
TURKEY'S ENTRY

THE ESCAPE OF THE *GOEBEN* AND THE *BRESLAU*

Shortly after 10.30 on the morning of 4 August 1914 Captain Francis Kennedy, commanding the British battle cruisers *Indomitable* and *Indefatigable*, sighted the two German cruisers, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. Kennedy was sailing westwards, north of Bône and south of Sardinia, under orders to close the exit of the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and so prevent the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* escaping into the Atlantic. However, the course being steered by the German ships was to the east. Earlier that day the *Goeben* had bombarded Philippeville and the *Breslau* Bône. Both were embarkation ports for the XIX French corps, en route from North Africa to metropolitan France. Although his ships had done little damage, Rear-Admiral Wilhelm Souchon had broken off the action and was now proceeding to the Straits of Messina. As the four cruisers converged, they kept their guns trained fore and aft. They passed each other at a distance of 8,000 yards without an exchange of either shots or courtesies. The British ultimatum to Germany was not due to expire until midnight.¹

Kennedy swung his ships round and set off to shadow the Germans. In her trials the *Goeben* had achieved a speed of 27 knots. But she had been sent out to the Mediterranean precipitately in 1912, during the first Balkan war, and her engines had created problems ever since. She had spent July in dry dock at Pola, Austria's naval base at the head of the Adriatic, in order to change her boiler

¹ The broadest accounts of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* incident are Halpern, *Naval war*, 12–26; Trumpener, *Canadian Journal of History*, VI (1971), 171–87. Exhaustive from the British perspective is Miller, *Superior force*; operational descriptions are Corbett, *Naval operations*, i. 54–71; Marder, *From the Dreadnought*, ii. 21–41; Hough, *Great War at sea*, 69–86.



MAP 23. THE MEDITERRANEAN

tubes. In the ensuing chase three out of the *Goeben's* twenty-four boilers failed, and, although she occasionally managed 24 knots, her average speed was 22. The battle cruisers should have been able to keep pace. But Kennedy, admittedly ignorant of the *Goeben's* boiler problems, seems to have been more conscious of the Germans' theoretical superiority than of his own potential. *Indomitable* was short of ninety stokers, and he was reluctant to redeploy gunners to the task in case there was action. Souchon, on the other hand, was determined to exploit his marginal advantage. His stokers fell unconscious in the effort to raise sufficient steam in the summer heat, and four died from scalding. By nightfall Kennedy had lost sight of the German cruisers.

The combination of leaky boilers and great speeds had depleted the *Goeben's* coal supplies. Souchon therefore bunkered at Messina but was only allowed twenty-four hours to do so by the Italians, who had affirmed their neutrality on 2 August. Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, commanding the Mediterranean Fleet, knew of the Germans' probable whereabouts by the afternoon of 5 August, but not of their intentions. Respectful of Italian neutrality, he deployed his major forces, including his three battle cruisers, west of Sicily on the assumption that Souchon might break out north from Messina to resume his task of disrupting the French convoys. The other option open to Souchon was to go south, past the Italian Cape, and then enter the Adriatic to join the Austro-Hungarian fleet. Rear-Admiral Ernest Troubridge, with four armoured cruisers, was cruising west of Cephalonia to guard against this eventuality. On the evening of 6 August, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, the former still in need of more coal, left Messina and steered a course for the Adriatic. They were duly spotted by HMS *Gloucester*, a light cruiser stationed to observe the southern exits from the strait of Messina. *Gloucester* stuck close to the German cruisers, observed that the entry to the Adriatic was a feint, and reported that their course was now towards Cape Matapan and the Greek Peloponnese. Souchon was hoping to rendezvous with a collier in the Aegean. *Gloucester's* task was to delay the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* sufficiently to allow Troubridge's squadron, steaming south, to intercept them.

Although grossly inferior in armament, *Gloucester* engaged the *Goeben* on the evening of 6 August. But Troubridge did not follow suit. On 30 July Churchill had instructed Milne and Milne had told Troubridge not to attack a 'superior force'. Churchill meant the fleets of Austria-Hungary and Italy, and his orders made clear that the *Goeben* was Milne's principal objective. But Troubridge was unusual in the Royal Navy: he had been an observer in the Russo-Japanese War, and had seen the effects of modern naval ordnance. He knew that the *Goeben's* 11-inch guns outranged those of his squadron. An exercise in 1913 had demonstrated that armoured cruisers should remain concentrated if they were to have any chance against a battle cruiser. One option was to attack the *Goeben* at night, but the light cruiser *Dublin*, detailed

for this duty, failed to make contact. Another was to catch the *Goeben* in narrow waters so as to lessen the range. However, such calculations were further complicated by Troubridge's continuing uncertainty as to Souchon's true course, whether he would continue to the south-east or double back to the north-west, and, if the latter, by the possibility that the Austro-Hungarian fleet might come out. Counselling by his flag captain, Troubridge allowed prudence to overcome his own offensive instincts. At 3.47 a.m. on the morning of 7 August he turned away. He was in tears as he did so. But he went further: shortly after 4 a.m. he signalled to Milne that he had abandoned the chase.²

Troubridge's grief, which would have been even greater had he anticipated the vituperation subsequently to be heaped upon him, could not at the time have seemed wholly warranted. The real threat to the *Goeben* lay with the French Mediterranean fleet under Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère and with Milne's battle cruisers. However, the French fleet (in direct contradiction to its pre-war orders) had forsaken offensive operations for convoy duties. Milne was dilatory. His respect for Italian neutrality had prevented him from following Souchon south through the Straits of Messina on the evening of 6 August. He had therefore failed to support HMS *Gloucester*. By passing Sicily to the west, he had guarded against the danger of Souchon doubling back towards the Algerian coast. During the night he learned that the French escorts were now sufficiently organized to counter such a threat. But instead of dispatching the almost fully coaled *Indomitable* east in hot pursuit, he bunkered in Malta. While there, at 1.45 a.m. on the 8th, he received a message which originated from the head of the British naval mission in Greece, Rear-Admiral Mark Kerr, to say that the *Goeben* was at Syra (now Siros) in the Aegean. But at noon the Admiralty signalled that hostilities had begun against the Austrians. They had not, and would not until 12 August. At 2.30 p.m., therefore, Milne abandoned the Aegean for a watch on the Adriatic. Although the Admiralty acknowledged its mistake eighty minutes later, it still said the situation was 'critical', and Milne concluded that keeping the Austrian navy under observation took priority over the pursuit of the *Goeben*. His signal to that effect was received in the Admiralty at 6.15 p.m., but not digested until 2 a.m. on the 9th, and was then reckoned to have predated his receipt of the cancellation of hostilities with Austria-Hungary. Not until 2.35 p.m. did Milne receive definite instructions to 'continue to chase the *Goeben* which passed Cape Matapan early on the 7th steering north-east'.³

Milne still expected Souchon to double back westwards, either to the Adriatic or to Gibraltar, or to extend his North African depredations to a raid on Alexandria and the Suez Canal; speed was not, therefore, of the essence.

² For a fuller consideration of Troubridge's position, see Miller, *Superior force*, esp. 26–32, 84–111, 270, 293–4.

³ Lumby, *Policy and operations in the Mediterranean*, 197; Lumby gives the signals, as well as the proceedings of the court of inquiry and the court martial. See also Miller, *Superior force*, 90–3, 120–33, 279.

Thus Souchon enjoyed an uninterrupted sixty hours in the Greek archipelago, completing a leisurely coaling in the early hours of 10 August. With the intensity of British signals traffic revealing the proximity of his pursuers, Souchon moved northwards. At 5 p.m. on 10 August his two ships anchored at the entrance to the Dardanelles. Milne had received no information on the political situation in Turkey, and he believed that the Dardanelles were mined and barred to all warships. The subsequent news that the Turks were guiding the *Goeben* and *Breslau* into Constantinople came as a complete surprise to him. The Germans' escape rendered the actions of every British naval commander, with the distinguished exception of Kelly of the *Gloucester*, not prudent but incompetent.

Much indeed of the conduct of the operation did not reflect well on the Entente fleets, and specifically on the Royal Navy. Milne and Troubridge received the ire of the Admiralty, but the Admiralty itself had done no better. Its orders, transmitted by wireless, displayed an imprecision which suggested that London should have abandoned the attempt to direct operations at long range. Troubridge had interpreted the 'superior enemy' as the *Goeben*, when the reference was to Austria-Hungary; Milne was told that the dual monarchy was in the war when it was not. Most crucial of all, the Admiralty did nothing to correct the fundamental assumption that the Germans would be aiming for the western Mediterranean and not the eastern. Joint French and British planning for operations in the Mediterranean in the event of war was scanty. The rough division giving responsibility for the western end to France and the eastern to Britain reflected French concerns for the security of North African communications. The raids on Bône and Philippeville, along with subsequent but false reports of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* moving west, combined to fix Boué de Lapeyrière's attention in that quarter. Milne's instructions from the Admiralty of 30 July had told him to aid the French in the transport of troops and only to attack superior forces in combination with the French. Despite his difficulties in establishing direct contact with Lapeyrière, Milne had therefore conformed with the French. In Britain the Foreign Office knew something of Germany's contacts with Turkey by 6 August. In Athens, Kerr had been told by King Constantine that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* were bound for Constantinople as early as 4 August. But Constantine knew because his cousin, the Kaiser, was trying to bludgeon him into a pro-German Balkan alliance. Kerr was sufficiently acquainted with the Kaiser to have appreciated the distinction between his impetuous correspondence and German policy. Furthermore, he could not compromise his source. He therefore routed the information via the British naval attaché at St Petersburg, and it was not received at the Admiralty until 1.15 a.m. on 9 August.⁴ It need not have been a surprise: the Admiralty was

⁴ Miller, *Superior force*, 179–88, 278–9, 281–2.

apparently decrypting most of the key signals between Berlin and Souchon.⁵ And yet London did not respond to the course adopted by the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* on 7 August to correct Milne's assumption that Souchon's move eastwards was a feint.

Conspiracy theories as to Britain's behaviour are easy to hatch. The Russians had repeatedly warned Britain of their fears for the naval balance in the Black Sea, either through an addition to the Turkish fleet or (more recently) through the presence of German or Austrian vessels. But Turkish naval strength could block a Russian presence in the straits and the eastern Mediterranean; thus the *Goeben* and *Breslau* served Britain's longer-term, imperial needs.⁶ More immediate was the argument that the delivery of the two ships into Ottoman hands took them out of the Mediterranean. This not only served the interests of Britain and France but also those of Greece. By making sure that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* went to Constantinople rather than to the Piraeus, the Greek prime minister, Venizelos, undermined the Germans' pressure on the king to abandon his neutrality while making it more probable that Greece would eventually join the Entente in the furtherance of its ambitions in the Aegean.⁷

At one level the episode's outcome was entirely satisfactory to the Entente. If the Triple Alliance had any potential for joint operations, it was as a naval force in the Mediterranean. The *Goeben* and the *Breslau* in combination with the Austro-Hungarian and Italian fleets presented a formidable threat. But the Italians had declared their neutrality on 2 August, and in isolation the Austro-Hungarian fleet had immediately become conscious of its inferiority to the French. Its principal mission was to secure the Adriatic coast, to blockade Serbia, to watch Montenegro, and so to support the army's land operations in the Balkans. The postponement of hostilities with both France and Britain was therefore entirely in its immediate interests. By breaking through to the Black Sea, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* ensured that there was no German reinforcement of the Austro-Hungarian fleet. Furthermore, the two vessels did not re-enter the Mediterranean until 1918, and their neutralization in relation to that sea was indeed rapidly adopted by the Entente as a rationalization of what had happened.

In reality, the mood of the opening days of August was not so considered; the uncertainty as to who was at war with whom, the emphasis on concentration on the western front, the expectation of a decisive battle in the major naval theatre, the North Sea—none of these was conducive to sustained attention to Souchon's two cruisers. Indeed, although Souchon himself was decisive and energetic, his instructions from Berlin revealed a comparable German uncer-

⁵ Santorini, *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire*, 63 (1985), 101.

⁶ Gottlieb, *Studies*, 43–6; Weber, *Eagles on the Crescent*, 75–6.

⁷ Miller, *Superior force*, 190–5, 277.

tainty which—even when known to London—did not necessarily clarify the situation.

Souchon's orders up until 2 August were exactly those reflected in Entente dispositions—he was to operate in the western Mediterranean or break through to the Atlantic. But on that day Turkey and Germany formed a secret alliance. Tirpitz and Pohl, the chief of the naval staff, therefore agreed that Souchon should go to Constantinople; Souchon had received these orders even before the attacks on Philippeville and Bône. On 5 August the Germans asked the Austro-Hungarian fleet to leave its bases and move into the southern Adriatic to help the *Goeben* and *Breslau* break out of the Messina strait. The Austro-Hungarian naval commander, Anton Haus, was hesitant. The mobilization of his fleet had only been ordered the previous day and was not yet complete. He was therefore even more anxious to avoid meeting the French fleet. Furthermore, he was simultaneously under contradictory pressures from Berchtold. The foreign office wanted him to break through to the Black Sea in order to bolster Turkey and to persuade Bulgaria and Romania to join the Central Powers. But to do so (even if technically practicable—and Haus was clear that it was not) would court the naval action with the British and/or French which he had been told by the foreign ministry to avoid. He therefore stayed put.

The Germans renewed their request with greater urgency on 6 August. Souchon was told that the Turks did not want him to appear in the straits just yet, and he was running out of options. Haus still refused to come south, but he agreed to escort the *Goeben* and *Breslau* into Austro-Hungarian territorial waters: in Pola expectations of major fleet action—certainly with the British and possibly with the French—soared.⁸ That evening Haus learnt that Souchon's course had been a decoy, and that he was now on the way to the Dardanelles. Given these tergiversations on the German side, Milne's expectation that Souchon would break back to the west and even the Admiralty's failure to alert Milne to the Turkish possibility become more comprehensible. It was Souchon himself who forced the pace of events. By presenting his ships at the entrance to the straits he obliged the Turks to come off the fence.

The significance of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to Turkey's decision to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers is perhaps more debatable than tradition allows. But what the episode does reveal is the difference in attitude to Turkey, and Turkey's role in their respective strategies, enjoyed by Britain and Germany. Britain's immediate response was to play down the political importance of what had occurred. The fiction of Germany's sale of the two cruisers to Turkey was readily accepted. Churchill fumed, but Asquith was complaisant: 'As we shall insist that the *Goeben* shall be manned by a Turkish instead of a

⁸ Halpern, *Haus*, 143–54.

German crew, it doesn't much matter: as the Turkish sailors cannot navigate her—except on to rocks or mines.⁹ Bethmann Hollweg, reluctant to credit the Admiralty with incompetence, construed the British response as a desire to limit the war.¹⁰ He was partially right, but for the wrong reasons. Britain did not propose to moderate its efforts against Germany, but it was anxious to restrict the war to Europe by preserving Turkish neutrality. The belief that Souchon would try to turn back to the Atlantic represented wishful thinking. Souchon's push to the east showed how different was Germany's understanding. Britain and Russia were Asiatic powers, France an African one. Their vulnerabilities lay as much outside Europe as within it. The voyage of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* was an opportunity to widen the war, not restrict it.

TURKEY'S DECISION TO JOIN THE CENTRAL POWERS

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman empire bore at least a superficial comparison with Austria-Hungary. In an era of increasingly strident nationalism, it rested its claims to great power recognition on the principle of supra-nationalism. Of a population of 39 million in 1897, only half were Turks. Macedonia embraced Slavs and Greeks; eastern Anatolia had a sizeable Armenian minority; Kurds bridged the frontier with Persia; and to the south were Jews, Circassians, and above all Arabs. Much of Ottoman greatness had rested on religious and racial toleration: Greeks and Armenians in particular had played a major part in the empire's administration and in the development of its commerce. But towards the end of the nineteenth century the importation of European nationalism had fostered terrorism, particularly among the Macedonian and Armenian populations. Racial divisions were not marked out with geographical neatness. The cities of Macedonia were predominantly Muslim and Greek, while the countryside was Muslim and Slav; in none of the six provinces of eastern Anatolia did Armenians enjoy an absolute majority. In both areas the Muslim population was as much sinned against as sinning. But reprisals followed terrorism. The Ottoman empire's multinational legacy became the victim of violence and European propaganda: the Turk was portrayed as—and increasingly became—a bloodthirsty bigot.

Like the Habsburg empire too, the Ottoman empire owed its continued integrity to the conduct of international relations. The orderly management of

⁹ Brock (ed.), *Asquith: Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 168.

¹⁰ Egmont Zechlin, 'Cabinet versus economic warfare in Germany', in Koch (ed.), *Origins*, 228; Hörich, *Deutsche Seekriegführung*, 26.

Macedonia lay in Russian and Austrian interests as well as Turkey's; Britain maintained Turkey as the buffer to Russian expansion into the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the route to India. But in 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, the great powers changed tack. They were happy to affirm the independence of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro, to grant autonomy to Bulgaria, to let Austria administer Bosnia-Herzegovina, to allow Britain control of Cyprus, and to give France a free hand in Tunisia. In 1897 they forced the Sultan to grant autonomy to Crete. Britain in particular, for so long Turkey's guarantor, now centred its strategy on Egypt (another Turkish loss) and the Suez Canal. As importantly, irridentism within the empire could henceforth look to external sponsors; the emergent Balkan states encouraged their fellow nationals in the rump of European Turkey; Armenian nationalism enjoyed French and Russian encouragement.

To counter this process of disintegration the Ottoman empire had no cultural identity save that of Islam. The progressive loss of European Turkey, the consequent decline in the number of Christians, and the emigration of its Muslim population to Constantinople and points east increased Muslim predominance. Furthermore, Islam provided the unifying link whereby the Arabs could be restrained from political separatism. The fact that the European powers used religion as a mantle for their own penetration of Turkey—the Orthodox churches were vehicles for Russian, Greek, and Bulgarian agitation, and France claimed the protection of the empire's 750,000 Roman Catholics—heightened Islamic awareness. Sultan Abdul Hamid emphasized his claim to the caliphate, fostered the use of Arabic, revived Muslim schools, and repaired the mosques. Ottomanism was redefined in increasingly Islamic terms in order to counter irridentist nationalism.

However, any tendency towards direct ideological competition and even overt religious hostility was moderated by the principle of economic self-interest. When Abdul Hamid had come to the throne in 1876, 80 per cent of Turkey's state revenues were devoted to meeting its foreign debts. The cost of the war of 1877–8, the subsequent indemnity to Russia, and the loss of so much productive territory exacerbated the position to the point where Turkey's finances were about to fall under overseas control. The Sultan's solution was to consolidate the debts, to create a public debt commission with representatives from Germany, Britain, Holland, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey, and to allocate direct to the commission certain state revenues, and in particular customs duties, for the purpose of reducing the debt. Having compartmentalized the debt, Abdul Hamid was then free to develop the remaining sources of revenue in order to compensate. This he accomplished with a fair degree of success. But by 1908 foreign economic control of Turkey had nonetheless extended far beyond the bounds set by the public debt commission. In part this was the Sultan's own fault: he encouraged

European economic competition as a substitute for territorial ambitions; his drive to create the conditions for industrialization (and thus increased revenues), particularly the construction of railways, required foreign investment; the burdens of an expanded army and an inflated bureaucracy needed fresh loans. However, in addition, the industrial powers had no desire to foster Ottoman economic independence. The 'capitulations'—privileges granted to foreigners in the days of Ottoman might, and allowing them exemption from Turkish law and taxation—became the symbol and instrument of the Sultan's weakness. Businessmen in Turkey were foreign residents or Ottoman citizens of non-Turkish race. Turkey itself was predominantly an agricultural country. In Abdul Hamid's reign the value of Anatolian grain exports went from 465 million kurus to 754 million, and the peasantry's contribution to state revenues grew from 77 per cent of the total to 87 per cent between 1872 and 1910.¹¹ But the capitulations prevented any increase in tariffs to protect Turkish industry from imports or to generate state wealth from exports. The exploitation of coal and mineral resources was limited; investment in industrial infrastructure could only proceed by way of foreign concessions and foreign loans. Thus, the Imperial Ottoman Bank was under British and (increasingly) French control, and 22 per cent of the public debt was owed to the former and 63 per cent to the latter. Thus too, despite a flourishing overseas commerce, Turkey had a trade deficit of 1.5 billion kurus in 1907–8.

The central aim, therefore, of the Young Turks' coup in 1908 was modernization, and modernization for a specific end, that of reversing Ottoman decline. Abdul Hamid, although aspects of his administration had been marked by success, had ruled as an absolute despot and had created an administration centred around the court rather than parliament. The revolutionaries aspired to restore the constitution of 1876. Their inspiration was thus in part western, liberal, and democratic: 'la Jeune Turquie' had been founded in Parisian exile in 1889. But the émigrés had split, some rejecting foreign influences and embracing centralization and others not. Within the empire the growth of professional education, particularly in the army and the civil service, sponsored an indigenous political awareness. Secret societies of young Ottoman officers drew inspiration not just from the west, but also from Japan, for Japan had managed to modernize without destroying its traditional society, and had given evidence of its emergence with victory on the battlefield. The Turkish army was convinced that fears of a coup had caused its neglect at Abdul Hamid's hands, and that if allowed a free rein it could crush terrorism and assure Ottoman integrity.

¹¹ On the general background, see Shaw and Shaw, *Ottoman empire*, ii. 201–41; Feroz Ahmad, 'The last Ottoman Empire', in Kent (ed.), *The great powers*; Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*.

In 1906 a post office official, Mehmed Talaat, formed the Ottoman Freedom Society in Salonika. The young officers of the 3rd army proved particularly enthusiastic adherents, and its ideas were carried to the 2nd army at Monastir. In September 1907 the Ottoman Freedom Society merged with the centralist arm of the exile movement, the Committee of Union and Progress, and adopted its name. It also absorbed a smaller but older organization, *Vatan* ('Fatherland'), which had been formed by Mustafa Kemal, who returned to Macedonia from a posting in Syria, also in September 1907. The initiative for action in 1908 came from within the empire rather than without—from Salonika and from the 2nd and 3rd armies.

In a sense the 1908 revolution was not a revolution. Parliament was restored (not introduced for the first time); the sultanate was not overthrown; grand viziers of the pre-revolutionary period held the same office afterwards; and the Young Turks themselves did not seize power. The class origins of the Young Turks were relatively humble; they lacked both the age and experience seen as necessary for government. The Committee of Union and Progress, therefore, preferred to exercise influence on government through indirect means and to continue to make a virtue of its quasi-secret arrangements. The result was a power struggle between and within the old political elites and the newly established political parties.

If there was a revolution it occurred in 1909, and it did so as the result of a largely fabricated counter-revolution. The grievances of the army were central to the 1908 coup. Demonstrations over arrears of pay and the failure to release conscripts at the conclusion of their terms of service had turned to mutiny on several occasions between 1906 and 1908. Of 505 members of the Salonika group of the Committee of Union and Progress in 1908, 309 were officers. Themselves products of military academies, they were anxious to reduce the army's reliance on officers promoted from the ranks. In April 1909 the mutiny of a Constantinople-based battalion, feeding on Islamic fundamentalism and probably stoked by discharged ex-ranker officers, was dressed up as a counter-revolution. The Sultan, almost certainly wrongly, was implicated. Mustafa Kemal created an Action Army from elements of the 2nd and 3rd armies, and became its chief of staff. Under the guise of restoring order it declared martial law, cracked down on those parties opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress, purged the older Ottoman elites, and deposed Abdul Hamid.

Thus the army, not the Committee of Union and Progress, provided such semblances of political order as existed between 1908 and 1913. Mustafa Kemal himself proposed that officers should disengage from politics. Mahmud Sevket Pasha, the commander of the 3rd army, led the Action Army and subsequently became inspector-general of all the troops in the region and then minister of war. Sevket put the weight on patriotism and national security ahead of

liberalism and social reform. He was tolerant of the Committee of Union and Progress rather than supportive of it. The latter divided against itself, the soldiers being more extremist than the civilians, and their political influence thriving on crisis but languishing without it.¹²

The initial reaction of the great powers to the Young Turks' revolt was supportive, if condescending. The Committee of Union and Progress saw the objectives of the new Turkey as a revived Ottomanism, resting on a programme of capitalism and westernization. Its members, therefore, expected the backing of Britain in particular. Throughout the nineteenth century Britain had urged such reforms as means to Turkish reinvigoration. More specifically, the conviction that the meeting between Edward VII and the Tsar at Reval in 1908 presaged Russo-British intervention in the problems of Macedonia had been a key cause of the coup: domestic reform was seen as a preventive to foreign support for irredentism and eventual partition.

But the hopes of the Young Turks were soon dashed. Grey was ready to 'give sympathy and encouragement to the reform movement', but otherwise proposed 'to wait upon events'; he would not, in other words, use Britain's external clout to aid the establishment of internal order.¹³ The cycle of coup and counter-coup, the violence of Turkish politics over the next five years, did nothing to persuade him to adopt a more positive line. Nor did the revolution staunch the loss of territory. The Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, still nominally Ottoman, was the first blow, and elicited—it seemed—only weak protests from the Entente powers. Italy's attack on Tripoli appeared also to enjoy great-power collusion. As the Italians' allies, the Germans were reluctant to intervene, and the British did not respond to Turkey's appeals. The culmination of this process, the Balkan wars and the effective extinction of European Turkey, confirmed for the Young Turks the notion that the international system would provide them with no succour.

The visible erosion on the frontiers was coupled with the latent threat of partition from within. Germany's debates with Russia, Britain, and France over the apportionment of Turkish railway construction carried with them the implication that the powers were dividing even Asiatic Turkey into spheres of influence—a process confirmed by Russia's proposals for the protection of the Armenians. Thus France sketched out its claim to Syria, Britain to southern Mesopotamia and the Gulf, Russia to the Caucasus, and Germany to central Anatolia. In reality, each of these powers pursued a policy designed to sustain the Ottoman empire, albeit in a weakened state. But by preparing its claim should the actions of another power trigger Turkey's final partition, it fuelled great-power rivalry and Ottoman mistrust.

¹² Ahmad, *Young Turks*, esp. 1–56; Zürcher, *Unionist factor*, 19–51; Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*, 18–19, 22, 24–5, 42–56.

¹³ Miller, *Straits*, 31–2.

Thus, the revolution produced no change in Turkey's economic subservience. Many of the Young Turks were themselves government employees whose salaries or pensions determined the size of the public debt. The army's hold on politics made increased military expenditure, not budgetary cuts, the order of the day. In 1910–11 the government collected 2.88 billion kurus but disbursed 3.37 billion. The frustration with foreign economic dominance—by 1911 the public debt organization employed a staff of 8,931, and was larger than the ministry of finance itself—fuelled antipathy to western capitalism and further undermined political liberalism. Djavid, the Young Turk minister of finance, struggled to establish Ottoman independence of French financial control, both in the public debt and in the Ottoman Bank. However, in so doing he weakened one of the few external bulwarks against the empire's partition. The French government's support of the political status quo was conditional on the interests of its own bondholders. Djavid resigned in May 1911.¹⁴

In none of the key areas, therefore, had the revolution of 1908 reversed the decline. And by 1912 the Committee of Union and Progress itself seemed a spent force, reliant on an increasingly authoritarian army and responsible for the alienation of Britain and France. Political parties, themselves offshoots of the Committee, entered the lists as its opponents. In November 1911 the Liberal Union was formed, pledged to the ideals of 1908 and 1909, ideals to which the Young Turks themselves seemed increasingly hostile. In January 1912 the Committee of Union and Progress exploited its hold on the provincial administration to ensure a triumphant, albeit corrupt, success at the polls before the Liberal Union could organize itself. With its parliamentary position shored up for the time being, it pushed through an amendment to article 35 of the constitution, allowing the Sultan to dissolve parliament, and so swinging the balance of power from the chamber to the executive. Such cynical manipulation of the constitution infuriated a group of junior officers with liberal links, who in July 1912 threatened a coup. The Sultan appointed a fresh government, without Young Turk members, and with a fixed determination to root the Committee of Union and Progress out of politics altogether. Using the weapon provided by the Committee itself, the government dissolved parliament under the amended article 35. The Young Turks had a foothold neither in cabinet nor in chamber.

The Committee saved itself from political extinction by playing the patriotic card. The outbreak of the first Balkan war at the beginning of October 1912 diverted the government's attention from domestic affairs, but also at first persuaded the Young Turks not to react until peace had been restored.

¹⁴ Ahmad, *The young Turks*, 75–80; Shaw and Shaw, *Ottoman empire*, ii. 285–7; Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*, 92, 110–12; Hayne, *French foreign office*, 26, 180, 185.

However, by December the Turkish army in the Balkans had fallen back almost to Constantinople. It seemed possible that the government would confirm Turkey's loss of Adrianople in an effort to get peace. On 23 January 1913 a hot-headed army officer of Macedonian origins, and (since he was only 31) a Young Turk in more than name, Enver, stormed into a cabinet meeting at the head of a group of soldiers. The minister of war was shot dead and the grand vizier forced to resign. Another Unionist, Djemal Pasha, took over the 1st army based at Constantinople. Enver then asked the Sultan to form a coalition government with Mahmut Sevket at its head. The external crisis presented by Adrianople had provided the Committee of Union and Progress with the means to resuscitate its domestic fortunes.

Even now, however, its hold on power was far from assured. Enver had acted out of frustration with the military situation rather than in pursuit of political self-advancement.¹⁵ Only three Unionists were in the cabinet, all of them moderates, and the new grand vizier was tolerant rather than supportive of the Committee. Adrianople fell on 26 March. Conspiracies against the government abounded; in Cairo the ousted grand vizier, Mehmed Kamil Pasha, was believed to be in cahoots with the British. The Young Turks' policy was, in the circumstances, prudent. They harped on the theme of national unity; they formed a committee of national defence to mobilize the country's war effort. Opposition to the government, therefore, smacked of betrayal. Kamil's return to Constantinople on 28 May to head a coup and Sevket's assassination on 11 June played into the Unionists' hands. The coup was crushed, Djemal imposed martial law, the Liberal Union was suppressed, and four more members of the Committee of Union and Progress were brought into the government. The new grand vizier, Mehmed Said Halim Pasha, was himself a member of the Committee; Djemal became minister of public works, and Mehmed Talaat minister of the interior. The appointment of Enver as minister of war in January 1914 brought together the triumvirate—Enver, Djemal, and Talaat—most associated with Turkey's entry into, and prosecution of, the war. Enver purged the officer corps in a reasonably successful attempt to remove the army from politics. The Committee itself—reputed to consist of about forty members—drew the strings of patronage into its own hands. The recovery of Adrianople in July 1913 gave the new government at least some consolation in foreign affairs, greater authority with the army, and success where its predecessors had failed.

The fact that it had taken five years for the Young Turks to assume power made it easy for foreign observers to underestimate the hold which they now exercised on Turkish politics. Those five years, although characterized by coups, assassinations, and defeats, proved vital in shaping the

¹⁵ Haley, *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXX (1994), 16.

Committee of Union and Progress's attitude to power. First and foremost, the young and inexperienced officers and bureaucrats of 1908 had served an apprenticeship in the exercise of government. Secondly, the Unionists' interpretation of modernization had been defined. In shedding its liberal support, the Committee had become a leaner but more compact body. But equally, its desire to westernize and to secularize, through the emancipation of women, through the reform of education, through the introduction of civil law, distanced it from the more conservative interpretations of Islam. Turkey remained Muslim—in some respects it became more so—but a division between faith and state was inaugurated. Pan-Islam was associated with the Hamidian regime. The Committee's aim was to centralize the state's administration. In their political philosophy, therefore, both Islam and Ottomanism—the universality of one and the multinationalism of the other—took on subordinate roles.

What replaced them in importance was Turkish nationalism. The loss of European Turkey and the inability to ensure the loyalty of Greeks or Armenians helped restate the Islamic identity of the empire by reducing the influence, as well as absolute numbers, of Christians. But Muslims too, most notably at the empire's peripheries in Albania and the Yemen, resisted the revival of Ottomanism through centralization. Therefore the setbacks of 1908–12 put the weight on the Anatolian heartland. All three—Djemal, Talaat, and Enver—hailed from the lost territories; yet their response to defeat was positive rather than negative. What was left them was racially and culturally more homogeneous. What it lacked was a sense of identity. This they endeavoured to provide, through language and literature, through youth movements, through 'Turk Ocagi' (the Turkish Hearth Society).

The origins of this movement were intellectual and academic. The study of a decaying culture of a backward society had flourished among exiles in France; it had assumed an increasingly political texture in response to European nationalism. Ziya Gokalp, its principal spokesman and a member of the Central Council of the Committee of Union and Progress, was a student of Le Bon and Durkheim, and professor of sociology at the new University of Istanbul. But if its bottom was western, its bulk was eastern. Its most vociferous advocates included a disproportionate number of Tatar, Azeri, and Uzbek exiles from Russia. After the 1905 revolution the Turkic peoples of the Russian empire hoped for greater autonomy. At first censorship was slack—250 journals were published by Turkic groups in Russia between 1905 and 1917—but as controls were reimposed so the focus of agitation moved across the Caucasus to Constantinople. This flight from the repression of a Christian power highlighted the fact that the Tatars and others were Muslims as well as Turks. Therefore Turkish nationalism provided a third way, at once both an alternative to and a synthesis of westernization and Islam.

Gokalp defined nationalism in terms of culture and sentiment. His aim was to get the average Osman to identify less with the cosmopolitan stock of the empire's administrative and business world and more with the illiterate Anatolian peasant. Thus, ethnic and political limits were not clearly drawn. Thus too, the distinction between Turkism and pan-Turkism became confused. Turkism's basic proposition suggested that, by being racially more united, the state would gain in vigour what it had lost in size. Pan-Turkism, on the other hand, was openly irridentist and expansionist. In its most extreme forms Magyars and Finns, Tamils and Chinese, were numbered as Turkic peoples. The Young Turks never went this far. But the thrust of their message was nonetheless visionary, its penumbra romantic. Gokalp directed the Turk's gaze not to the west but to the east, identifying Turks with Tatars, with the populations of the Russian Caucasus, of Azerbaijan, Turkestan, Persia, and Afghanistan. 'For the Turks,' Gokalp wrote in 1911, 'the fatherland is neither Turkey nor Turkestan; their fatherland is a great and eternal land: Turan.'¹⁶

The implications of pan-Turanianism, or even of Turkish nationalism, for Turkish policy in 1914 should not be exaggerated. Turkey did not enter the Great War with the intention of turning Gokalp's cultural reveries into political reality. Nor could the Committee of Union and Progress publicly define Turkification so narrowly that it excluded non-Turkish Muslims (such as the Arabs) or non-Muslims of other races (such as Armenians or Greeks). At a secret meeting of the Committee of Union and Progress in August 1910, the Young Turks declared their resolve to uphold Muslim supremacy and to ensure the dominance of the Turkish language, but in endorsing those objectives Talaat (who, one observer concluded, had no commitment to any religion, including Islam)¹⁷ stated that their objective remained that of 'Ottomanizing the Empire'.¹⁸ Both Ottomanism and Islam continued to coexist with Turkism. For those reluctant to embrace the new thinking, Turkification carried a measure of intolerance and xenophobia. But its purpose was consolidatory, not revisionist. A common religion and a common language would serve the Young Turks' objective, a stronger and more united Turkey that could stand on its own feet, and so preserve itself from economic subordination, territorial partition, and nationalist irridentism.

Such objectives could not, however, be achieved independently of the great powers. Turkey's survival, in which the powers were mildly interested, was not the same as Turkey's recrudescence, in which they were not. Not only would the latter threaten their own established interests, it also seemed inherently improbable of fulfilment. To the external observer there was little reason to

¹⁶ Jaschke, *Die Welt des Islams*, XXIII (1941), 5; see also Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 28–42; Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, ch. 2; Bihl, *Kaukasus-Politik*, 143–50.

¹⁷ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story*, 20.

¹⁸ Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*, 63; also 84–90.

expect the new government of 1913 to be any more stable than its predecessors. Furthermore, its espousal of Turkification, and its employment of the metaphors of French Jacobinism, suggested excesses which did not appeal to liberal sensibilities. Turkey, rightly, had no faith in the concert of Europe to protect its interests. It needed an ally—an ally for whom Turkey's strength would be an asset, not a threat. The trouble was that, while Turkey itself was still weak, such an alliance held little appeal to any potential partner.¹⁹

In 1908 it had been Britain that had inspired the Committee of Union and Progress in its political reforms, and which had provided a possible break with the pro-German policies of the Sultan and of the army. But, in so far as British responses were positive, they were swayed not by Turkey as a European power but as an Asiatic one. 'I think', wrote Sir Arthur Nicolson in January 1911, 'that this Pan-Islamic movement is one of our greatest dangers in the future, and is indeed far more of a menace than the "Yellow Peril".'²⁰ With a large Muslim population in India, and indeed elsewhere in the empire, it behoved Britain to cultivate good relations with the Caliphate. Moreover, in Mesopotamia and in the Persian Gulf British interests in Ottoman stability took on a more practical form. The British India Steam Navigation Company had the shipping rights on the Euphrates and the Tigris; they, and other British and Indian companies, had—in 1906—79 per cent of the total Gulf trade; and—a growing concern now that oil-burning warships were under construction—the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and Shell (which although Dutch had a minority British interest) owned 75 per cent of the shares of the Turkish oil company. Germany's construction of the Baghdad railway and an increase in German shipping in the Gulf represented a converging challenge to the complacency of British business in the area. But Germany was less of a challenge to Britain in Asia than was Russia: in 1903 it preferred to see the former, not the latter, on the Mesopotamian littoral. In seeking protection for its interests, Britain maintained that it was buttressing the status quo; remarkably, in meeting most British desiderata in 1913 and 1914, both Germany and Turkey agreed.

¹⁹ The literature on Turkey's entry to the war is sadly deficient. Reflecting the available sources, most academic work approaches the problem from the viewpoint of a particular great power rather than from the Turkish end. Kent (ed.), *The great powers*, provides a country-by-country survey; on Britain and Turkey, see Heller, *British policy*; and Miller, *Straits*; on the Central Powers and Turkey, Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman empire*; Silberstein, *Troubled alliance*; Weber, *Eagles on the crescent*, and—older but still valuable—Mühlmann, *Deutschland und der Türkei 1913–1914*. An excellent recent survey, but focused on 1913–14, is F. A. K. Yasamee, 'Ottoman empire', in Keith Wilson (ed.), *Decisions for war*. A brief synthesis from a Turkish perspective is Y. T. Kurat, 'How Turkey drifted into World War I', in Bourne and Watt (ed.), *Studies in international history*. Also helpful: Shaw and Shaw, *Ottoman empire*; Ahmad, *Young Turks*; Larcher, *La Guerre turque*; Howard, *Partition of Turkey*; Emin, *Turkey in the World War*; Trumpener, *Journal of Modern History*, XXXIV (1962), 369–80.

²⁰ Heller, *British policy*, 39; in addition to Heller on Turko-British relations, see also Cohen, *British policy in Mesopotamia*, and Marian Kent, 'Great Britain and the end of the Ottoman empire 1900–23', in Kent (ed.), *The great powers*.

But what set the overall tenor of Turkish–British relations was not the success of British concerns in Mesopotamia but the death of Turkey in Europe. Sir Edward Grey regarded the Concert of Europe as the best device for managing Turkish decline without triggering Turkish partition; he also felt that the demise of European Turkey might consolidate Turkey in Asia. Thus, British support for Ottoman grievances over the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina involved financial compensation, not the return of territory. Apart from the Concert of Europe, the other—and progressively more important—plank to British foreign policy was the solidity of the Triple Entente. Russia was Britain's ally; Russia was also Turkey's putative foe—at least on its northern frontiers. Russia had fought Turkey in 1828, 1854, and 1877; it was a sponsor of the Balkan states, a coadjutor of the Armenians in eastern Anatolia, and an interested party in the fate of the straits and Constantinople; it was also frightened by pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. Such a combination of interests was potentially lethal to Turko-British rapprochement. Britain's policy was determined by the needs of the Entente, not of empire. In 1910 the India Office's commercial and strategic priorities in Mesopotamia were subordinated to the Foreign Office's fear that a forward policy in the region would increase Turkey's reliance on Germany. In 1911 Britain did not restrain Italy in Tripoli for fear of driving that country back into the arms of the Triple Alliance.

Britain's military and naval weakness in the region was a driving factor in its diplomacy. Even in the 1890s Britain realized that it could not prevent Russia seizing the straits without exposing itself to France in the western basin of the Mediterranean or in the channel. The Defence Committee therefore concluded in 1903 that the strategic position would be no worse if Russia had free access to the eastern Mediterranean, and in 1906 the Committee of Imperial Defence made it clear that Britain was bereft of coercive powers in relation to the straits. In reflection of these views, Grey expressed sympathy with regard to Russia's ambitions in the area, thus fomenting Izvolsky's bargaining with Aehrenthal over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, the Anglo-Russian entente had a European as well as an Asiatic naval dimension, even if the first was never part of the formal agreement. Much of the ire of the Foreign Office over the Admiralty's plans to withdraw from the Mediterranean was concerned specifically with the role of sea-power in giving stability in an area where Britain's ambivalent diplomacy left it unable to play a more positive role.²¹

One indirect substitute for the erosion of British naval power in the eastern Mediterranean was the British naval mission established in Turkey in 1908. Fisher favoured the incorporation of Turkey as a fully-fledged member of a formalized entente, and Churchill took a similar line when he entered the Admiralty. But the navy for which Britain assumed responsibility had been

²¹ Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*, 114–18; Miller, *Straits*, 17–22, 25–7, 111–12, 147.

deemed 'practically non-existent' in 1904: in 1908 vegetable gardens grew on the decks of its obsolete vessels. British naval advisers, perhaps also reflecting Fisher's advocacy of flotilla defence for enclosed home waters, urged the Turks to acquire torpedo boats rather than more sophisticated and demanding ships. But maritime inadequacy in the face of Italy in 1911 and Greece in 1912 made the Turks determined to have Dreadnoughts. The tensions which therefore emerged were exacerbated by Constantinople's conviction that the completion of the two ships it had eventually ordered from British yards was deliberately delayed. Nonetheless, in 1913 Vickers secured a thirty-year contract to upgrade and maintain Turkey's dockyards, and in May 1914 a third ship was ordered from Armstrongs.²²

This most obvious, if fraught, symbol of Turko-British co-operation was also vulnerable to Entente concerns. The Russians were less relaxed about Turkish naval power: for them its focus was the Black Sea, where their own fleet was still weak and unmodernized. The fact that Turkey's naval ambitions in 1913-14 were directed not against them but against Greece complicated the situation rather than resolved it. The British also maintained a naval mission in Athens. The Greeks were as resistant as the Turks to the idea that torpedo boats would suffice, and ordered a battle cruiser from Germany in 1912. Britain favoured the Greeks rather than the Turks, but they were determined not to allow either party to play off the great powers against each other in its search for domination of the Aegean. In Greece the case for a pre-emptive attack before Turkey received its Dreadnoughts was vitiated by exhaustion after the first Balkan war. In Turkey the determination to recover the forfeited islands of Chios and Mytilene was held in check by the fact that the Dreadnoughts had not arrived and by the vulnerability of its position in Thrace.²³

At its best, therefore, British policy towards Turkey was cautious, not warm. Its worst was represented by Sir Gerard Lowther, ambassador in Constantinople from 1908 to 1913. Lowther was slow to gather information on the Committee of Union and Progress, and when he finally did so he saw it as an aggressive and chauvinistic organization, committed to Turkish nationalism. Lowther emphasized the splits in Islam, Shi'ite versus Sunni, Arab versus Turk, and did not therefore share the fears for Muslim loyalty in the British empire; when the Young Turks spoke in a western voice, he bracketed them with the Terror of the French Revolution. In July 1913 Lowther was replaced by Sir Louis Mallet, an orientalist and an advocate of improved Turkish relations. But by 1913 British foreign policy was even more set in the mould of European policies, and of its Entente commitments. Mallet's desire to rebuild Ottoman

²² Miller, *Straits*, 59, 78-83, 96-7, 140-3, 184; Marian Kent, 'Constantinople and Asiatic Turkey 1905-1914', in Hinsley (ed.), *British foreign policy under Grey*, 158-9; Marder (ed.), *Fear God and dread nought*, ii, 197-9, 384-6, 389-90.

²³ Miller, *Straits*, 190-1, 204-6; Miller, *Superior force*, 152-7, 163-72.

strength was bridled by his belief that it must be done in conjunction with the other powers; he feared that unilateral action would trigger the very scramble for territory that it would be designed to avoid. Mesopotamia could still be resolved as a local issue; but it could not be the vehicle for a broader Turko-British alliance. Thus, on three occasions—in 1908, 1911, and 1913—the Turks sought an agreement with Britain, and on all three were met with coolness. On the last, in June 1913, Turkey offered Britain a defensive alliance. But Turkey was seen as too weak and the proposal too challenging to the European powers for its risks to be acceptable to Britain.

Historically, Germany was not a major player in Ottoman affairs. By 1913 the value of its exports to Turkey was still inferior to those of Britain and Austria-Hungary, and the value of its imports to those of Britain, Austria-Hungary, and France. Germany was restricted in Turkey, as elsewhere, by its lack of mobile capital: in 1910 Germany had provided Turkey with the loan which France and Britain had refused, but in 1913 Germany could not lend and the Turks had reverted to the French. On the other hand, the cause of Germany's lack of liquidity was the pace of its own industrialization, and what was striking—and alarming to those powers alert to German expansionism—was the growth of German imports to Turkey. France dominated the Ottoman public debt, but saw its share of Turkish imports fall from 18 per cent of the total in 1887 to 11 per cent in 1910. Over the same period Germany's share rose from 6 per cent to 21 per cent, and Austria-Hungary's from 13 per cent to the same figure; Britain's fell from 60 per cent to 35 per cent.²⁴ Thus, selective examination suggested a higher German profile in the Turkish economy than did crude aggregates. Two specific areas were of special significance, since their impact was as much strategic as it was economic.

In 1903 the Deutsche Bank secured a ninety-nine-year concession for the construction of the Baghdad railway, together with branch lines in Mesopotamia and Syria. A subsidiary company, the Baghdad-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft, was formed, and was guaranteed a minimum income on the operating costs: the first 4,500 francs earned on each kilometre of track per annum were to go to the company, sums above 4,500 francs and below 10,000 to the Turkish government, and profits over 10,000 francs were to be split 60:40 between the government and the company. German heavy industry thrived on the export of rolling-stock and steel rails. The grandiloquent title the 'Berlin-to-Baghdad railway', and the connotations of German expansionism which it contained, tended to obscure the fact that commercial rather than strategic considerations underpinned German involvement. Indeed, the very fact that the railway did not meet the needs of the Turkish army caused friction between

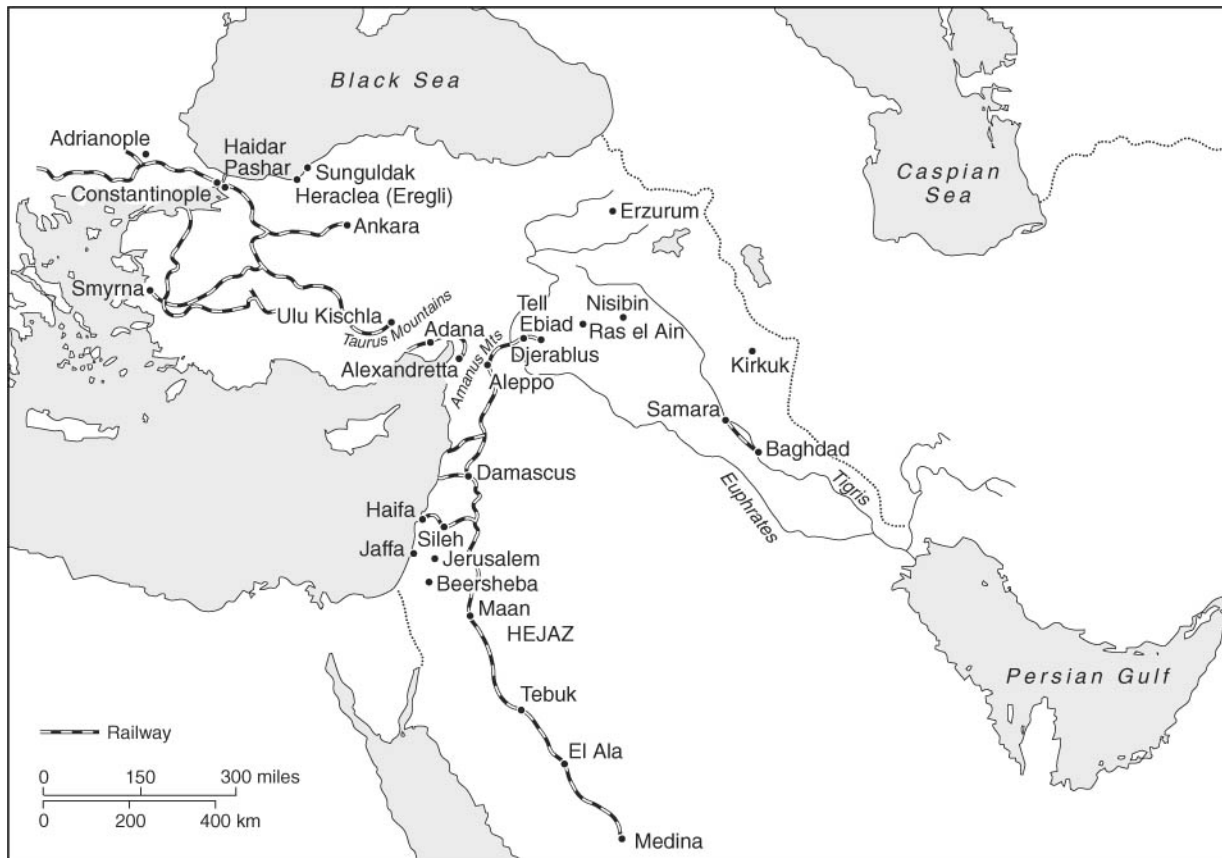
²⁴ Gottlieb, *Studies*, 21.

the company and German officers.²⁵ In so far as the railway was used as an adjunct of policy, it became the means for détente, not confrontation. The Germans respected the Russians' wish that the course of the line should pass through southern Anatolia rather than open up the north-eastern part of Turkey; thus, they deliberately forfeited the opportunity to threaten the Caucasus and so draw Russian troops away from the European front. Britain and Germany agreed to divide the Mesopotamian parts of the line into southern and northern sections. Compromise with France over Syria proved more difficult. But again the German objectives were economic: the financial viability of the line rested in large part on its links with Aleppo and Alexandretta. Germany's priorities with the Baghdad railway stand comparison with France's control of the public debt and Britain's interests in Mesopotamia; over the long term Germany wanted to establish its stake in the event of Turkey's partition, and the foreign ministry worked closely with the Deutsche Bank, but in the meantime it intended to compete in this, as in other, overseas markets.

The second obvious symbol of the German presence in Turkey was its military mission. It was the reaction of the other powers, and specifically Russia, to the Liman von Sanders affair in early 1914 that set the military mission in an international political context. Liman himself stressed that his task was entirely technical, to help in the training and rebuilding of the Turkish army after the defeats of the Balkan wars.²⁶ Furthermore, the invitation originated with the Turks; it balanced the comparable roles of the French with the Turkish gendarmerie and the British with the Turkish navy. The decision to approach the Germans in 1913, which ran counter to the Young Turks' own proclivities in foreign policy, was thus a product of the need for equipoise, and also the fruit of history. German advice to the Turkish army began in the 1830s under the elder Moltke; many senior Turkish officers, including Sevket and Ahmed Izzet Pasha (grand vizier and minister of war respectively at the time the invitation was issued), had been attached to the German army in their early careers; and Colmar von der Goltz, who had served in Turkey from 1883 to 1895 and again in 1909–10, enjoyed an intellectual, if not practical, influence in Constantinople that enhanced Germany's military reputation. Liman von Sanders's mission therefore represented continuity for an army already influenced by German military practices, and which in its anxiety to restore its fighting capacity as soon as possible could not afford the time lost in a change of style. Germany's acceptance of the Turkish invitation was defensive more than it was aggressive. At stake was the German army's *amour propre*; a refusal would be tantamount to the acceptance of

²⁵ Trumpener, *Journal of Contemporary History*, I (1966), 180–1; see also id., *Germany and the Ottoman empire*, ch. 9.

²⁶ Liman von Sanders, *Five years in Turkey*, 1–4; see also Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman empire*, 13–14.



MAP 24. THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE'S RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS

responsibility for the defeats of the Balkan wars. If Germany did not accept, then the invitation would go to another power. Diplomatically, this would constitute a step back; after all, in 1913 the Turkish army was a—possibly the—major player in Turkish domestic politics.²⁷ But, as important, it would be a mistake for German trade. Krupp had established a hold on the demand for field artillery in south-eastern Europe, and in Turkey specifically, in the 1880s. But French Creusot-made guns were penetrating the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek markets, and, it was argued, had performed better in the Balkan wars. The German military mission therefore had a responsibility to foster German arms sales.²⁸ What the mission most definitely was not doing was preparing a Turko-German alliance for war; the agreement reserved Germany's right to withdraw Liman and his officers in the event of war.

Therefore, like Britain's, Germany's areas of co-operation with the Turks were self-contained; they were not conceived as the bridge to a more formal alliance. The advocates of an alliance, who included the Kaiser in 1905, Colmar von der Goltz in 1909, Moltke in 1911, and Marschall von Bieberstein, the ambassador until 1912, rested their case on military grounds. Turkey's defeat in the First Balkan War therefore undermined their position. Furthermore, they were not supported by the foreign ministry in Berlin. The latter feared upsetting Britain and France. Britain proved to be the conditioning factor in another context. When in 1909 the Turks responded to Britain's aversion to providing Dreadnoughts by asking the Germans for them, the foreign ministry was keen to oblige, but Tirpitz refused to disrupt the navy's domestic building programme.²⁹

In Constantinople itself German policy was fragmented by the competition of overlapping but independent responsibilities. The leading supporters of closer Turko-German relations were Walter von Stempel, the military attaché, and Hans Humann, the son of an archaeologist who had worked at Smyrna and de facto naval attaché from autumn 1913. Both Stempel and, particularly, Humann were on close personal terms with Enver; Stempel recognized the opportunity for political influence provided by the German training of army officers, Enver himself having served in Berlin as Turkish military attaché between 1909 and 1911, and Humann was a protégé of Tirpitz and a mouthpiece for German navalism. But Stempel and Humann were isolated, both in a military and in a diplomatic context. Militarily, Stempel's reports to Berlin had to compete with those of Liman, whose responsibilities were entirely independent of those of the embassy. The German general staff saw Liman's task as technical, but Baron von Wangenheim, Germany's ambassador, saw it as

²⁷ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 91–2, 94–5, 108–9, 111–13.

²⁸ Schulte, *Vor dem Kriegsausbruch*, 19–35.

²⁹ Hagen, *Türkei im ersten Weltkrieg*, 31–2; Epkenhans, *Wilhelminische Flottenrüstung*, 305; Mom-bauer, 'Moltke', 115–16.

political. Moltke would have been content to dispatch a team of junior but professionally proficient advisers; Wangenheim wanted a figurehead capable of exploiting the Turkish army's clout in domestic politics for the benefit of Germany's eastern policy. This did not mean preparation for war. When Liman stressed the strategic needs of the Baghdad railway, Wangenheim countered by emphasizing its economic rationale and its function in great-power détente. Liman huffed and puffed over the salaries and ranks of his officers—both inflated in Turkish eyes—and threatened to resign: Enver did not object. Most importantly, Liman dismissed the Turkish army as being of no military value in the immediate future. Accordingly, in March and again in May 1914 Moltke wrote off Turkey as a potential ally.³⁰ Diplomatically, Stempel and Humann found themselves countered by Wangenheim. The key to Wangenheim's policy was Germany's need to find an accommodation with Russia. Thus, Wangenheim had been a prime mover in seeking a settlement of the Liman affair, suggesting compromises in his status unacceptable to the general himself, and so aggravating their poor relations. If a synthesis of German policy towards Turkey before the First World War is possible, its complexion would differ little from that of other powers. Co-operation with Turkey was seen as desirable, but its pursuit should come second to the management of the Triple Alliance and its needs. On this broader stage Turkey, particularly after the defeats of the Balkan wars, threatened to be a liability rather than an asset.³¹

Not that Turkey in 1914, at least to begin with, was actively seeking a German alliance. The great powers inevitably interpreted the position of Turkey against the background of their alliance networks. This impression was confirmed by Said Halim and Talaat, both of whom reckoned that Turkey needed the protection of one or other of the two blocs. But actual policy was determined by local considerations, by the balance of power in the Aegean and the Balkans, and by Russian ambitions in the area. Turkey had two main aims. First there came the recovery of Chios and Mytilene from the Greeks. Both the French and the British were pro-Greek, but the British were building the Dreadnoughts Turkey needed to counter the Greek navy, and the Kaiser, bound to King Constantine by Hohenzollern blood, was unlikely to support an anti-Greek policy for Germany. Secondly, Turkey wanted to come to terms with Bulgaria. Both powers had an interest in the revision of the Treaty of Bucharest, and Turkey was anxious to stabilize its position on the European side of the straits. Here the policy of the Central Powers was divided: Austria-Hungary was anxious to establish a fresh Balkan League around Bulgaria, but Germany was not. As late as mid-July 1914 Pallavicini, the Habsburg representative in Constantinople, found his advocacy of a new Balkan grouping built around

³⁰ Mühlmann, *Das deutsch-türkische Waffenbündnis*, 14; Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 150–2.

³¹ Weber, *Eagles on the crescent*, 17, 19–20.

Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey blocked by both Jagow and Wangenheim. Like the Austrians, the Turks had an interest in overthrowing the verdict of the Balkan wars, and some of them, Enver in particular, were prepared to fight to achieve that. What made such a policy thinkable was the fact that Russia, the power with the weakest economic stake in the Ottoman empire and no seat on the Ottoman public debt commission, appeared less of a threat than theretofore. Russia had not a single Dreadnought (although four were under construction) available in the Black Sea. For the time being at least, a weakened Turkey in control of the straits was a better proposition for Russia than their possession by a strong power other than Russia.

Thus, in May 1914 pro-Germanism aroused as divided reactions in Turkey as did pro-Turkism in Germany. German efforts to renegotiate the financial clauses of the 1903 railway agreement, and a conviction that Germany was just as bent on Turkish partition as the other powers, fuelled the pro-Entente lobby. Rejected by Britain, Turkey first turned not to Germany but to Russia and then to France. In May itself Talaat floated the idea of an alliance with the Russians. Sazonov was sufficiently taken by surprise not to seize his opportunity. In July Djemal visited France to attend the naval manoeuvres off Toulon. Distrustful of Germany's ulterior motives, Djemal argued that France, if allied to Turkey, would restrain Russia. But his timing was unfortunate. Poincaré and Viviani were about to depart for St Petersburg; thus the French could excuse their own support for the Greeks and their sensitivity as to Russian reactions with postponement.³²

By late July 1914, therefore, Turkey still had no alliance and had been rejected by each of the Entente powers. The case for a German alliance became proportionately more convincing. Germany's attraction was its combination of military strength on the continent with its weakness in Asia Minor. Germany had taken no Ottoman territory, as Britain had done in Egypt or Cyprus; Germany was not a Mediterranean or Gulf naval power and therefore could not threaten Turkey's long coastline, as Britain or France could; Germany had no Muslim colonies to create a clash of interests with Islam. Instead, Germany's interests were purely commercial; therefore, self-interest would determine German willingness to fight in Turkey's defence. Put in the context of the great-power alliances, the Turks were invoking the principles of deterrence—of the threat that the partitioning of Turkey by the Entente powers would trigger war with the Triple Alliance—in order to buttress their own integrity. More immediately, a treaty with Germany would become the means to persuade Romania and Bulgaria to ally with Turkey, and so create a fresh Balkan bloc which would isolate Greece.

³² For Djemal's own account, see *his Memoirs*, 101–8; also Corrigan, *Past and Present*, 36 (1967), 144–52.

It was therefore Turkey, not Germany, which initiated the alliance between the two powers, and it did so for reasons largely independent of the July crisis and its impact on European politics. The advocates of the alliance—Turkey's ambassador in Berlin, Said Halim (the grand vizier), Talaat and Djemal (after their rejections by the Russians and the French respectively), and, above all, Enver—were still in a minority both in the cabinet and in the Committee of Union and Progress. The offer made by Enver on 22 July 1914 was consequently kept secret from the cabinet as a whole.

However, while Turkey's offer reflected a long-term policy, Germany's acceptance was determined by short-term considerations. After all, nothing had happened in Asia Minor to make Turkey a more seductive mate. Only four days before the Turkish offer Wangenheim had reported that,

without doubt, Turkey today is still an unsuitable alliance partner. They only want their allies to take on their burdens, without offering the slightest gains in return... The policy of the Triple Alliance must be to shape relations so that, if the Turks should after years finally become a major power, the threads will not have been cut.³³

The author of the change in German perceptions was the Kaiser himself. Wilhelm's dynasticism had caused him to favour Greece and to dislike Enver's radical politics. But by 24 July immediate military imperatives had become more compelling. A Balkan grouping of Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania linked to the Triple Alliance would transform the prospects for Austria-Hungary and the balance of forces on the eastern front. The alternative, particularly given the Turkish approach to the Russians in May (which was known to the Germans), might be a Turkish-led Balkan grouping on the side of the Entente. Furthermore, Wilhelm's views were fully in accord with those of his Austro-Hungarian ally. Pallavicini argued that the swift defeat of Serbia would create the opportunity to form—with Turkey's adherence—a Balkan constellation favourable to the dual monarchy.³⁴

What came back from Berlin was therefore not the same proposal which the Turks had originally offered. Foreign ministry opposition to a long-term alliance persisted. Instead, the German objective, reflecting the dominance enjoyed by the military in decision-making in the last four days of July, was the fulfilment of immediate military needs. It has been argued that Bethmann Hollweg hoped, through the agreement, to frighten Britain towards neutrality.³⁵ But in reality Bethmann's role was reactive rather than creative. Moltke now saw some relief from his worries with regard to the eastern front, and,

³³ Mühlmann, *Deutschland und der Türkei*, 39.

³⁴ Weber, *Eagles on the crescent*, 52–5; Corrigan, *Past and Present*, 36 (1967), 150–1; A. May, *Passing of the Hapsburg monarchy*, 140; Silberstein, *Troubled alliance*, 10–16. But F. R. Bridge, 'The Hapsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, 1900–18' in Kent (ed.), *Great powers*, 43–6, suggests Austria-Hungary was more cautious.

³⁵ Mühlmann, *Das deutsche-türkische Waffenbündnis*, 18.

putting aside his earlier reservations concerning Turkey's military capabilities, posited a Turkish attack on Russia. Liman seemed optimistic with regard to Turkey's military potential, and reckoned that four to five army corps would soon be ready to take the field. Bethmann Hollweg accepted the argument, contenting himself with the thought that the agreement should be limited to the immediate military crisis.

Enver and his colleagues, therefore, found themselves no longer engaged in their primary task of resolving their Balkan problems but of committing themselves to war against Russia. The fact that they were prepared to do so must in retrospect be seen as evidence of their brash foolhardiness. But at the time the arguments for following Germany were not without conviction. The immediate confrontation was that between Austria-Hungary and Serbia; in the calculations of Said Halim there would be a short war which would impel Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance and effect a new balance of power in the Balkans. Serbia and Greece would be squeezed, disgorging the Aegean islands and western Thrace, and Germany's principal function would be to guarantee the consequent settlement.³⁶ Thus, a defensive alliance with Germany against Russia did not necessarily betoken involvement in a wider European war, and did provide a guarantee against Turkey's most long-standing military threat. Secondly, given all the indications that the European powers were bent on the partition of the Ottoman empire, if a wider European war did break out it might trigger a scramble for Turkey. In particular, the straits, the waterway which linked Russia to its allies, could never remain truly neutral. Both sides would see their control as crucial to the war's outcome. In these circumstances neutrality did not seem a viable option; certainly it had not profited Turkey in the recent past. On 2 August 1914 Germany and Turkey formed an alliance. Austria-Hungary adhered three days later.

The hasty improvisation which had characterized Germany's acceptance of the Turkish offer continued to determine its dealings with the Ottoman empire in the autumn of 1914. Having secured an ally, Germany's main need was to make sure that the ally became a belligerent. In particular, the knowledge that only a minority of the Turkish cabinet had negotiated the treaty, and that parliament had been adjourned rather than risk its rejection of the alliance, coupled with the well-established volatility of Turkish politics to suggest that the opportunity to get Turkey into the war on the side of the Central Powers might be fleeting. But Turkey's military weakness, which had argued against an alliance in May, had not been eradicated by August. Turkey was not ready for war; mobilization would take months; its European frontier was unsecured, and the Dardanelles were inadequately defended. None of these considerations stopped Moltke and, in particular, Conrad from hatching hare-brained

³⁶ Yasamee, 'Ottoman empire', in Wilson (ed), *Decisions for war*, 237–8.

schemes for execution by Turkish forces.³⁷ Wangenheim tried to console the intemperate soldiers by arguing for the advantages of Turkey's benevolent neutrality. The alliance had forestalled the formation of a hostile Balkan league, and by remaining out of the war Turkey minimized its material demands on the Central Powers.³⁸ But the effect of Wangenheim's approach was to keep alive the division in German policy which had existed before the conclusion of the alliance.

For the moment, therefore, the Turks were in a strong bargaining position. German splits and German needs gave them the upper hand in negotiations. On 6 August Said Halim took the opportunity presented by Germany's request that Turkey admit the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to the straits to spell out to Wangenheim what he believed the implications of the treaty to be. Germany was to support the abolition of the capitulations, to aid Turkey in the recovery of its 1878 frontiers in the Caucasus, to reconsider Turkey's Balkan frontier, to promote understandings with Bulgaria and Romania, and, if Greece joined the Entente, to help Turkey regain its Aegean islands. In addition, Germany was not to make peace while any Turkish territory remained in enemy occupation, and was to ensure that Turkey received a war indemnity. Prudently, Wangenheim made his acceptance of these terms conditional on Turkey's belligerence and Germany's ability to dictate the peace. But neither then, nor with the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* flying Turkish colours, did Turkey abandon its neutrality.

Bulgaria was the key to Turkey's position. The Ottoman empire could not fight Russia with its back exposed to a potentially hostile Balkan neighbour. But on 9 August the Turkish cabinet's Unionist members went even further: they proposed to await the outcome of negotiations with Greece and Romania as well. Thus they could benefit from the protection of the Central Powers while postponing the costs of fighting. Said Halim in particular effectively saw the Turko-German alliance as the means to create a four-power Balkan bloc. The negotiations surrounding such a configuration—the Bulgarians would not act without a guarantee from the Romanians, and by September the Greeks were embracing neutrality—became so protracted as to be a means by which those favouring neutrality could postpone entry into the war indefinitely.³⁹

The ambivalence of the Turkish cabinet, while it represented a source of strength in negotiation with Germany, was an indication of the limitations on Enver's power. Opinion in Constantinople was divided four ways. Around Enver were those convinced of German military prowess and of the need to hitch Turkey's star to a Triple Alliance victory as quickly as possible. Opposed to him was the economic realism of those who argued that Turkey should be

³⁷ Pomiankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 80–2.

³⁸ Silberstein, *Troubled alliance*, 91–2.

³⁹ Yasamee, in Wilson (ed.), *Decisions for war*, 242, 245, 247–8; Miller, *Straits*, 224–6, 234, 283–5.

allied to the Entente, the potential victors because of their greater resources. The neutralists fell into two groups: those in favour of strict neutrality, and those who favoured armed neutrality and an alignment with Germany as a defence against Russia.⁴⁰ The fact that policy lay in the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress as well as the cabinet, that the divisions were replicated there, and that its membership was unclear, doubled the uncertainties created by these splits. Britain's abandonment of neutrality, the failure of Italy and Romania to honour their obligations to the Triple Alliance, and—in due course—the defeat on the Marne all progressively weakened the hands of the pro-German lobby. Each of the steps taken by Turkey in August prolonged the ambiguity. The simultaneous declaration of neutrality and of mobilization, approved by the cabinet on 3 August, appeased all parties: the warriors had put war preparations in train, the neutralists had approved those preparations so that Turkey could protect its neutrality. Even the acceptance of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, which seemed bound to force Turkey's hand, was accomplished without a change of stance.

Vital to Turkey's ability to resist German pressures was the support it received from the Entente powers in the maintenance of its neutrality. Turkey got away with the most flagrantly un-neutral behaviour in August because at that stage neither Russia nor Britain could afford to interpret Turkish behaviour in an adverse light. Moreover, Turkey's own approaches to the Entente at first suggested that its commitment to the Central Powers was not as rigid as its actions increasingly implied.

On 5 August Enver, of all people, reassured Giers, the Russian ambassador, as to the purposes of Turkish mobilization. He said it was not directed against the Russians, and that indeed the Turkish army could be employed in the Balkans against Austria-Hungary. The conditions that Turkey would set for such an alliance would be frontier ratifications in western Thrace and the return of the Aegean islands. From the great-power perspective Turkey's offer was rank duplicity; from the Turkish perspective Turkey's Balkan and Aegean objectives remained totally consistent. The attractions to Russia were obvious. The straits question would be settled on sufficiently favourable terms, at least for the time being, and the Russian army in the Caucasus could be switched to the European theatre. But the consequence would be a Turkish-led Balkan grouping, reactivating European Turkey. This caused Sazonov to pause, since he preferred the idea of Russia as the orchestrator of Balkan affairs. More importantly, it led both Britain and France, with their pro-Greek sympathies, to favour Turkish neutrality rather than Turkish belligerence. Thus the Entente reply, delivered on 18 August, offered Turkey territorial integrity in exchange for Turkish neutrality. If Turkey accepted the Entente's terms, the German

⁴⁰ Kurat, in Bourne and Watt (eds.), *Studies*, 293.

military mission and the German cruisers would have to depart. The capitulations and the territorial grievances would continue. Russia would grow militarily stronger through Dardanelles-directed imports. On one interpretation the Entente offer betokened not even the maintenance of the status quo, but a further reduction in Ottoman power.⁴¹

The failure of these negotiations, together with the arrival of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, increasingly convinced Sir Edward Grey of the eventual outcome. Turko-British relations had received a major blow on 29 July 1914, when Britain had impounded the two Turkish Dreadnoughts under construction in British yards. According to the terms of the contract Britain acted within its rights. Moreover, although this was not known to the British, on 1 August Enver and Talaat did offer the first vessel to the Germans. The decision was therefore fully justified in terms of the naval balance in the North Sea. It also protected a potential ally, Greece, from attack in the Aegean, and calmed Russian worries about the balance in the Black Sea. But it was a gift to Young Turk propaganda. The ships had been funded by popular subscription, deliberately engineered to heighten Turkish national awareness, and were the symbol of Turkish resolve over the question of the Aegean islands. The howls of the Turks were not without effect. They popularized the German alliance, justifying the arrival and purchase of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* as substitutes for the forfeited battleships, and contributing to the Entente's acceptance that the sale of the cruisers did not infringe Turkish neutrality. On 20 August Kitchener persuaded the cabinet to reject Venizelos's offer of a Greek alliance for fear that further inflammation of Turkish sentiment would threaten Egypt. Just over a month later, a date by which the Foreign Office in London—if not Mallet, the ambassador—was convinced that Turkey would soon side with the Central Powers, Britain even offered to return the two battleships: the offer was not taken up.⁴²

The explanation for the confusion in British policy is largely personal. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty and therefore primarily responsible for the appropriation of the battleships, had been much impressed in 1911 both with the Young Turk leadership and with Turkey's ability to cause mayhem as Germany's proxy in southern and central Asia.⁴³ His attitude, compounded by frustration at the escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, and then by his reading of intercepted signals traffic between Germany and Turkey, was correspondingly firmer. By the beginning of September he was initiating plans for storming the straits; on 27 August and again on 8 September he told Troubridge 'to sink the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, under whatever flag, if they come out of the

⁴¹ Howard, *Partition*, 96–104; C. J. Smith, *Russian struggle*, 70–5.

⁴² Weber, *Eagles on the crescent*, 79.

⁴³ Heller, *British policy*, 63–4; see also Churchill to Enver, 15 Aug. 1914, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. III, *Companion*, 38–9.

Dardanelles';⁴⁴ and on 25 September he authorized Vice-Admiral S. H. Carden, who had succeeded Troubridge, to attack any Turkish vessel. On 2 October, the Turks having closed the straits to foreign shipping on 26 September, the British blockade of Turkey began.

Limpus, the head of Britain's naval mission in Constantinople, sent reports to the Admiralty emphasizing Germany's increasing hold on Turkey; Mallet, writing from the same city to the Foreign Office, stressed the strength of Turkish neutralism. The ambassador was absent from the capital at the beginning of August, and his appreciation of what followed was correspondingly weakened. It was he who argued that the presence of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* was in British interests, since they protected the straits against Russia;⁴⁵ and it was he who, at the end of September, advised British ships to back off from the Dardanelles rather than risk a clash with the Turks. But in October even Mallet began to accept that war looked probable. His aim now was to prolong Turkish neutrality for as long as possible.

Such conduct was unsustainable. By the beginning of October British policy towards Turkey was no more genuinely neutral than was Turkey's own. Grey's diplomacy from August onwards concentrated on the formation of a Balkan confederation, under Venizelos's leadership, with Turkey as its implicit foe.⁴⁶ But the immediate pressure was imperial, not European. The proximity of Arabia and Mesopotamia to India, their position on the route to the subcontinent, and the fear that the collapse of Turkish power in the southern half of the Ottoman empire could destabilize British imperial authority prompted forward action, albeit for conservative reasons. The preservation of the status quo in the Gulf would be undermined if Arab rebellions were successful and Britain had become too closely associated with Ottoman rule. Hardinge, the viceroy of India, feared that if, as a result, Persia extended into southern Mesopotamia, Russia would not be far behind. On 25 September Sir Edward Barrow, the military secretary at the India Office, suggested that the 6th Poona division should be dispatched to Shatt-el-Arab, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Ostensibly its task would be to defend the Admiralty's oil supplies; in reality it was to signal support to the Arabs, to block the spread of a holy war to the east, and to 'steady' Turkey.⁴⁷ On 24 September Kitchener, reflecting parallel concerns to those of India but from an Egyptian perspective, instructed that secret negotiations should be opened with the Hejaz Arabs. Hardinge reported himself confident that the Muslim population of the subcontinent would

⁴⁴ Gilbert, *Churchill*, vol. III, *Companion*, 101.

⁴⁵ Weber, *Eagles on the crescent*, 75.

⁴⁶ C. J. Smith, *American Historical Review*, LXX (1965), 1015–34.

⁴⁷ Heller, *British policy*, 146; also J. Nevakivi, 'Lord Kitchener and the partition of the Ottoman empire 1915–1916', in Bourne and Watt (eds.), *Studies*, 317–19; Olson, *Anglo-Iranian relations*, 34; Poppell, *Intelligence and National Security*, V (1990), 143.

remain loyal in the event of a holy war. But he remained anxious not to provoke Turkey without call. In deference to these concerns, the 6th Poona division, or Indian Expeditionary Force D as it became on 16 October, was diverted from the oilfields at Abadan and halted at Bahrain on 23 October.⁴⁸

Such self-imposed restraint, major at a local level, was nonsensical against the broader background. Turkey's declaration on 6 October that the Shatt-el-Arab constituted Turkish territorial waters forced Britain to a decision—either to abandon its Gulf interests or to reassert them. On the Egyptian frontier minor clashes occurred between the Turks and the British. Russian agitation amongst the Armenian population in Persian Azerbaijan threatened the stability of the Caucasus front. The Turks responded by appealing to the Kurds, and both sides involved troops in support of their propaganda by October.⁴⁹ In fomenting Arab nationalism, in exploiting the aspirations of the Balkan powers, and in their primary alliance with Russia, the British were abetting Turkey's partition as surely as they had already commenced hostilities, albeit of a low intensity.

Thus Britain, for all its apparent desire to restrict the war and to ensure Turkey's continued neutrality, made, in the furtherance of that policy, not a single concession of any real significance to Turkey. The contradiction implicit in British policy since 1908, and even before, was forced into the open. Support for a liberalized, reformed Ottoman empire was incompatible with continued stability in the Middle East.⁵⁰ In Constantinople Germany's credit gained from the comparison.

The most significant convert to the German cause was Talaat. He had hoped that the Entente powers would offer terms sufficiently attractive to enable him to isolate Enver and his policies. But their collective failure to end the capitulations, and Britain's and France's inability to provide Turkey with any long-term guarantees against Russia, swung him round in favour of intervention. Talaat remained more cautious than Enver, in particular wanting Bulgaria as an active participant in any war with Russia. But the opponents of intervention, Said Halim and Djavid, were now losing influence. As minister of war, Enver had enhanced his domestic authority by mobilization and the imposition of martial law. As minister of finance, Djavid countered by offering the war minister only a quarter of what he deemed necessary to fund the army.⁵¹

Mobilization had deepened Turkey's economic plight; so too had the outbreak of war in Europe. Business in Constantinople collapsed as shipping and insurance were unobtainable. Panic on the markets generated a run on the

⁴⁸ Cohen, *British policy in Mesopotamia*, 298–308; Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs*, 12–15.

⁴⁹ Gehrke, *Persien in der deutschen Orientpolitik*, i. 15–20.

⁵⁰ Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, 11–17.

⁵¹ Yasamee, in Wilson (ed.), *Decisions for war*, 249–50.

banks. On 3 August the Ottoman treasury had only £Turkish 92,000 in cash.⁵² On the following day a moratorium was declared. Foreign loans dried up. But the effects, although adverse, included an enforced economic independence. On 5 September Enver proposed that Turkey default on its repayments to the Ottoman public debt and to the Banque Perrier. Djavid was outraged. Instead, on 8 September Turkey abrogated the capitulations and on 1 October, as evidence of its freedom from great-power control, raised customs duties by 4 per cent and closed foreign post offices. This was one decision in which the whole cabinet, not just a Young Turk clique, was involved. The assertion of national sovereignty unleashed a wave of popular enthusiasm, both spontaneous and orchestrated. Flags appeared on shops and houses, a national festival was announced, and the rhetoric of Turkism declaimed.⁵³

Germany was as uncomfortable about Turkey's economic policy as were the other powers. But, since the capitulations were only enforceable through great-power collaboration, Germany and Austria-Hungary made no economic sacrifice when they prudently supported the Ottoman decision. Moreover, with trade at a virtual standstill the abrogation of the capitulations was of political rather than financial significance. Turkey's need for cash was not thereby averted. Britain's blockade made further temporizing hard to sustain. Turkey had to choose between demobilization or bankruptcy, but the former was as incompatible with robust neutrality as it was with active belligerence. On 30 September Enver asked the Germans for a loan of £T 5 million in gold. Bethmann Hollweg and Zimmerman wanted to make the loan conditional on Turkey's entry into the war. Both sides had strong hands to play. The Turks needed the money whatever their foreign policy; the Germans knew that the Turks could not fight without their financial aid, given the Entente's effective control of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Wangenheim was still uncertain of the wisdom of securing as an ally a power ostensibly prostrated by wars in Libya and the Balkans. The foreign ministry, therefore, extracted Richard von Kühlmann from its Stockholm embassy and sent him to Constantinople, his birthplace, specifically to get Turkey into the war.⁵⁴ At a meeting at the German embassy on 11 October Enver, Talaat, Djemal, and Halil agreed that they would authorize Admiral Souchon to attack the Russians in the Black Sea when the Germans had deposited a first instalment of £T 2 million in Constantinople. The balance would follow when Turkey was in the war.⁵⁵ Germany's stake in Ottoman public finance thus began to grow at the Entente's expense. At the same time the hesitations of those Turks convinced of Entente economic and maritime superiority, especially Djemal, began to be undermined.

⁵² Ahmad, in Kent, *Great powers*, 16.

⁵³ Ahmad, *Studies in Ottoman Diplomatic History*, IV (1990), 46–54.

⁵⁴ Kühlmann, *Erinnerungen*, 440–1, 448.

⁵⁵ Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman empire*, 48–9, 51.

The idea that a foray by the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* into the Black Sea would mark the initiation of Turkish belligerence is the clearest indication of the significance of the two cruisers' escape for the development of the war. By the end of October the defence of Constantinople and the straits, the pivot of Turkey's communications, its naval base, and its economic and administrative centre, had been secured. Germany had sent both sailors and mines to upgrade the Dardanelles' defences. A defensive agreement with Bulgaria, settled on 18 August, although it had not included any alliance for offensive purposes in the Balkans and had done nothing, therefore, to alleviate the military position of Austria-Hungary, had reassured the Turks with regard to the landward approaches to the straits on the European side. But, three months after mobilization had begun the Turkish army was still not fit for offensive operations. Hafız Hakki Bey, the deputy chief of staff, said that another six months were required, and argued that with winter approaching war was now impossible; on 4 October Enver even ordered token steps towards demobilization.⁵⁶ The fleet was no readier. Souchon was convinced that the British naval mission had deliberately undermined the fitness of the Turkish navy⁵⁷—although the experience of the Germans with the army would suggest that the fault lay with the Turks themselves. The German cruisers therefore provided the most battleworthy means by which hostilities could be precipitated.

The frustrations of the German officers, stranded in Turkey while their colleagues fought in Europe, had mounted with their inactivity. Liman, isolated from Turko-German negotiations, had requested his return to Germany, albeit without success. Souchon similarly chafed at the incarceration of his cruisers. An early plan that he should be reinforced by the Austro-Hungarian fleet from Pola had come to nought on technical grounds. Berchtold's and Conrad's enthusiasm for a naval presence to help persuade Romania and Bulgaria into support for the Central Powers was countered by the lack of appropriate bases and fuel problems.⁵⁸ On 14 September Enver secretly authorized Souchon to enter the Black Sea, but on the 19th the government realized what was afoot. Souchon protested at this denial of his duties as a German officer, in other words, to engage the enemy. So on 24 September he became a Turkish officer with instructions not to undertake warlike acts without Turkish orders. Thus, when Souchon finally was allowed into the Black Sea the responsibility for what he did lay with Turkey and not Germany. Cruises of limited range by isolated vessels of the Turkish fleet were conducted without incident, largely because the Russians stayed in harbour in their anxiety to avoid provocation. But on 25 October Enver gave Souchon specific instructions to 'gain command of the Black Sea', and to seek out and attack the

⁵⁶ Yasamee, in Wilson (ed.), *Decisions for war*, 253–4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 19–20.

⁵⁷ Halpern, *Naval war*, 49–50.

Russian fleet. The support of the Turkish cabinet for war was still far from certain, and what Enver had in mind may have been a manufactured incident on the high seas.⁵⁹ Souchon's own orders went further. On 29 October the Turkish fleet raided Sevastopol and Odessa, and bombarded Theodosia and Novorossisk. The damage inflicted on either side was minimal; certainly the opportunity to inflict a pre-emptive and disabling blow on the Russian Black Sea fleet had gone begging. But the political purport of the act was unequivocal.

With hindsight, Turkey's entry to the war was ordained from the moment it admitted the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to the Dardanelles. The subsequent delay had been a product of Turkey's lack of war-readiness and of Bulgarian neutrality, not of uncertainty in regard to its eventual policy.⁶⁰ But an observer in Constantinople on the days subsequent to Souchon's attack still felt that the overall disposition of the government was against belligerence, and that the Russian response to the attack—a request for the removal of the German naval and military missions—gave Turkey an option for peace which a majority wished to exercise.⁶¹ Enver's orders to Souchon had been known beforehand to Talaat and Djemal; indeed, it was the winning of the latter from his pro-Entente stance that proved crucial to Enver's resolve. But the triumvirate was sufficiently conscious of its numerical weakness in the cabinet to sidestep the request that the latter convene on 29 October. Instead, Talaat contrived that the government should meet with the central committee of the more bellicose Committee of Union and Progress on 30 October. Enver had anticipated a government crisis, and in particular the opposition of Said Halim, the grand vizier, and Djavid. They and three other ministers resigned, but then gave in to the pressure of the central committee, which supported the war by seventeen votes to ten. Some of the support for neutrality did not represent a predilection for peace per se; it was grounded on the army's continuing low estimate of its combat-readiness.⁶² Thus, even the lines in the debate for peace or war were not clear cut. Governmental unity was sustained by the dispatch of a conciliatory, albeit—in its account of Souchon's attack—fictitious note to Russia on 1 November. Said Halim's inclination was still to resign: Enver's and Talaat's pressure, probably not gentle, ensured that he did not. Their hold on government was not so secure, their power not so untrammelled, that they could afford to do without him. Their achievement was considerable. Djavid and three other opponents of intervention did go, and Enver was able to exaggerate the size of the anti-war lobby in order to increase his leverage on Germany. But

⁵⁹ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 165–6; Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman empire*, 53–5.

⁶⁰ Mühlmann, *Deutschland und der Türkei*, 64–5.

⁶¹ Pomiankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 87.

⁶² Kurat, in Bourne and Watt (eds.), *Studies*, 311–14; more generally, Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman empire*, 56–61, and id., *Journal of Modern History*, XXXIV (1962), 369–80.

in effect Turkey embraced a war united in its government and in its purpose; neutralism before the war did not spill over into lack of patriotic resolve during it.

The Ottoman empire therefore entered the First World War through its own devices, and in pursuit of its own interests. It was neither the innocent pawn in Germany's more ambitious concepts, nor the victim of Russian and British imperialism. A combination of rationality—represented by Djemal, and arguing that the costs of neutrality had ceased to make the latter a sensible option—and emotion—represented by Enver, and fusing pan-Turanianism with nationalistic fervour—made a strong domestic argument in favour of intervention. But Turkey's commitment notwithstanding, it is also true that neither Germany nor Britain in the end acted to stop Turkey. This failure was born of the circumstances generated by the onset of the war itself rather than of the long-term agents for Ottoman decline.

More problematic is the question of Russian responsibility. Russia's policy in the first half of 1914 had become unwontedly conciliatory towards Constantinople, and its strategic interests in the second half demanded a concentration on the European front, not on the Caucasus. The arrival of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* had renewed the threat of naval inferiority which the Turks' pursuit of Dreadnoughts had already promised for the years 1914 to 1916. On paper the *Goeben* could outrun and outfight the Black Sea fleet: her broadside was as heavy as that of all three Russian pre-Dreadnoughts combined. Sazonov's diplomatic instructions confirmed Stavka's prudence (if not the fleet commander's inclination), and contrasted with the response of the British navy on the other side of the straits: the Black Sea fleet was not to provoke Souchon nor to challenge the fiction of his ships' neutrality. But Russia's ambitions to control the straits had been fostered by its own brand of navalism and by the long-term plans for the build-up of the Black Sea fleet.⁶³ The determination that if Turkey did not control the Dardanelles Russia should be reawakened by the boost to partition provided after the Turko-German alliance. Turkey's closure of the straits at the end of September re-emphasized Russia's economic vulnerability. Thus, while Russian policy still favoured Turkish neutrality, Russian sentiment greeted war against Turkey with acclaim. From the Entente's viewpoint, the dangers that Russia's efforts on the eastern front might be distracted by Turkey were offset by the consequent hardening of Russia's commitment to the war itself.

Russia's handling of the developments of September and October had been significantly aided by decrypts of the signals between Pallavicini and the foreign ministry in Vienna. It had passed the contents of these to London,

⁶³ Nekrasov, *North of Gallipoli*, 18–22; Alan Bodger, 'Russia and the end of the Ottoman Empire', in Kent (ed.), *Great powers*, 82–9.

but the impression of imminent Turkish belligerence which they conveyed was at odds with the more reassuring reports from Mallet and from Britain's military attaché in Constantinople, Francis Cunliffe-Owen. Britain did not appreciate that it was receiving top-grade political intelligence until 20 October.⁶⁴ Thereafter its expectation of war with Turkey meant that Souchon's attack caused little surprise. Together with France, Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Turkey on 30 October. On the next day Churchill, cock-a-hoop, signalled the commencement of hostilities, and ordered the bombardment of the Dardanelles. Technically Britain and Turkey were not yet at war, and indeed Sazonov's reply to the Turkish note did leave open the possibility of negotiation. On 2 November Russia declared war, and on 3 November Carden opened fire on the outer fortifications of the Dardanelles. On 4 November Grey was still hoping to postpone Britain's war with Turkey, but the Royal Navy's actions had forced the hand of the Foreign Office, and indeed of the cabinet. On 5 November both Britain and France followed Russia's lead.⁶⁵

TURKEY'S CAPACITY FOR WAR

'Turkey is militarily a nonentity! . . . If Turkey was described before as a sick man, it must now be described as a dying man . . . Our military mission is like a medical board, that stands by the deathbed of a hopeless invalid.'⁶⁶ These were the words with which Moltke had assessed the military capacities of his new allies when writing to Conrad on 13 March 1914. But within days of 2 August both chiefs of the general staff were sketching out offensives for this 'dying man' that simultaneously embraced the Caucasus, Bessarabia, Odessa, and the Suez Canal. Rational assessment was prey to wishful thinking: once again the push to extremes—world power or decline, annihilating victory or defeat—failed to include the possibility of a middle way. The Turkish army was a far more potent force than Moltke's March 1914 assessment allowed for: by the beginning of 1916 it had achieved major defensive victories; throughout the war it would tie down large numbers of British and Russian troops; the Dardanelles would remain closed to Entente traffic; and Turkey's defeat would come no sooner than that of Germany itself. But equally, the Turkish army was not a finely honed instrument well adapted for modern war, and nor was the Turkish economy sufficiently advanced to support it even if it had been.

⁶⁴ Sheffy, *British military intelligence*, 90.

⁶⁵ David, *Inside Asquith's cabinet*, 205; Gilbert, *Churchill*, iii, 215–19; Miller, *Straits*, 326–30.

⁶⁶ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 150; see also Mühlmann, *Oberste Heeresleitung und Balkan*, 22–3.

The army to which Liman von Sanders was appointed in January 1914 was a bewildering blend of the new and the unreformed. One historian of modern Turkey has written of officers 'with up-to-date training for an out-of-date army'.⁶⁷ But even this oversimplifies the issues. Abdul Hamid had opposed modernization for fear of the army's potential role in domestic politics. In von der Goltz's day the activities of the German military mission were circumscribed, its pressure for reform contained. The effect was to channel the Germans' efforts into military education, and specifically into the service academies. In the 1890s up to twenty young officers a year had gone to Germany for further tuition. Finally, in 1907, six model battalions under German-trained Turkish officers were established for the instruction of officers and NCOs. Two main consequences accrued. First, at least until 1907, training was theoretical rather than practical, confined to the classroom and the barrack-yard. Secondly, its beneficiaries were regimental officers, not generals. Only once, in 1894, was von der Goltz allowed to conduct a staff ride. The formation of the model battalions confirmed the generational division within the officer corps.⁶⁸

The frustrations of internal policing, which had fostered the army's politicization despite Abdul Hamid's best endeavours, and the aftermath of the 1908 revolution served to deepen this split. The older generation, pre-eminently Sevket himself, argued that the army's political role was disinterested, finite, and above party. Some of the younger generation, notably Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), agreed in principle but acted very differently in practice; many identified with the Unionists. Thus, to professional fissures were now added political differences.

Most officers, whatever their age, liked to see their loyalties as Ottoman rather than Turkish. After all, many were Macedonian in origin or had found in Macedonia the forcing ground for their political and professional motivations. In reality, the supra-national ideal found only weak expression within the army. Although the latent conflict between Ottomanization and Turkification was no more explicit than it was elsewhere, it was not possible for either idea to provide the means to reunify the officer corps. The conscription law of 1886 made all male Muslims aged over 20 liable for three years' active service and for a total of seventeen in the various categories of reserve.⁶⁹ But Kurds, Arabs, nomads, and the inhabitants of Constantinople were all exempt. Thus, less than half the population was eligible for service, and its burden fell disproportionately on the Anatolian peasant. A revised recruitment law introduced in 1912 and promulgated in May 1914 embraced non-Muslims who did not pay taxes (but not those who did). It posited an army of 1.2 million men,

⁶⁷ B. Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, 201.

⁶⁸ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 64–89.

⁶⁹ Shaw and Shaw, *Ottoman empire*, ii. 245–6.

but as only two of its twenty-five annual classes served in the active army the regulars' peacetime establishment was set at 200,000. The lack of population registers for many parts of the country made evasion easy. Non-appearance meant that the actual strength was probably nearer 150,000, rising on mobilization to 800,000, or only about 4 per cent of the population. Sevket simplified the arrangements for mobilizing the massive number of reservists required to flesh out this diminutive force by introducing a regional corps organization. He established four army 'inspections' (Constantinople, Erzincan, Damascus, and Baghdad) and a total of thirteen corps, each of whose divisions (thirty-six in all) recruited locally.⁷⁰ But thus was Ottomanization forfeit. Furthermore, the army did not even have a common language. Only 40 per cent of the total population spoke Turkish; Said Halim, the grand vizier, could not write it. The script was a problem, particularly for the transmission of orders by telegraph. It took four different forms, and—because the Turks wrote Arabic and Persian words phonetically—the spelling lacked standardization. The Young Turks, partly to ease commercial transactions and partly through their support for Turkification, were committed to the standardization and Latinization of the language. Enver, when he became minister of war, struggled to introduce into the army a common form of Arabic, but by the second year of the war had to abandon the attempt.⁷¹

Sevket was the dominant figure in the army's reform between 1909 and 1913. The suppression of the so-called 'counter-revolution' of 1909 was the first step in the elimination of the older generation of officers, and it was his authority that papered over the political and professional fissures of the officer corps.⁷² His initial aim was simply to make good the perceived deprivations of the Hamidian era. As minister of war in 1910 he refused to allow his department's budget to be subject to the ministry of finance's controls, and successfully demanded an extraordinary credit of £T5 million as well as an ordinary budget of £T9.5 million.⁷³ Modern equipment was ordered from Germany. But in 1912 either this had yet to be delivered or Turkish soldiers had still to be trained in its use; thus, not only was the Turkish army defeated, the empire's foreign indebtedness was increased. Sevket, now grand vizier, rethought his approach. He aimed for financial retrenchment. His assumption in 1913 was that Turkey would not face war for some time. Its immediate target should therefore be a small, professional army, capable of expansion in case of crisis—hence the 1914

⁷⁰ Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 65–6; Erik Zürcher, 'Little Mehmet in the desert: the Ottoman soldier's experience', in Cecil and Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon*, 232–3; Sheffy, *British military intelligence*, 34; Ahmad, *Kurdistan*, 52–3.

⁷¹ Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, 225–6; Bihl, *Kaukasuspolitik*, 140, 153, 158, 161, 200; Guse, *Kaukasusfront*, 18.

⁷² Haley, *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXX (1994), 17–18, 23.

⁷³ Ahmad, *Young Turks*, 68–74.

recruitment law and the corps organization.⁷⁴ Enver continued on the same lines. The War Ministry's budget for 1914/15 showed a 30 per-cent cut, partly achieved by lowering the soldier's pay. His attention was on increasing the pace of mobilization through the improvement of roads and through the training of reservists. In February 1914 he reckoned that the army would be fit for war in five years.⁷⁵

It is customary, when explaining Turkey's military performance in the First World War, to set it in the context of the two Balkan wars, to argue that Turkey was at war continuously from 1912, or even—if the rebellions in the Yemen, Lebanon, Albania, and Macedonia are included—from 1910. Thus, by 1918 the empire was militarily exhausted. But this interpretation misses the point. The experience of the Balkan wars proved crucial to the reform and reinvigoration of the Turkish army. The major problems that Turkey encountered in embarking on a fresh war in 1914 were less the consequence of economic strain than of the fact that the transformation of the army initiated by Sevket was incomplete, that the army was caught between having partially abandoned one system and having not yet fully embraced another. Furthermore, the war for which this army was being prepared in 1913 was presumed not only to be more distant in time than 1914, but also to be a Balkan, not a world war.

When Turkey opted for intervention its army was indeed ill-equipped. It was short of 280 guns and 200,000 rifles; it had only 150 small-arms rounds per man, and 1,088 shells per gun. Lack of animals deprived it of mobility. The Anatolian horse was too small for the cavalry, which was 20 per cent below its establishment, and too weak for the draught of artillery; the low number of pack horses had been reduced yet further by the depredations of the Balkan wars. Efforts in the 1890s to form an irregular Hamidieh cavalry from the Turkoman and Kurdish tribes had floundered after 1909: the lack of horses meant that half of them were in fact infantry. Even more problematic than their locomotion were their loyalties. Raising men eroded the authority of the tribal chiefs, and those they procured were largely motivated by hatred of the Armenians; nearer the Persian frontier their sympathies frequently lay with Russia.⁷⁶ For the army as a whole, as significant as lack of stocks and lack of horses was lack of standardization. Some of the Turkish army's equipment was excellent: they had Mauser magazine-rifles and French 75 mm quick-firing field guns. But within the same units were found weapons of different bores, and different vintages, and different nationalities. The Mausers were of two calibres, and alongside them were single-shot Martinis. The heavy artillery was antiquated; Turkey's field guns came from Schneider in France, its field howitzers from Krupp in Germany, and its mountain artillery from Skoda in

⁷⁴ Djemal, *Memoirs*, 67.

⁷⁵ Ahmad, *Young Turks*, 68–74; Pokrowski, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, series 1, ii. 61–3, 193–4.

⁷⁶ Ahmad, *Kurdistan*, 53–8.

Austria-Hungary. The supply services, already primitive, were presented with a logistical problem far more complex than that of any of the major European powers. Turkey's equipment problems were characterized as much by the transitional stage of its modernization as by the exhaustion of the Balkan wars.⁷⁷

Furthermore, not until January 1914, and the appointment of Enver as minister of war, were the professional and political splits of the officer corps properly addressed. The need to neutralize the army politically, to force officers to choose between membership of the army and membership of the Committee of Union and Progress, had been recognized by Sevket and advocated by a group of younger officers, including Mustafa Kemal.⁷⁸ In addition, the Balkan defeats had highlighted the incompetence of many senior officers. But Sevket was assassinated and Izzet Pasha, minister of war in 1913, proved reluctant to execute the purge of the officer corps widely recognized as essential. This, therefore, was Enver's major task on appointment. At a stroke he removed both military inefficiency and political opposition from the army. The total number of officers dismissed is variously given, with figures ranging from 200 to 2,000, and a safe average would be over 1,000. Most generals aged over 55 were out; so too were those promoted from the ranks without professional education; young majors found themselves in command of regiments, lieutenant-colonels in charge of divisions. Many German observers argued that Enver had done no more than buoy up his own political position, and that the current of promotion was still determined—and continued to be throughout the war—by political favouritism. But they missed the point. Enver did use the army as his political base; his 'Special Organization', or *Teskilat-i Mahsusa*, formed in 1914, was a secret service responsible to him alone and funded by the war ministry. Built on the experience of terrorist and guerrilla operations in Macedonia and Libya, it became the vehicle for his political objectives, foreign and domestic, pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic.⁷⁹ But in the army as a whole ability was not placed second to political reliability; Kemal himself, whose calls for the army's political neutrality were in reality cloaks for his own enormous ambition, and who was opposed to Turkish intervention in the war, was not a victim of Enver's purge. What German officers were often reacting to was less politicization per se than democracy; officers from humble backgrounds, without the breeding or the aristocratic pretensions of German officers, and schooled by the events of 1908 to 1913, seemed lacking in the sense of duty and personal honour which German observers expected.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 70; Muzaffar Erendil, 'The Ottoman empire in World War I', in Kiraly *et al.* (eds.), *East Central European society*, 371–2; Shaw and Shaw, *Ottoman empire*, 246.

⁷⁸ G. Dyer, *Journal of Contemporary History*, VIII (1973), 125–33.

⁷⁹ D. Rustow, *World Politics*, XI (1959), 518–19; Zürcher, *Unionist factor*, 50, 59, 83.

⁸⁰ Schulte, *Vor dem Kriegausbruch*, 131–5; Guse, *Kaukasusfront*, 21, gives a different view from his compatriots.

Enver's refashioning of the army's officer corps masked the commencement of an assumption of overall strategic control that was completed by the autumn. His friends dubbed him 'Napoleonlik'; Pomiankowski, the Austrian military attaché, called him a dilettante. Both descriptions were merited, but neither was true. Enver's ambitions, both for himself and for Turkey, were Napoleonic; his abilities—at least as a commander—were not. A 'matinee idol', in the words of the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Enver also impressed another advocate of action rather than reflection, Winston Churchill, who described him as 'A charming fellow—vy good looking & thoroughly capable'.⁸¹ Enver's self-belief derived from his successful organization of the defence of Libya; significantly, he had not even won that campaign, but he had established the infrastructure for a protracted defence. His strengths were administrative rather than operational. The war ministry was the basis of his political power both domestically and internationally; his mastery of it was what forced the Germans, hitherto wedded to the older, Hamidian generation of officers, to take him seriously. As Francis Cunliffe-Owen, Britain's military attaché, observed, Enver made his department 'as up to date in its methods as the *Kriegsministerium*'.⁸² During the course of the year the range of Enver's responsibilities rapidly expanded. The committee of national defence, created by the Committee of Union and Progress in 1911 in response to the invasion of Libya, and taken formally within the purview of government after the coup of January 1913, was placed under the ministry of war. Reflecting the rhetoric of the French Revolution and charged with social and economic mobilization for war, it gave Enver a role in agriculture, industry, commerce, and education.⁸³ The arrival of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, and the consequent de facto subordination of the navy to German control, weakened the hold on the fleet of Djemal, the minister of marine. Not until September was Limpus's naval mission asked to leave; thus, Souchon's dealings were with Enver, and Djemal's role became secondary. With the outbreak of war Djemal went to Syria as military governor and commander of the 4th army, delegating the daily running of his ministry to Enver. Meanwhile, on 21 October 1914 the Sultan became titular commander-in-chief, and appointed Enver as his deputy. Enver thus gathered into his hands responsibility for both services, and for command as well as administration.

The transformation of the Turkish army between 1913 and 1914, therefore, owed much more to Sevket and to Enver than it did to Liman von Sanders. This was not, in fact, what Sevket had intended. He had planned 'a German military mission on the grand scale', thus giving the Germans the real influence

⁸¹ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story*, 31–2; Soames (ed.), *Speaking for themselves*, 31; generally, Haley, *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXX (1994), 1–51, 224–51, esp. 1–15.

⁸² Miller, *Straits*, 178.

⁸³ Ahmad, 'War and society under the Young Turks', 128–32.

which the Hamidian regime had denied them. But his plan 'to appoint a German general to command a Turkish army corps, and to have German staff and regimental officers in command of every unit comprising it, and in this way form a model army corps',⁸⁴ fell foul of the diplomatic crisis generated by the German mission. Liman was appointed inspector-general of the Turkish army. Therefore his orbit was restricted almost immediately on arrival. His main efforts were channelled into improving conditions of service. This suited Enver very well. The new minister of war was as impressed as Sevket by German military methods; the Turkish general staff was reorganized on the German model, with three sections for each of operations, intelligence, and railways; and a German, Bronsart von Schellendorf, was appointed its chief. But Enver was equally determined that the Turkish army should be employed in the Turkish national interest, not in that of Germany. The German military mission had risen to a strength of seventy by the summer of 1914. Its task, however, remained advisory and technical. Germans became chiefs of staff; they did not command.

Furthermore, temperamentally Liman and Enver found themselves at odds. By the end of the war Liman had proved himself an able commander and a sympathetic judge of Turkish troops. But he antagonized many of his colleagues. One of his German subordinates in Turkey, Kress von Kressenstein, described him as 'self-confident and conceited, temperamental and hot-tempered, mistrustful and sensitive'.⁸⁵ He had been judged unsuitable for a corps command in Germany. Thus, status was to Liman an important aspect of his Turkish service. But he was then undercut by Enver's appointment as minister of war. Deprived of the coveted corps by diplomatic pressure, he had to be promoted a general of cavalry in the German army and a marshal in the Turkish army as consolation. This preoccupation with rank and rewards, combined with his prior commitment to Germany's, rather than Turkey's needs, provided the basis for a series of clashes with the equally explosive character of Enver.

In sum, the influence of the German military mission was marginalized. Liman played only a minor part in the negotiations leading to the Turkish alliance and then to Turkish intervention. He had no co-ordinating role in German strategy in Turkey. Indeed, the divisions between German departments played a major part in strengthening Enver's hand; Wangenheim and Liman bypassed each other; Souchon, Admiral Usedom (the officer sent out to improve the Dardanelles' defences in September), and the military and naval attachés all reported independently to Berlin. Paragraph 3 of the Turko-German treaty of 2 August stated that in the event of war the military

⁸⁴ Djemal, *Memoirs*, 67.

⁸⁵ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 137; see also Haley, *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXX (1994), 30–4, 40–2.

mission would be left at Turkey's disposal, and that relations between the head of the mission and the Turkish war minister would be direct and so established as to have 'an effective influence on the general conduct of the army'. Bethmann Hollweg interpreted this clause as giving the military mission the supreme Turkish command in all but name. What actually happened was that Liman was appointed to the command of the 1st army in Thrace. The German presence at Turkish GHQ was headed by Bronsart von Schellendorff, as Enver's chief of staff.

Bronsart was responsible for such war planning as Turkey had achieved by October 1914, and for its mobilization plan. The fact that both were chaotic may be an indictment of Bronsart, or of his ability to stand up to Enver: the winter campaign in the Caucasus in 1914–15 would support such judgements. The Austrian military attaché called him 'petty, excessively nervous, glory-seeking and an intriguer'.⁸⁶ But even the most able staff officer would have had difficulty resolving the problems with which Bronsart was confronted. The war plan, which he drew up on 4 July 1914, reflected priorities in Turkish foreign policy: it concentrated on a war with Russia in the area of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and on a possible conflict in the Balkans. Turkey would adopt a defensive posture in the Caucasus and would redeploy the troops in Palestine and Mesopotamia to Anatolia.⁸⁷ What happened between August and November was that a world war was grafted onto a Balkan war. Turkish plans grew accordingly, but the basic assumption—that the major concentration should be around Constantinople—was not altered.

Moltke's enthusiasm for the Turkish alliance rested not so much on the aid it could provide in the Balkans as on its ability to distract Russia and Britain. At a meeting on 16 August the representatives of the German military mission discussed with Enver and Hafiz Hakki, the deputy chief of staff, the possibilities for amphibious operations in the Black Sea and for a thrust against the Suez Canal. The orders for the 2nd army in Syria and VIII army corps in Palestine to move to Anatolia were revoked; instead, both were earmarked for the Egyptian offensive, and two divisions from Mesopotamia, also originally destined for Anatolia, were given the task of parrying any British landing in northern Syria. By mid-September the German sailors, Souchon and von Usedom, were dismissive of landings on the Black Sea coast: the Turks would need to defeat the Russian fleet first, but without the ability to blockade the Russian ports they would not be able to force the Russian navy to battle. They, together with Wangenheim, therefore favoured a concentration against the British in Egypt. Liman von Sanders was opposed: if the army protected the straits it would at least guard the navy's back and so give Souchon the freedom

⁸⁶ Bihl, *Kaukasuspolitik*, 223.

⁸⁷ Erendil, in Kiraly *et al* (eds.), *East Central European society*, 372; Sheffy, *British military intelligence*,

to fight for control of the Black Sea. Enver agreed; on 22 October he accepted that Bulgaria's failure to ally itself with Turkey meant that considerable forces should remain in Thrace. But at the same time he did not renounce the offensive in Egypt, and moreover he declared his support for operations in the Caucasus.⁸⁸ His response to German pressure, and his anxiety to assert Turkish worth, led him to produce an inclusive list rather than to establish priorities.

Therefore, the mobilization ordered on 2 August lacked a clear operational focus and was carried out by an army in the throes of reorganization. When the orders went out the full instructions for mobilization under the terms of the 1914 recruitment law were not yet issued. In their peacetime state divisions were formed of six or nine battalions, totalling 5,000 or 6,200 men; many units were in fact under establishment, some companies mustering only twenty soldiers. Those aged 23 to 30, the reservists who were to complete the active corps, and those aged 30 to 38, who were to form corps depots, were ordered to report within three days. Even the disabled were to attend, in order to have their disability registered. Units were then doubled in size. The economic crisis of August, with overseas trade suspended, boosted unemployment and provided a ready reservoir of manpower. But the army could not cope with the influx. The reservists were told to bring food for three days. Thereafter there were insufficient rations for the swollen battalions. The local population, its economic life already shattered by the loss of the adult male population, was plundered for food. The only financial compensation was to the state, which at least received the payments of those able to buy themselves out. The purge in the officer corps had, as result of the consequent acceleration in promotion, created gaps in the junior ranks; the NCOs of the Turkish army were mostly re-enlisted men, peasants, frequently illiterate and lacking in initiative. Thus, old methods of training were mixed up with new. In September the territorials, those aged 38 to 45, were called up; in October they were sent home again. By the end of October full Turkish mobilization was still not implemented, but there was a danger that the strains it imposed would cause its collapse before its completion.⁸⁹

Enver's attention, reflecting the original war plan, had been on the assembly of the 1st and 2nd armies (a total of 200,000 men) around Constantinople, and of the 3rd army (120,000 men) around Erzerum, facing the Caucasus. The transport system was sufficient to move 10,000 reservists a day, and therefore the concentration of the whole army would take between four and five months.

⁸⁸ Mühlmann, *Deutschland und der Türkei*, 101–2; Macfie, *End of the Ottoman empire*, 124; Sheffy, *British military intelligence*, 35–6; Miller, *Straits*, 307–8, 321.

⁸⁹ Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 66–7; Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, 107–8; Aaronsohn, *With the Turks*, 16–23; Miller, *Straits*, 237. On its impact in Mesopotamia, see Moukbil, *La Campagne de l'Irak*, 11–15; and in Kurdistan, see Ahmad, *Kurdistan*, 133–6.

When Turkey went to war its southern borders, the responsibility of the 4th army in Syria and of four divisions in Iraq, were still not covered. The security of the south was rendered secondary to the needs of the north. Iraq in particular was used as a reserve for the other fronts, three of its four divisions going to reinforce the 4th army in Syria and the 3rd in the Caucasus. And yet, thanks to Indian Expeditionary Force D, the first Turkish soldiers engaged in action were the diminutive garrison at Fao on the Persian Gulf. Furthermore the southern areas, because of their distance from Constantinople, had been those least affected by the German military mission and other reforming agencies; pay was frequently in arrears, and Arab disaffection (albeit at this stage exaggerated) created doubts about the troops' loyalty.

The fact that Britain and France, as well as Russia, were at war with Turkey transformed the Ottoman empire's strategic position. Its extended coastline, with its accessibility to naval power, its joint frontier with British-controlled Egypt, and the Government of India's interests in Mesopotamia meant that the entire perimeter lay under potential threat. The concentration planned in July, in Turkey's north-western corner, had by November to be balanced with the defensive needs—and the offensive possibilities—at each of its other apexes, in the north-east and the Caucasus, in the south-west and the Suez Canal, and in the south-east and Iraq. The ability to concentrate rapidly, to exploit interior lines in order to be able to transfer troops from one sector to another, would be pivotal to Turkey's ability to wage war. Turkey had an elaborate telegraph system but no efficient means of internal transportation.

Before the war much of Turkey's traffic was carried around its perimeter, by sea. But the British had instituted a blockade in the Mediterranean even before the declaration of hostilities, and Russia began to assert its dominance over the Black Sea during the course of 1915. Therefore the difficulties of the land communications, masked before the war, were exposed. Turkish railway construction between 1888 and 1914 showed an impressive rate of growth, from 1,780 kilometres of track to about 5,800, but its density—for 1.76 million square kilometres of territory—remained sadly deficient.⁹⁰

Furthermore, from the military perspective the situation was even worse than the crude statistics suggested. In May 1914 Major Theodor von Kubel reported that the railways in Iraq and Anatolia required an investment of 100 million marks in order to bring them up to military needs.⁹¹ Von Kubel's recall, as a consequence of the ensuing fracas with the Deutsche Bank's railway subsidiaries, highlighted the commercial priorities that underpinned even German railway construction. Each nation built according to its own local

⁹⁰ On Turkey's railways, see esp. Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire*, ch. 9; Larcher, *La Guerre Turque*, 57–9; W. Stanley, *Journal of Transport History*, VIII (1966), 189–204; Mühlmann, *Das deutsch-türkische Waffenbündnis*, 31–4.

⁹¹ Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 148–9.

needs, establishing not an Ottoman network but a juxtaposition of single-track links, of different gauges, without interconnections. The fact that Constantinople, the potential hub of a railway system had there been one, was on the periphery of Turkey confirmed the inappropriateness of the routes for the purposes of national defence. Such military needs as were served by the railways were for the movement of troops from Asia Minor to European Turkey, not for a two-way flow across the Asiatic heartland of the empire.

Thus, of the four major fronts envisaged by Enver in his 22 October memorandum only the Balkan and the Constantinople areas were adequately provided for. Deliberately neglected, in deference to Russian objections on strategic grounds, was eastern Anatolia. The nearest railheads were Ulu Kischla, north of the Taurus Mountains, and Tell Ebiad, east of the Euphrates, 700 and 400 kilometres respectively from Erzurum, itself some distance from the frontier and the putative battle-front.

Syria was better endowed, and superficially seemed to be well adapted for a push towards Egypt. But British and French efforts in the regions had been designed to link the Mediterranean ports to commercial centres inland, and not to provide a north–south connection. Thus Jerusalem was linked to Jaffa, but there was no line south to Beersheba, and that to the north and to the Haifa–Damascus line was begun but not complete. Further east, the line from Damascus through Maan to Medina, the Hejaz railway intended to transport pilgrims to the holy cities, was narrow gauge, and between Tebuk and El Ala had to carry its own water (in addition to the water for the troops in the blockhouses guarding the line), so reducing its capacity.

During the course of the war the lines within Palestine were reorganized, redirected, and extended with comparative speed. But the whole theatre of operations remained isolated from Constantinople by the breaks in the southern Anatolian section of the line in the Taurus and Amanus mountains, north-west of Aleppo. When war was declared 37 kilometres were still to be cut through the Taurus range and twelve tunnels were required: not until January 1917 was a narrow-gauge link effected, and not until September 1918 was this upgraded to a standard gauge. The Amanus link was 97 kilometres long, and was completed early in 1917. Until then all equipment for not only the Syrian but also the Mesopotamian fronts had to be unloaded and reloaded twice, and had to be carried by pack animal or by human labour across the two ranges. Those disqualified on religious or national grounds from military service formed labour and porter battalions, numbering 110,000 men as early as October 1914.⁹² Each 100-kilometre stretch across the mountain ranges was—by late 1915—allocated 3,500 to 4,000 baggage animals—camels, buffaloes, and horses. But the standard of veterinary care was appalling: sixty

⁹² Bihl, *Kaukasuspolitik*, 193.

to seventy died each day. Furthermore, the retired officers of the Hamidian army, pressed back into service for duties in the rear, proved limited and slothful, leaving their NCOs to manage matters and to sell the camels to the neighbouring Kurds.⁹³

The Taurus and Amanus links were not the only incomplete sections in the celebrated Berlin–Baghdad railway line. A total of 825 kilometres of track was still to be laid in August 1914. The Euphrates bridge near Djerablus was not finished; from Tell Ebiad to Samara, north of Baghdad, only the first 103 kilometres to Ras el Ain had been begun, and by the war's end the line had been extended 200 kilometres from Tell Ebiad to Nisibin. The 1903 agreement with the Turkish government was increasingly squeezing the Baghdad railway company's profits as operating costs rose, thus reducing the capital available for further investment. Labour was lost not only through the mobilization of the army but also because the workers were not paid. The war worsened the company's financial position, as military needs ousted commercial traffic but military goods were only charged one-third the standard rate. In 1914 the company registered a 1.2 million franc loss, and in 1915 1.7 million francs, while the Turkish government netted 8 million francs. In November 1914 the company reckoned that a forced construction programme could complete the Taurus and Amanus sections in April 1916, and the Iraq section in May 1917. But the German government was slow to interpret the line in strategic terms rather than economic. It had to accept that the war was going to be sufficiently long for the imperatives for completion to be military. Not until March 1915 was OHL convinced by the German foreign ministry of the military importance of the line. Then the Turks themselves proved reluctant to support what they saw as the furtherance of German interests. Negotiations with Turkey over the terms of a German government loan to aid construction continued throughout the war without reaching a conclusion. By 1917 the Baghdad railway company was effectively bankrupt, setting its accumulated losses since 1914 at 6 million marks. It was saved in July by the German government, which provided a prepayment of 100 million marks secured in Baghdad railway bonds and most of the company's shares. The solution, intended as an interim one pending fresh negotiations with the Turks over the revenue arrangements, fell foul of the intransigence of the Ottoman government. By the end of the war the German government had diverted a total of 360 million marks towards the line.⁹⁴

Initially, however, it was not the Turkish section of the Berlin–Baghdad railway line that gave cause for major concern but the European. On 6 August 1914 Enver asked the Germans for half-a-million artillery shells and 200,000

⁹³ de Nogales, *Four years beneath the crescent*, 164–7.

⁹⁴ Trumpener, *German and the Ottoman Empire*, ch. 9; Feldman, *Deutsche Bank*, 141–4.

rifles. The Turkish shopping list lengthened as mobilization proceeded: mines, howitzers, trucks, electrical equipment, and even boots, blankets, and uniforms were requested. Progressively more pressing were the demands for German coal. In 1911–12 Turkey produced 700,000 tonnes of coal from its mines at Ereğli; the balance of its needs, 421,000 tonnes, were imported, 88 per cent from Britain.⁹⁵ In September 1914 British imports ceased. Turkey's own production in that year reached 651,240 tonnes; in 1915 it fell to 420,317 tonnes, and in 1917 to 146,000. Such coal as there was did not necessarily reach its major consumers—the city of Constantinople and the railways themselves.⁹⁶ Before the war the coal had been shipped from Sunguldak in the Black Sea to the Bosphorus; from late 1914 the Russians mounted a blockade on the port and bombarded its facilities. The Turks were not able to use the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to break the blockade, principally because if the *Goeben* was employed as an escort she consumed almost as much coal as the colliers could carry.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the blockade was not sustained continuously; the bombardments, for all that there were twenty-five, including an air raid, were not definitive.⁹⁸ Thus, coastal traffic continued to trickle through at a rate sufficient to deprive of urgency pressure for a railway to link Sunguldak to Turkey's interior. Opponents of the line argued that coastal traffic would make any line redundant with the advent of peace. Thus, both Turkey's major sources of fuel, Britain and Ereğli, were affected by the outbreak of war.

Broadly speaking, Germany was willing to provide its ally with coal and munitions. But with Serbia undefeated, the Berlin–Constantinople line passed through Romania and Bulgaria, both still neutral. The route was mostly single track, and at Giurgevo goods had to be unloaded, taken across the Danube by barge, and reloaded at Rustchuk. However, the technical difficulties were second to the political. Initially Romania co-operated with Germany, albeit with restrictions, allowing no more than eight freight cars a day. In September the Romanian attitude became stickier, and by 17 September only thirty-three of 116 cars sent by Krupp had passed through Romania. On 2 October the Romanian government finally stopped all shipments to Turkey.⁹⁹ The Germans tried every possible way of reopening the route; they considered shipments down the Danube in the teeth of Serb artillery; plans to airlift goods by Zeppelin foundered on the weight of the load and on the lack of facilities for airships in Turkey; one scheme suggested the release of forty balloons in south Hungary when the wind was favourable.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately there was no real

⁹⁵ Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 603.

⁹⁶ Bihl, *Kaukasuspolitik*, 204.

⁹⁷ Neulen, *Feldgrau in Jerusalem*, 43.

⁹⁸ Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian battlefields*, 550–2; Nekrasov, *North of Gallipoli*, 26, 36.

⁹⁹ Trumpener, *Journal of Modern History*, XXXII (1960), 145–9.

¹⁰⁰ Mühlmann, *Das deutsche-türkische Waffenbündnis*, 48–9.

solution other than the defeat of Serbia. Not until 17 January 1916 would the first train from Berlin pull into Constantinople. By and large Turkey conducted its first year of operations with its own resources.

The victories which the Ottoman army secured at Gallipoli and at Kut, therefore, provide further confirmation that material exhaustion after the Balkan wars was not such a major factor affecting Turkey's fighting capacity. Even the railway problems of the southern parts of the empire should not be exaggerated—at least for 1915: the inhospitability of the terrain, the problems of water and of supply, kept armies in those regions relatively small irrespective of the limitations imposed by railway capacities. Much more important was the fact that the Turkish army, thanks principally to Sevket and Enver, had been reformed in 1913 and 1914 sufficiently to sustain major operations with success in 1915.

Virtually lost amidst a welter of damning evidence gathered by British military intelligence was the report filed by Cunliffe-Owen, the British military attaché, on 10 October 1914:

There is no doubt that very considerable progress is being made in [the Ottoman army's] efficiency, and that it will be far superior to that in existence before the Balkan war. The continuous training . . . and the time which has elapsed for the deliberate organisation of mobilisation and administrative arrangements must cause the Turkish forces to be now regarded as a factor . . . to be taken seriously into account.¹⁰¹

Moltke's sudden enthusiasm for the Turkish army had some basis in military reality, rather than solely in political opportunism. Moreover, the early defeats in the Balkan wars, when Turkey had fought offensively, had obscured the later successes in defensive battles. These were the qualities—the hardiness, the doggedness of the Anatolian peasant—on which the Turkish leadership was able to build, and which made Turkey a worthy ally of the Central Powers.

¹⁰¹ Sheffy, *British military intelligence*, 61.