranked on top of the security agenda of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey resorted to keeping both the Soviets and Germany informed in this respect. Put it differently, in addition to all, Turkey's maintaining non-combatant position was a very significant point which she could possess. Furthermore, the Soviet concern was one of the crucial instruments which Turkey ought to have asserted in the equilibrium of power configuration. Therefore, Turkey could have gotten through the case for a time successfully thanks to her adept diplomacy.

#### **4.4. Non-Aggression Pact Between Turkey and Germany or the Second Pillar of Treaties**

The ongoing process for the Middle East (the consolidation of Iraq through a military coup staged by pro-German Rashid Ali al-Gaylani and an uprising of pro-German Vichy government in Syria) (Deringil, 2015:152) caused Germany to pay attention to Turkey's non-belligerence before the German operation advanced aimed at the USSR, and thus, the content of Turkish-German talks continued in that direction (Oran, 2001:424). For Turkey, it was time to assure her security and stability using a treaty with Nazi Germany. In addition to the most common suggestions, Germany brought up with the new offering that promised to give some territorial gains in the Balkans and the Aegean regions favor Turkey, in contrast with the German proposal, Turkey ought to provide easiness and convenience for Nazis over the Turkish Straits. It would be better to point out that Nazi diplomats did not make anything of Turkey's manner and behavior against sort of carrot-policy, apart from Von Papen (Deringil, 2015:145). Papen was one of those being conscious of the Turkish manner which would not have come around via certain practices like Balkan states being apt to do. However, Ribbentrop was persisting on those requests and wishes and he was getting more menacing, while Turkey was rejecting their offers (Oran, 2001:444).

At that point of talks, Turkey had been conducting her adept and skillful balancing policy. Whereas Turkey was exhibiting an attitude against German leverage, she demonstrated herself as though she was weak and defenseless to Nazi leverage. In so doing, Turkey was attempting to constrain leverage coming from the allied powers. The allies, mainly the US, tensed up and did not approve a reconciliation between Turkey and Germany. Moreover, although Turkey was playing with both parties and looking for ground for reconciliation with Nazi Germany, the basic goal was to achieve her survival and territorial integrity by balancing both Great Britain and Germany. It should be remembered that Turkey was not only an ally of Britain but also an amicable relationship with Germany would be the best of clarifying Turkish's balancing act at that time (Deringil, 2015:148). In this context, Great Britain did not look much repressive as regards a possible Turkish-German pact and according to as Turkey would not act contrary to her current treaty with Britain, the reconciliation between them can be found understandable.

As a result of these circumstances, the non-aggression pact between Turkey and Germany was eventually concluded on June 18, 1941. This pact stipulated that either side assured that they would be respectful of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Besides that, given the British's concern, the pact was created on the circumstance that each side would hold and conform to their earlier treaties and agreements (Oran, 2001:444). In the end, Turkey succeeded to ensure her national security and territorial integrity thanks to her successful balancing tactics. In another saying, Turkey, at the same time, successfully benefitted from two treaties which she consolidated her stand. Through the treaty with Great Britain, Turkey would protect her lands and straits from German transition to assault Britain. In other respects, via the non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, Turkey would resolve another important question she faces, which was the passage of Britain via the Turkish Straits to help and provide support for the Soviet Union. Thereof, with her adept tactics and policies, Turkey could manage to keep off of the deadliest war, which was, in other respects, in favor of Britain, evaluating Turkey's vulnerability regarding military power and equipment (Fox, 1959:28). In short, it could be inferred that even though Turkey was not gotten involved in the war, she was certainly the victor of the diplomatic struggle up to now.

#### **4.5. Turkey-Britain Relations in 1941**

By 1941, the axis power, more or less, was dominating continental Europe in the war, in particular, the irresistible aggression of Germany across Europe caused Britain, which had already lost her closest ally, France to the enemy's hand, to be on the defensive position. Herewith, it was seeking aid to lower her burden and liability because Nazi Germany was penetrating the Balkans region. Italy's demands were denied by Greece in 1940. From that point on, it was the time for a possible German occupation of Greece. For Great Britain, Nazis could be hindered and halted in Balkans through cohesion, coordination, and cooperation amid Balkan countries encapsulating Turkey. In Britain's strategic calculation, Turkey could become a leading nation in the reemerging of the Balkan Pact. In other respects, Turkey looked for taking measures to prevent Germany from further advancing through a Turkish-Bulgarian non-aggression pact. In so doing, Turkey contemplated that the involvement of Bulgaria in the Axis powers can be stalled (Oran, 2001:436). Hence, it disproved its success, and immediately after Bulgaria was seized by Nazi Germany and Greece became the next target for German expansionism. Following these developments, Britain accelerated her effort to revitalize the Balkan pact with the help of Turkey. However, the conditions for Britain were not well and underwhelming. Britain could not provide and deliver large-scale assistance to Greece, for it was very engaged in the war in the Middle East. Therefore, what Britain wished was to assign these Balkan countries that had not been occupied by axis powers yet to be led by Turkey to come together toward Nazis.

In other respects, Turkey was conscious of the inapplicability of the revitalization of the Balkan pact when considering the circumstances in these states. However, Great Britain had tried to take a few steps to achieve this. To do this, Great Britain was persisting on Turkey to negotiate with Yugoslavia. Even though Turkey was aware of the impracticability of that, she attempted to make a contact with Yugoslavia. Hence, what Turkey contemplated proved to be right. Yugoslavia was drawn to German with the territorial motion proposed by Nazis (Açıklın, 1992: 1076). After this development, Nazis captured the entire Balkan countries. Britain had miscalculated Yugoslavia's maneuver and manner (Açıklın, 1992: 1077). For this reason, it could be deduced from that event that Turkey differed from the Balkan countries, though she had, more or less, equivalent resources with them. Primarily factor in this differentiation was that Turkey was a unified statehood politically as well as nationally. It was an important reason why she was resistive and so was not defenseless to manipulation emanated from the great powers, contrary to that of the Balkans. Secondly, Turkey separated from others since she could talk indefatigably with the great powers.

As regards Turkey's relations with Britain, the downfall of Greece caused the lack of reliability in Turkey's mind, for Britain could not give sufficient military equipment and assistance. Thereof, it was grasped by the Turkish policy-makers that they ought to have stood on their own feet without relying on any other country's help, and as a consequence of which the compromise between Turkey and Germany showed up as inescapable policy. Nonetheless, it ought to be emphasized that all those events did not refer to that Turkey changed its course from the ally powers to the axis powers, because such a policy change would have created a serious problem for Turkey to be able to balance great powers.

#### **4.6. Turkey's Relations with the USSR in 1941**

As abovementioned, Turkey's relations with the Soviets were turning sour in the wake of the non-aggression pact formed amid Nazi Germany and the USSR. Turkey was significantly worried about being circled by both great powers as occurred in Poland. For that reason, the USSR as a near-great power had been paid close attention by Turkey's policymakers in every phase of her foreign policy activities. In 1941, an important event which formed the basis for Turkey's worries was the disclosure of Soviet requests and wishes over the Turkish Straits. It was a Nazi strategy in which Germany resorted to bolster up her hand toward Turkey and to be much more affected in talks. Furthermore, following the ineffective talks in Berlin, and beforehand Germany advanced too far, the USSR wished to enhance her sphere of influence over the Balkans region, and yet the straits via making an effort to reach an agreement with Bulgaria, which she cannot get at the meeting in Berlin. In so doing, the USSR wanted to give leverage on Turkey for the issue of straits, and prevent Germany from advancing more over the Balkans as well. Hence, Bulgaria rejected the Soviet suggestion down because she could not encourage to provoke powerful Nazi Germany, and thus, Bulgaria had to become on the side of the Axis power. At that point, moving closer with Turkey became a rational choice for the Soviet Union (Oran, 2001:435-37). When it comes to Turkey, she wished to figure out new ways to escape from the containment by Germany through Bulgaria in the west and the Soviet Union in the east concurrently. Herein, Turkey

decided to adopt a balancing policy by playing upon Britain's worry about the Balkans. Britain sued for Turkey to declare war on Germany if Germany would wage war on Yugoslavia. Conversely, Turkey wished to feel certain of a possible Soviet incursion, and to be able to his desire, she concluded a non-aggression pact with the USSR on March 25, 1941, via Britain's mediatory role (Oran, 2001:437).

Simply put, Turkey was already reluctant to take a side and know that it would not declare war on Germany. A simple explanation of this was that Turkey lacked military equipment and assistance according to a clause in the Tripartite Treaty, Turkey could not have been a part of war without having enough military support, which Great Britain failed to meet a need (Oran, 2001:438). Therefore, Turkey could remain non-belligerent and also conclude a non-aggression pact with the USSR. For the war between the Soviets and German, there was an important condition that caused Turkey to be worried. The outset of Operation Barbarossa resulted in a reconciliation between the USSR and Great Britain. Even in the wake of Operation Barbarossa, Britain announced that she would promote and provide support to the USSR (Deringil, 2015:150). At the time, the USSR analogically, what it had done earlier with Nazi Germany, could conduct negotiations with Britain on behalf of Turkey. Thus, Turkey faced her conventional anxiety of being surrounded by two great powers at the same time. Nonetheless, Turkey once more resorted to balancing policy and accomplished to come through by benefitting from the USSR and via her crucial strategic position. To hamper German transition via straits, shutting down the straits was a required measure on behalf of the USSR as well as the importance of Turkish neutrality (Oran, 2001:446). Consequently, by August 1941, the USSR and Great Britain pronounced that they would conform with the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits signed in 1936, which it could be deduced that Turkey achieved to recover itself from admitting Soviet requests on the straits, at a minimum for a certain time. Furthermore, it is crucial to illustrate that Turkey was instead active during the war, despite her non-belligerence policy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

From 1939 to 1945 the globe saw the deadliest war ever in human history. Turkey, which was positioned in one of the most significant geographical places, achieved to remain undamaged from the war. When it comes to what kept Turkey alive during the war years, three basic pillars seem to come to the forefront; traditional balancing policy, non-belligerence policy, and unconditional obedience to non-belligerence policy. The formation of Turkish foreign policy emanated from a realist point of view and so evaluated material resources which Turkey had. For sure, her economic and military circumstances could not compare to those of the great powers. In other respects, her diplomatic accommodation and geographic vitality constituted her advantageous sides, yet the latter would alter from one time to another time. Diplomatic accommodation originated from the past experiences made by the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic activities. Concerning the geographical location, since Turkey was located at in a midpoint that links Eastern Mediterranean to the Middle East, and possessed the Straits, which links the Black sea to the Mediterranean, she was inescapably gotten involved in global issues during the war years to which she was unwilling to get involved. Therefore, taking all these into account, the decision-makers designed a kind of real politics for Turkey that could be formed in a defensive approach for peace.

About the implementation of that approach, Turkey applied to make up military alliances to ensure her national security and territorial integrity during the war. Consider that military alliances were once part of, but so important tools of, balancing policy. Coalition building was not a big problem that Turkey had to overcome for Turkey, for she was geographically crucial even though at the outset she had some difficulties to entice Great Britain toward the Italian danger in the Balkans and the Mediterranean regions. Nonetheless, to a certain extent, Turkey succeeded to haul three Balkans states (Greece, Yugoslavia, and Romania) together for Balkan Entente in 1934. As the war expanded over the Balkans, Turkey and Great Britain came closer. It would be better to stress that during the war years, Turkey did not permit a sort of superior-subordinate relations between them, hence followed adept and capable diplomacy. When Great Britain had compelled Turkey to take part in the war, she attributed the Tripartite Treaty among Britain, France and Turkey made in 1939. In other words, she set forth her military weakness toward Nazi Germany and continued to promote her non-belligerence policy. Herewith, Turkey accomplished to balance both Nazi Germany and Great Britain, via her adept diplomatic maneuvers, with which she formed a military alliance to balance Germany. Furthermore, when Great Britain attempted to attract Turkey by proposing new territories, she did not fall into a trap and stood her firm position in compliance with her non-belligerence principle.

As for relations with Nazi Germany, up to 1943, Germany had made an effort to persuade Turkey either to make an alliance with it or to remain non-belligerent in the war when it assaulted the USSR. Following that, Germany embraced and implemented certain methods like supporting Pan-Turanism as well as proposing some territorial concessions to attract Turkey. Meantime, it brought about changes for the Turkish economy through chrome trade with Germany that was in sharp need to be able to maintain the war. Thereat, via adept diplomacy, Turkey could make money from Germany, although she was ranked at the top of her threat perception. A non-aggression pact signed between Turkey and Nazi Germany in 1941 became another cornerstone for balancing policy employed by Turkey. Therefore, by doing so, Turkey, in the proper meaning of the word, became a non-belligerent in the war.

In addition to these factors, the USSR also played a very significant role in decision-making for Turkish foreign policy. During the war, Turkey gave particular importance to the Soviets since when Turkey signed an alliance treaty with Great Britain, which encapsulated a supplementary item concerning the Soviet Union. In other respects, Turkey's evaluation concerning the Soviets' intentions and motives was on target because the Soviets had, all the time, been a possible menacing actor to Turkey's national security and territorial integrity as Turkey followed an adept policy amid both sides of the belligerents. Furthermore, their contemplations over the Balkans were well-known and were not a secret. Also, the Soviets' manner against Turkey could be considered an indication of their intentions. Consequently, in each stage of WW II, Turkey ought to have thought of the Soviet factor because of her geographical proximity that is evaluated amid the main elements of the threat perception put forward by Stephen Walt.

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