



*British Diplomacy in Turkey,
1583 to the present*

*A study in the evolution
of the resident embassy*

G.R. Berridge

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British Diplomacy in Turkey, 1583 to the present

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resident embassy

By

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On the cover: Pera House: garden front, May 1987 (with kind permission of Patricia Daunt) and the Ankara Embassy: south front of the Residence, late 1980s (with kind permission of Timothy Daunt)

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For Cathy and Will, with love

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PREFACE

This book has been my default research project for the last twelve years. It has, in other words, been picked up and set aside depending on the pressure of other demands, though for about the last 18 months I have worked on it virtually non-stop. If I had realised how much labour it would entail I would probably never have started it but I have no regrets. The late Christopher Hughes, brilliant and eccentric, whose influence was still present in the Department of Politics at Leicester when I arrived 30 years ago, used to maintain that in order to challenge their own thinking political theorists should also study a particular government in depth; and it is for this reason that, though chiefly interested in Hegel, he was possibly better known for his work on Switzerland. Something of this approach must have rubbed off on me because when I developed a general interest in diplomacy I thought that I had better study one embassy in depth. I chose the British Embassy in Turkey, I think (it was a long time ago) because of its colourful history, and it has certainly challenged and—I hope—enriched my general thinking in countless ways.

In 1968 the Foreign Office became the 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office' but it is now commonly referred to once more as the 'Foreign Office'. For the sake of simplicity it is this name that I use throughout the book. Occasionally I also employ terms now current rather than those in use at the relevant time, such as 'prenegotiations' rather than 'preliminaries'. This may make some retired diplomats wince but should make it easier for scholars and students searching this book for illustrations to find what they are looking for.

As to proper names, I have in general relied on the British usage that was current at the time being discussed; hence for example 'Constantinople' until the late 1920s and 'Istanbul' thereafter.

G. R. B., Leicester, February 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me with this book. Among those to whom my debt is deepest are those who have cast a critical eye over all or parts of the draft manuscript, as well as assisting me in other ways. These include David Barchard, Sir Brian Barder, Peter Clark, Sir Timothy Daunt, Keith Hamilton, Alan James, Lorna Lloyd, Andrew Mango, Larry Pope, Kishan Rana, Sir Ivor Roberts, Jeremy Varcoe, and John W. Young. I am responsible for all errors of fact and faulty analysis which remain. Others who have helped me in various ways include Nick Fishwick, Sir David Hannay, Peter Hogarth, Sinan Kunalp, Richard Langhorne, Alex May, Caroline Mullan, Onder Ozar, Charles Malouf Samaha, Sue Smith, Paul Stokes, Margery Thompson, Jane Warry, Antony Wynn, and Esin and Nuri Yurdusev. I am immensely grateful to all of them, and extend my apologies to anyone I have overlooked.

I am also in debt to the staffs of the many archives and libraries which I have used. However, I must mention especially those of The National Archives in London and Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge, both of whom not only displayed unfailing kindness but also an enlightened attitude to the use of digital photography. This prompts me to add that this book would never have been finished without the use of a digital camera with a vast memory, so for that I must also thank most warmly my good friend, Hossein of Datanext, who has supplied me with and taught me how to use computers and (latterly) cameras for over 20 years.

In addition I must thank Oxford University Press for permission to reprint in Chapter 3 of this book material from my chapter entitled 'Nation, class, and diplomacy: the diminishing of the dragomanate of the British Embassy in Constantinople, 1810–1914', in Markus Mösslang and Torsten Rlotte (eds.), *The Diplomats' World: A Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815–1914* (Oxford University Press for the German Historical Institute London: Oxford and New York, 2008).

For financial assistance, I would like to express my gratitude to the Nuffield Foundation, which gave me a Small Grant to support the pilot project on which this book was based.

For permission to reproduce material under copyright among the illustrations, I wish to thank Patricia Daunt and Timothy Daunt (the

photographs of Pera House and the Ankara Residence, respectively); the Lady Middleton (the photograph of her father, General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall); and the Trustees of the British Museum ('The Grand Vizir giving Audience to the English Ambassador'). I have researched the provenance of the remaining photographs and photo-engravings to the best of my ability and feel confident that they are all in the public domain. I stand ready to make appropriate arrangements should this prove misplaced in any individual case.

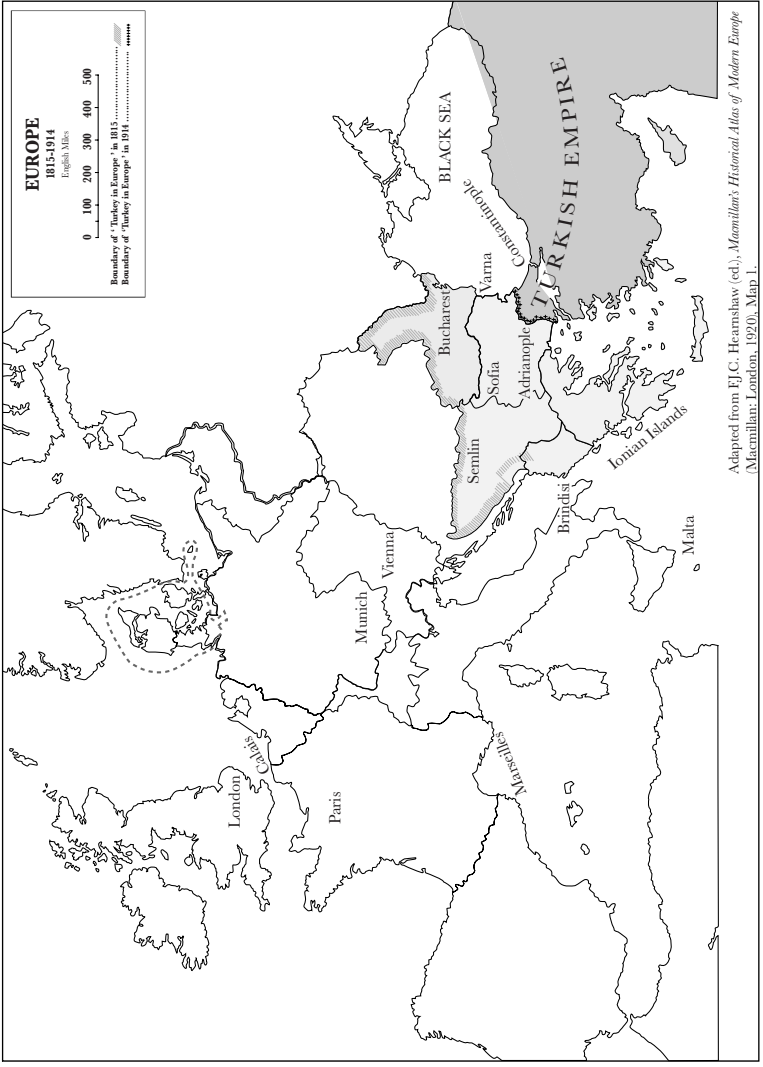
Finally, I must thank Renee Otto, my editor at Brill, for her brisk and expert assistance, and the house's cartography department for help with the maps.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

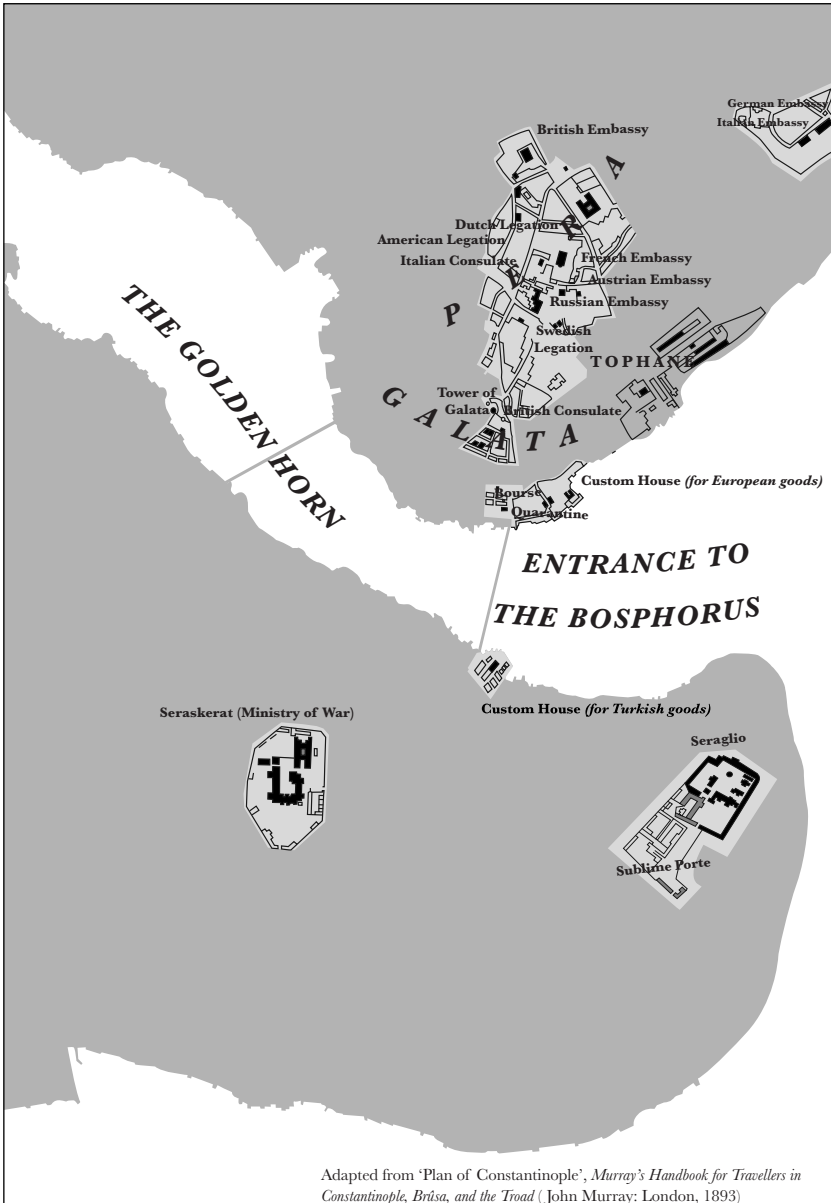
ASC Dur.	Archives and Special Collections, Durham University
Adm.	[British] Admiralty
AR	Annual Report (later, Review) [by the embassy on Turkey]
BD	<i>British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898–1914</i> , ed. by G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley (HMSO: London)
BDOHP	British Diplomatic Oral History Programme < www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/BDOHP >
BEA	British European Airways
BoT	Board of Trade [British]
BTI	British Trade International
C	Head of MI6
CAC Cam.	Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge
CD	SOE Executive Head
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
C-G	Consul-General
CO	Colonial Office
CPRS	Central Policy Review Staff
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DBFP1	<i>Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939</i> , 1st Series
DBFP2	<i>Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939</i> , 2nd Series
DBFP3	<i>Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939</i> , 3rd Series
DLO	Drugs Liaison Officer
DoE	Department of the Environment
DoTpt	Department of Transport
DOT	Department of Overseas Trade
DS List	<i>The Diplomatic Service List</i>
ECGD	Export Credits Guarantee Department
FAC	Foreign Affairs Committee [House of Commons]
FO	Foreign Office
FO List	<i>The Foreign Office List and Diplomatic and Consular Year Book</i>
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
GCCS	The [British] Government Code and Cypher School
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
GPO	General Post Office [British]

HCPP	House of Commons Parliamentary Papers
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ILO	Immigration Liaison Officer
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISLD	Inter-Services Liaison Department
JIB	Joint Intelligence Board
JPS	Joint Planning Staff
K-H	Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe
LE	Locally Engaged [Staff]
MA	Military Attaché
MECA Oxf.	Middle East Centre Archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare [British]
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service
MOI	Ministry of Information [British]
MPBW	Ministry of Public Buildings and Works [British]
NAFEN	Near and Far East News Ltd
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
O of W	Office of Works
PPD	Personnel Policy Department [Foreign Office]
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
SCA	Somerset County Archives, Taunton
SIME	Security Intelligence Middle East
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
SO	SOE symbol for the Minister of Economic Warfare
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SO1	SOE's propaganda division
SO2	SOE's sabotage division
THY	Turkish Airlines
TNA	The National Archives, London (formerly the 'Public Record Office')
UKCC	United Kingdom Commercial Corporation
UKTI	United Kingdom Trade and Investment
WLS	Wireless Liaison Service

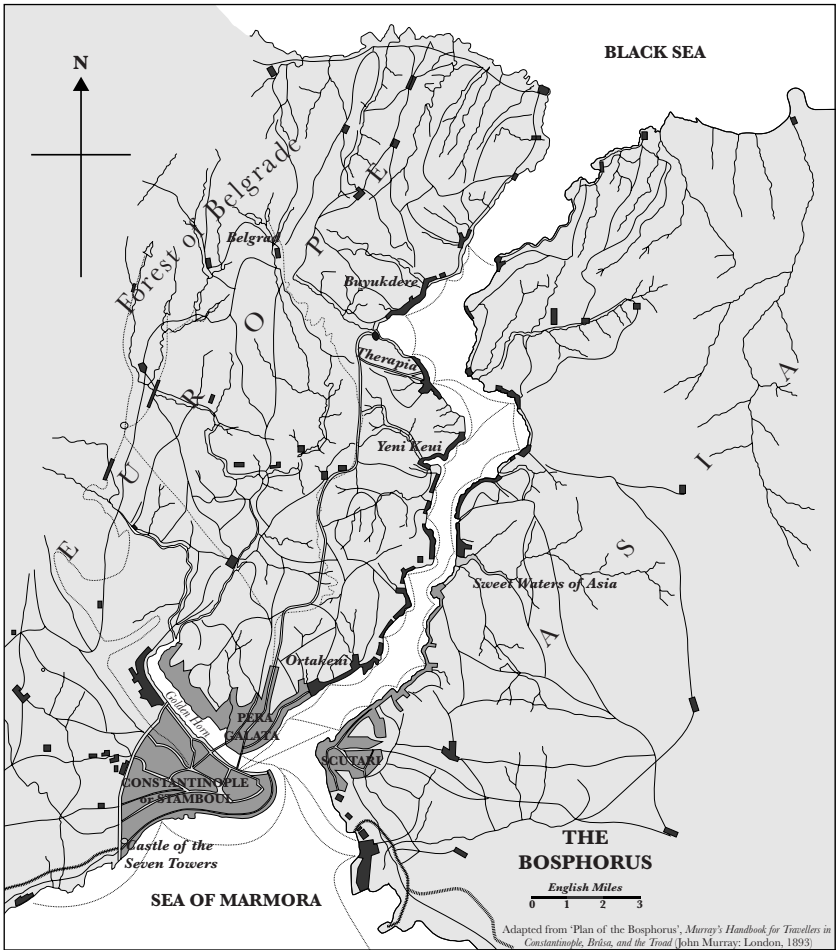
MAPS



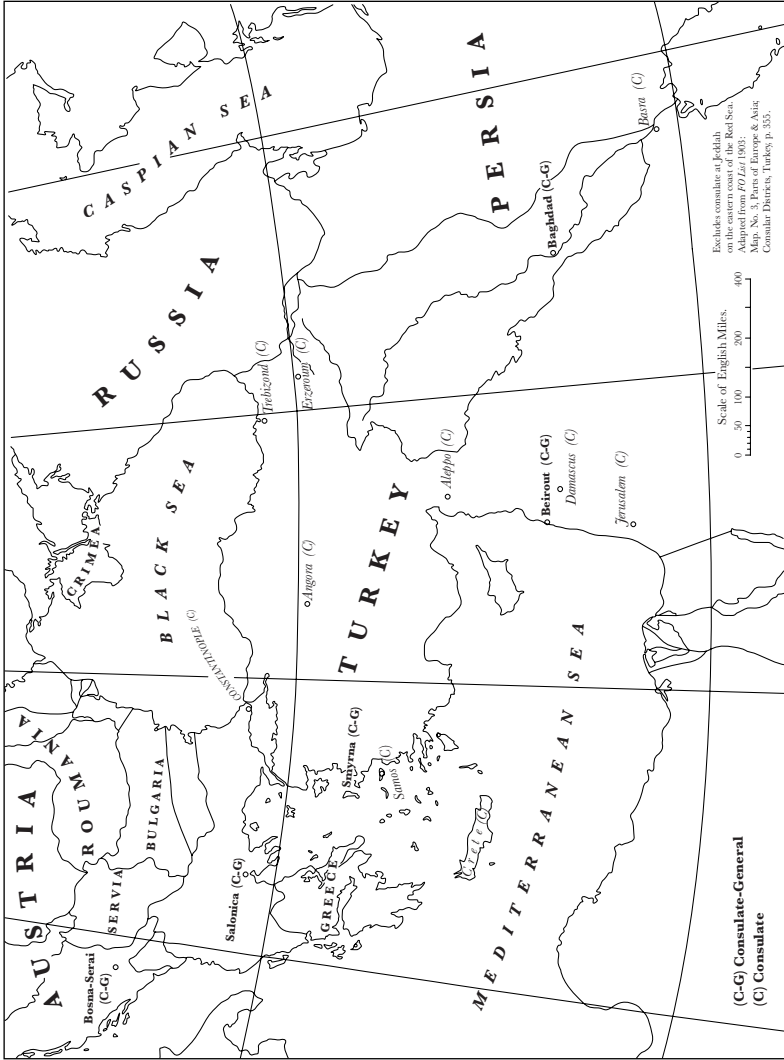
1. Europe, showing contraction of the Ottoman Empire and important cities and ports on routes taken by King's/Queen's Messengers, 1815–1914



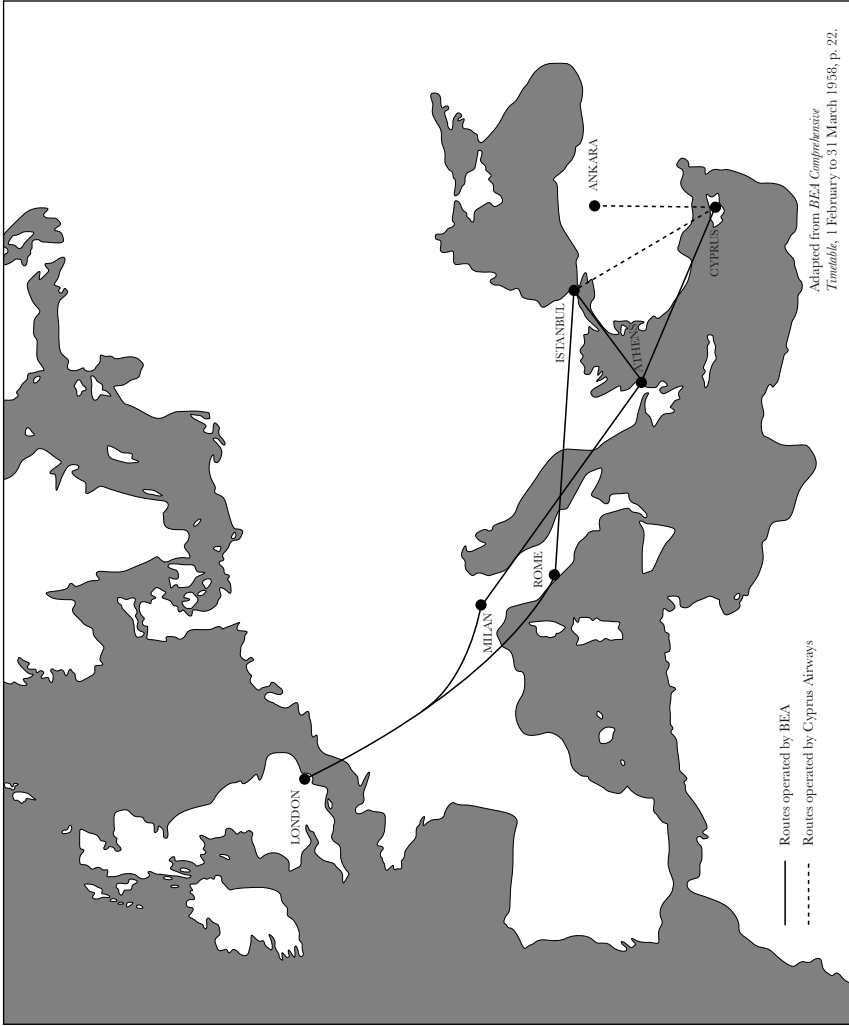
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3. The Bosphorus, showing summer embassy sites, 1892



4. Principal consular posts subordinate to the British Embassy in Constantinople, 1903



5. BEA/Cyprus Airways services to Istanbul and Ankara, winter 1957-8

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1 The Grand Vizir giving Audience to the English Ambassador
(© Trustees of the British Museum)

Representative of a popular genre inspired by the work of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, this picture was painted by Francis Smith, who accompanied the notorious libertine, Lord Baltimore, on a tour of the Levant in 1763–4. The stylized figures in the painting include, standing to the immediate right of the seated ambassador, the dragoman of the Porte; behind him, the embassy's own dragoman; and to his rear, the leading members of the English nation in Constantinople.



Fig. 2 Early ambassador: Sir Paul Pindar (*unknown engraver and artist*)



Fig. 3 Early eighteenth century ambassadress: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
(photograph by Dawson of a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller)



Fig. 4 Summer embassy: Therapia, late nineteenth century (*unknown photographer*)

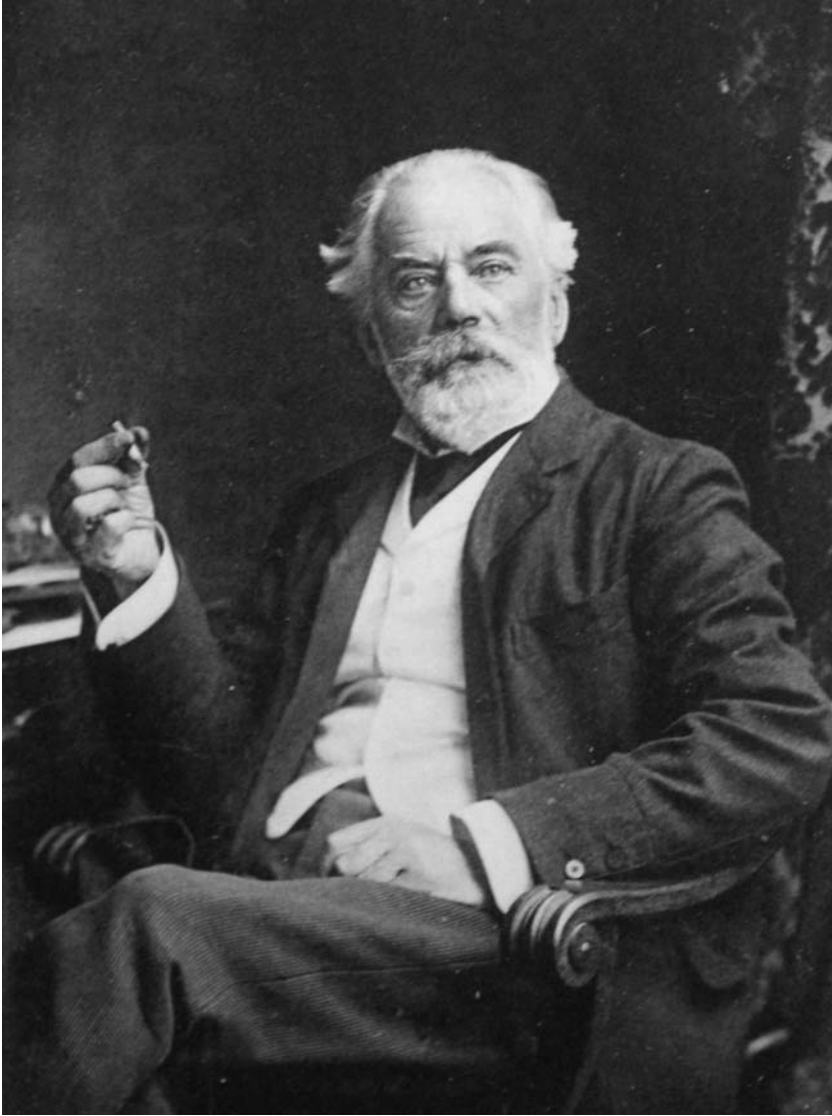


Fig. 5 Judge of the British Supreme Consular Court at Constantinople: Sir Edmund Hornby (*Elliott and Fry, Ltd.*)

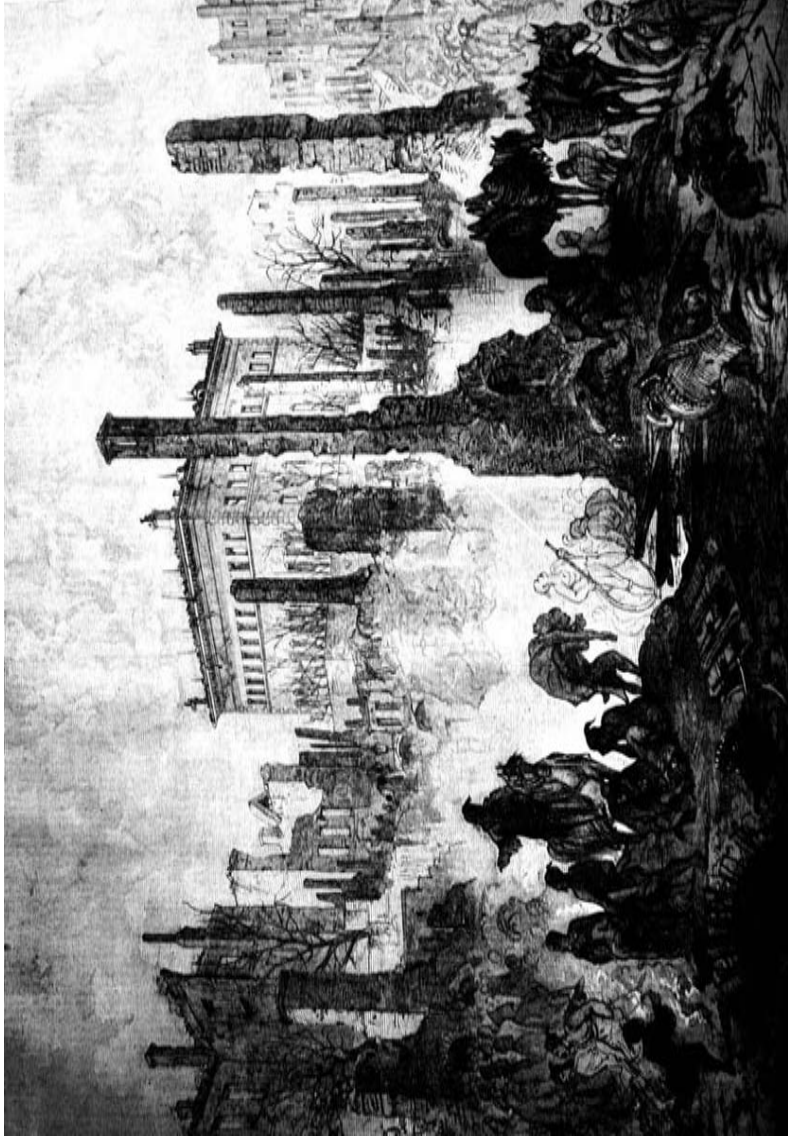


Fig. 6 The embassy ruins after the great fire of 1870 (*Illustrated London News*, 2 July 1870)

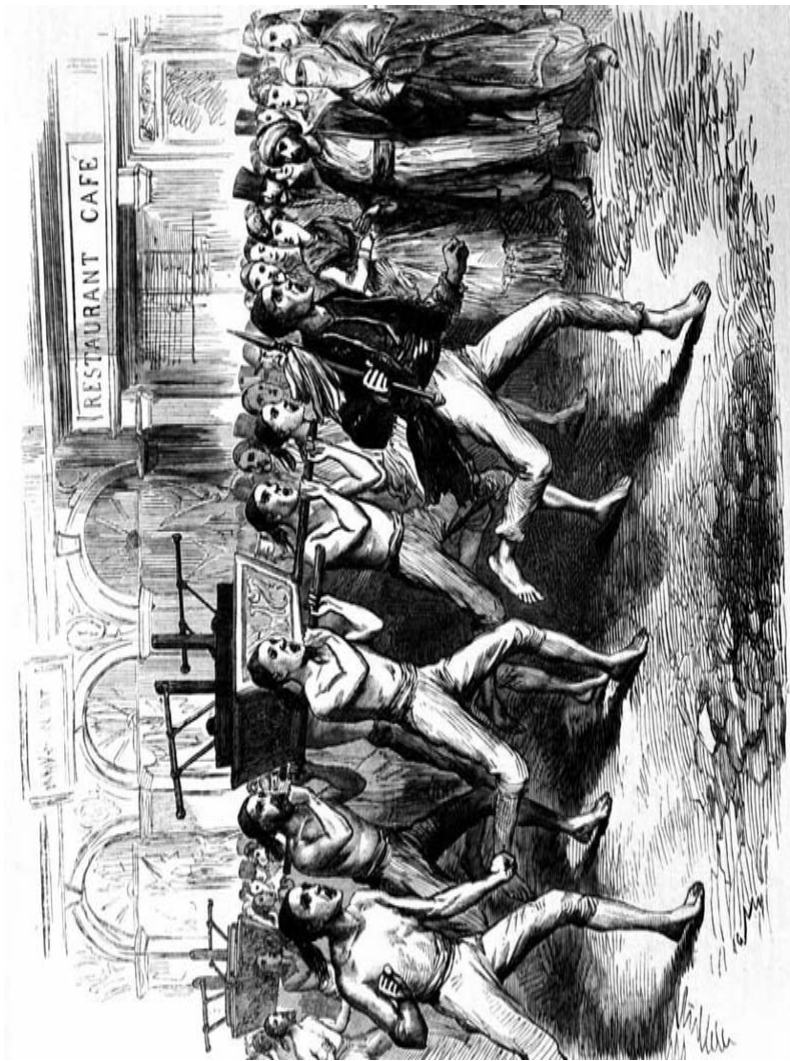


Fig. 7 Constantinople firemen (*Illustrated London News*, 18 June 1870)

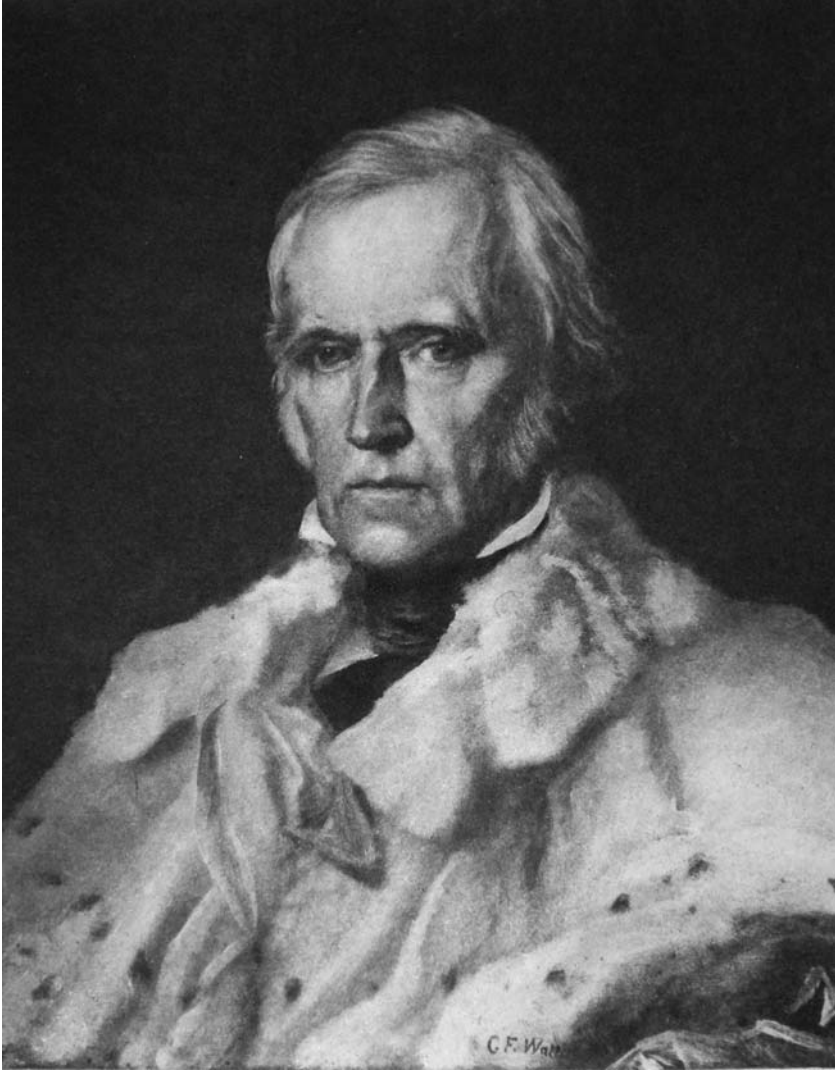


Fig. 8 Mid-nineteenth century ambassador: Lord Stratford de Redcliffe
(photogravure by Walker & Cockerell from a portrait by G. F. Watts)

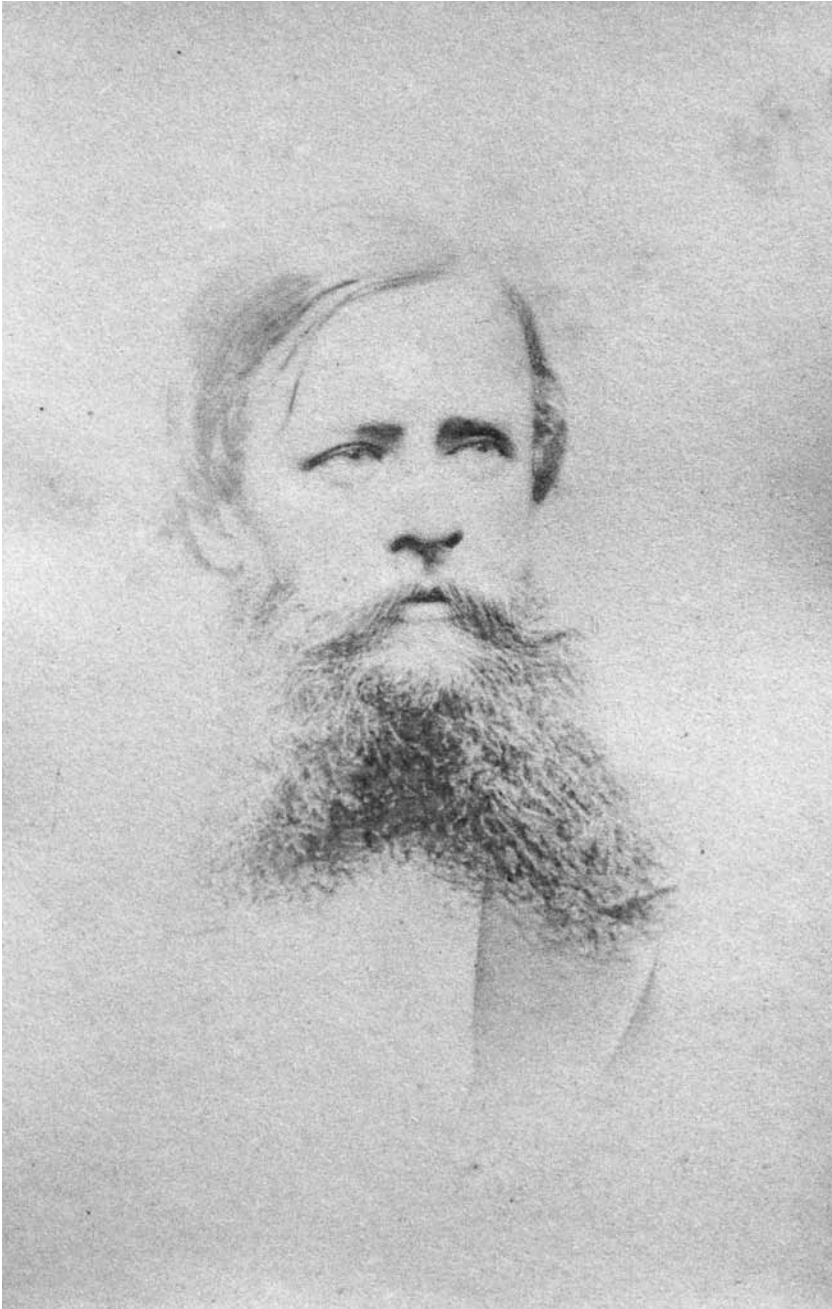


Fig. 9 Oriental attaché: Percy Smythe (later 8th Viscount Strangford)
(unknown photographer)

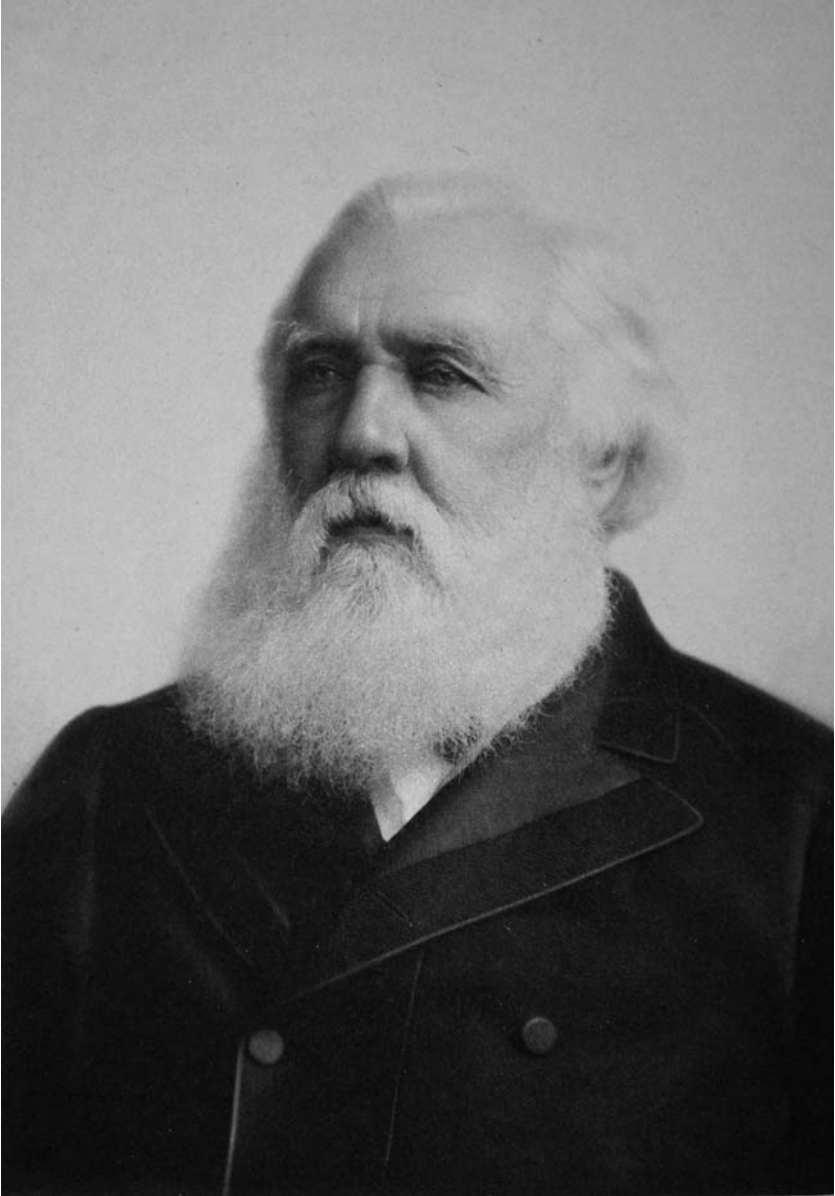


Fig. 10 Late nineteenth century ambassador: Sir Henry Layard
(photogravure by Walker & Cockerell from a photograph by Fradelle & Young)

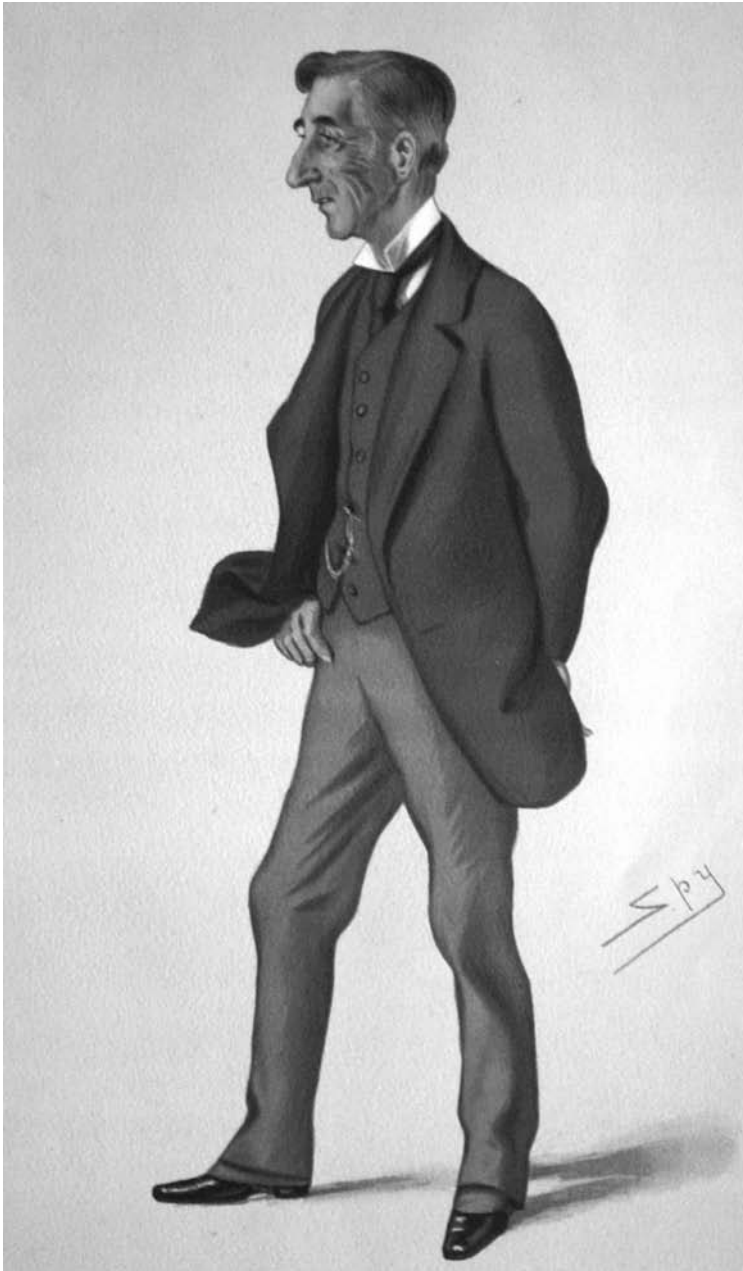


Fig. 11 Late nineteenth century ambassador: Sir Henry Elliot
(*Vanity Fair*, 17 March 1877)



Fig. 12 Levantine dragoman: Hugo Marinitich in the embassy's slave department
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 13 Levant consul: Ardern G. Hulme-Beaman (*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 14 Queen's Messenger: Captain Philip Wynter
(*photograph by W. Forshaw*)



Fig. 15 Early twentieth century ambassador: Sir Gerard Lowther
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 16 Early twentieth century ambassador: Alice Lady Lowther
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 17 “The cramped and inconvenient cottage... now only a standing challenge to the prestige of the British Empire” (Sir George Clerk, 29 June 1927): The first British Embassy building at Ankara, 1926
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 18 Early twentieth century ambassador: Sir Horace Rumbold
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 19 The only British general who could speak Turkish: General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall (*unknown photographer, with kind permission of the Lady Middleton*)



Fig. 20 Mid-twentieth century ambassador with his staff: Sir Bernard Burrows, Ankara, 29 October 1960
(*unknown photographer*)



Fig. 21 Pera House: garden front, May 1987 (with kind permission of Patricia Daunt)



Fig. 22 The Ankara Embassy: south front of the Residence, late 1980s
(with kind permission of Timothy Daunt)

INTRODUCTION

By the late sixteenth century the resident embassy, although still a relatively novel development in the history of diplomacy, was already a well-established institution. This was underlined by the willingness even of princes of different religions to exchange ambassadors, as noted with approval in 1585 by the influential lawyer Alberico Gentili.¹ There is, therefore, nothing particularly surprising in the fact that in the second half of the 1570s the adventurous Christian government of Queen Elizabeth I of England, together with the London mercantile community, should have decided to consider establishing a permanent embassy in Constantinople, the capital of the Muslim empire of the Ottoman Turks. In 1583 such an embassy was created and William Harborne, a merchant and former member of parliament who enjoyed close connections with Elizabeth's privy council and had been in Turkey three years earlier, was confirmed as England's first ambassador.²

What prompted the English to take this step, and how did the component parts of the embassy evolve over the period up to the outbreak of the First World War? The first of these questions provides the focus for this introduction, and the second for the first part of the book. How and why did the embassy change in the twentieth century? What contribution did it make to Anglo-Turkish diplomacy from the First World War until the present day? These questions shape the second part of the book, and in the answers they stimulate suggest some lessons for modern diplomacy in general.

Furtherance of trade with the Levant was without doubt the main English interest in developing diplomatic relations with Turkey at the end of the sixteenth century and remained so for many years afterwards.³ Development of this distant and dangerous trade, jealously controlled at the time by Venice and France via special privileges granted by the sultan known as 'capitulations', also offered the strategic advantage of fostering the growth of the English fleet. It was against this background

¹ Gentili, *De Legationibus Libri Tres*, vol. 2, pp. 90–1.

² Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 76.

³ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, pp. 31–4, 51–2; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 6.

that in September 1581 the London merchants interested in the Turkey trade obtained a charter from Elizabeth's government. In return for the risks which they would have to take in its development, this gave their company, the Levant Company, as it was soon to be called, a complete monopoly of the trade.⁴ Thus confident about his commercial position and with his authority bolstered by proper diplomatic credentials from Elizabeth, Harborne was able only shortly after returning to Constantinople to secure for English commerce throughout the Ottoman Empire capitulations that were as generous as those already enjoyed by its rivals.

For many years afterwards the first priority of Harborne's successors was to ensure that these privileges were honoured; to seek redress for the English traders when they were not; and to renew when necessary and, if possible, improve upon their terms. If the English merchants were to gain maximum advantage from the capitulations, their ships also had to be free from the constant threat of attacks by pirates, most of whom were nominally subjects of the sultan; such attacks not only threatened the commercial relationship but also damaged royal prestige. As a result, encouraging the sultan to co-operate in the suppression of piracy and rescuing enslaved seamen both became important, if subsidiary, aims of English policy. The commercial priority in the ambassador's work was reflected in the unusual procedure whereby on his appointment he was always provided not only with instructions from the government but also with articles of agreement and a separate set of instructions from the Levant Company.

Promoting trade may have been the main priority, but even during Harborne's time a political interest in English friendship with Turkey had also become important.⁵ In the late sixteenth century England was still no more than a middle power in a European system dominated by rivalry between Spain and France, each of which was anxious to bring Elizabeth's realm within its own orbit. By the end of the 1560s, the French threat had been removed but that from Catholic Spain—also

⁴ It was originally called the 'Turkey Company' but became known as the Levant Company following a merger with the Venice Company under a new charter in January 1592.

⁵ This needs emphasising because the sweeping observation of Wood—which elsewhere he qualifies—that before the Revolution of 1688 the English representative in Constantinople was no more than 'a commercial agent masquerading as an ambassador' (*A History of the Levant Company*, p. 130) is quoted favourably by Horn in *The British Diplomatic Service 1689–1789*, pp. 32–3.

the driving force of the Counter-Reformation—had more than replaced it. Henceforth this country was to be regarded as Protestant England's natural enemy. But Spain, with its important possessions along the Barbary Coast and in Italy, was also the natural enemy of the Ottoman Empire, at least in the West. Furthermore, the sultan was beginning to need encouragement to continue his wars against the Western infidels because for a whole variety of reasons, not least the mounting costs of his conflict with Persia in the East, he was beginning to find this more difficult; in 1578 he had even concluded an armistice with Spain.⁶ Hence the calculation of Elizabeth's government was simple: friendly contact with the Turks would put it in a better position to encourage them to attack, or at least appear poised to attack, the Habsburgs (Austrian as well as Spanish) from the East and thus relieve Spanish pressure on England.⁷

The manipulation of Turkish policy to suit England's interests in the balance of power, or territory in Germany, did not always involve encouraging the sultan to attack the Habsburgs. Indeed, with the slow eclipse of Spain in the seventeenth century and the new need for Austria to give its undivided attention to helping Europe's opposition to the rising power of France, the opposite policy was dictated. And once Russia started to threaten the complete destruction of the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century and thus upset the equilibrium of Europe as a whole, the simple survival of that empire—'the sick man of Europe'—became a fixed point of British policy. However, manipulating the policy of a Muslim state, especially if this meant inciting it to attack Christendom, caused unease at home and was a propaganda gift to England's Catholic enemies everywhere. As a result, it was one for which the English government was usually inclined to deny any responsibility.

Other English interests in good relations with distant Turkey developed independently or in the wake of pursuit of the main aims of policy. Some of these became constant refrains in the instructions with which the ambassadors were sent out. One was the welfare of all Christians in the Ottoman Empire, but especially those of 'the true Protestant religion' and the Greek Orthodox Church. Another objective that often

⁶ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, pp. 165–6, 171; Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 164.

⁷ Walsingham to Harborne, 8 Oct. 1585, repr. in Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 226–8.

came to mind when certain wealthy and influential Englishmen contemplated the Ottoman Empire, although not the sort of thing thought proper for an ambassador's formal instructions, was the plunder of its Christian statues and other artefacts. Yet another important interest, which grew steadily in significance, was facilitating communications with India, where the East India Company was enlarging its operations. This began to loom large in the late eighteenth century, and required strong diplomatic intervention because the Porte (the Ottoman government) was hostile to the intrusion of Christian shipping into the Red Sea. Since the East India Company was the great rival of the Levant Company, this was not without further complications. And as English horizons broadened and Constantinople became of greater importance as a centre of diplomacy, the advancement of English prestige in the Ottoman capital also became a significant interest in its own right. It was for this reason, as well as for reasons rooted in the balance of power, that importance came to be attached to mediation between the Turks and their enemies—whether Poles and Venetians in the early days, or Austrians, Greeks and Russians later. Successful mediation also had a cash value to ambassadors.

This, then, in broad outline, was the political and trading context in which the English Embassy was first established and then evolved over the next three centuries. What form did this evolution take, and what were the main influences on it? The justification for most of the chapters in Part A that shape the answers to these questions will be self-evident. However, the British consuls scattered across the Ottoman Empire might be considered marginal to the embassy. They are given a chapter because they came under the authority of the ambassador in Constantinople and because, after the early nineteenth century, they were in any case strongly represented in the embassy itself. As for the building which housed the ambassador and his family, this might be considered worthy of only a long footnote. It is dealt with in the first chapter partly because it was the first material condition in Turkey of an effective diplomacy and partly because—in its location as well as its character—it was itself periodically the subject of controversy.

And so to what for a long time the Turks called the 'English Palace'.

PART A
EVOLUTION

CHAPTER ONE

‘THE ENGLISH PALACE’

Like the other embassies in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the British Embassy was always called a ‘palace’ because, as Philip Mansel puts it so well, “if in other capitals ambassadors lived like princes, in Constantinople they lived like kings”.¹ They did this because of the strong and enduring belief that the Ottoman government attached particular importance to ‘outward appearances’ and because the rivalry between the great powers for influence at the Porte was always intense. They were able to do it because there was money to be made by a shrewd envoy in Constantinople in the early years, some of them even brought money with them, and sultans themselves were sometimes generous with gifts of land and buildings to their foreign guests.

In the early nineteenth century the English Palace, previously always a rented building, was given purpose-built premises. Despite this, their fate was not to be a happy one. With most of its buildings made of wood and the density of its population accelerating, the Ottoman capital experienced a marked increase in destructive fires in the nineteenth century,² and the British Embassy suffered along with the rest of the urban fabric. This led to great arguments as to where exactly it should be located as well as about its architecture. By the outbreak of the First World War it certainly had a palace worthy of the name but at huge and oft-lamented expense. It also had a summer embassy on the Bosphorus but most of its buildings had just burned down. It had a fleet of vessels to ply between the two but they were the smallest, slowest and oldest on the water.

¹ Mansel, *Constantinople*, p. 194.

² There were an astonishing 229 “extensive fires” between 1853 and 1906, which was greatly in excess of anything that had gone before, Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*, pp. 52–3.

The Early Embassy

In Turkey, as in other countries where British diplomats were resident, it was customary until the early nineteenth century for the ambassador to house with his own family not only an increasing body of servants but also his 'official family' as well.³ At most times this included a secretary, private secretary, doctor, chaplain, and—later on—an increasing number of unpaid attachés (see Chapter 2). To begin with it seems that the Levant Company also expected the ambassador to share his house with the English merchants and factors (agents for merchants), trading in Constantinople.⁴ For long after this practice ceased he was still expected to entertain them—not to mention English ships' captains and officers, and other diplomats—on a regular basis. This much is evident from the diary of Samuel Medley, the elderly, gout-stricken, and God-fearing butler to the eighteenth century ambassador, Lord Kinnoull; Medley as might be expected, was much concerned with this aspect of embassy life.⁵ Important visitors from home also expected to be lodged at the embassy if they so desired, since there were no real hotels in Constantinople until the nineteenth century, notably Misseri's and, a step down from this, the Hotel de Byzance. All of this meant large premises, with some rooms set aside for living and entertaining, and some for business, the 'chancery'.⁶

Harborne, the first English ambassador, took a house on the lower Bosphorus close to the arsenal at Tophane. This was in a Muslim area and was perhaps chosen by Harborne, who was known to the Ottomans as 'the Lutheran ambassador', because it placed him at a discreet distance from the embassies of the Catholic states—also his commercial rivals—which were up the hill in Pera. However, shortly before the end of his own embassy, Edward Barton, Harborne's successor, was forced by complaints from his neighbours that he kept a disorderly house, to join the rest of the Franks.⁷ Pera was long to remain the favoured spot for all the foreign missions. Here, according to Fynes

³ In 1750, according to official Ottoman records, the British Embassy had a staff of 55, although this would have consisted largely of domestic and personal staff, Mansel, *Constantinople*, p. 194.

⁴ Skilliter, 'The organization of the first English embassy in Istanbul in 1583', p. 161.

⁵ Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople*. Kinnoull's embassy had both a Great Dining Room and a Lower Hall for taking meals.

⁶ Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service 1689–1789*, p. 16.

⁷ Woodhead, 'Harborne' and 'Barton'.

Moryson, the Elizabethan traveller who stayed with him, Barton lived in "a faire house within a large field, and pleasant gardens compassed with a wall".⁸ The ambassador also had views of the minarets of the city, the surrounding waters, and the distant hills of Asia, which a later resident, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the less famous Edward, who served as ambassador only from March 1717 until July 1718, described with justice as "perhaps altogether the most beautiful prospect in the world".⁹ The same house seems to have been enjoyed by Barton's immediate successors, although its enjoyment did not always commence immediately. One of the more notable among them, Sir Thomas Roe, found on his arrival that it had been stripped of all furniture and plate by his predecessor.¹⁰

When the house initially taken by Barton was surrendered is not clear; nor is the number of different houses that were subsequently occupied by the British Embassy before the nineteenth century, although it was probably quite a few.¹¹ Even occupying two at the same time seems not to have been that unusual. During the English civil wars in the seventeenth century this was hardly surprising, since both sides attempted on various occasions to install their own ambassador and there were lengthy periods when two embassies vied for recognition at the sultan's court.¹² The same thing happened even in the more normal times of the eighteenth century. Lord Kinnoul, who had been recalled but had run up debts and was suspected of lingering in Constantinople in the hope of securing a lucrative mediation between the Turks and the Russians,¹³ overlapped for possibly as long as a year with his successor, Sir Everard Fawkenor, who was increasingly exasperated by his behaviour. Kinnoul at least had the decency to vacate the existing house in favour of the new ambassador, removing himself into the old Russian Palace.¹⁴ The pages of Medley's diary for 1736 reveal that the

⁸ Moryson, *The Itinerary*, vol. 2, p. 92.

⁹ Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, p. 99.

¹⁰ Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 141–2.

¹¹ The house occupied by Abraham Stanyan burned down in 1725 and was rebuilt by the Levant Company on the same site, Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople*, p. 82.

¹² The longest survivor of this messy and complex business was the suitably pragmatic Sir Thomas Bendish, Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642–1660*, pp. 111–16, 158–71, 185–90.

¹³ TNA, Fawkenor to Harrington, 11 June 1736, SP97/28; Cassels, *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire*, ch. 9.

¹⁴ Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople*, p. 153.

butler was for ever going backwards and forwards between one palace and “ye other pallace”. Fortunately, although by this time nearly 70, he was a keen walker.

The sultans were not always so enamoured as the foreign ambassadors of Constantinople and its environs and in the second half of the seventeenth century spent a great deal of time in Adrianople (now Edirne), their capital for the century before the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Adrianople had “the treble attraction of tranquillity, proximity to hunting grounds and geography: it was the natural mobilization centre for Ottoman campaigns in Europe”.¹⁵ This meant that the ambassadors, including the English Ambassador, had to follow them. Mustapha II, who was fond of hunting, virtually abandoned Constantinople for Adrianople altogether, and Sir William Paget, whose period as ambassador (1693–1702) overlapped very closely with Mustapha’s reign, had to spend much time there in “uncomfortable circumstances”.¹⁶

In addition to the house in Pera, the English Ambassador rented a summer residence in the countryside to the north, usually in Belgrade Forest.¹⁷ Much later, he preferred Buyukdere or Therapia, both villages on the European shore of the Upper Bosphorus. About the beauty of these locations, favoured in summer by cooling breezes blowing down from the Black Sea, visitors and the handbooks they carried were always lyrical in their praise.¹⁸ Diplomatic contact as well as pleasure was served by the summer embassy, for Ottoman ministers and other diplomats were to be found in the same vicinity during the summer months. This residence also provided relative safety from the plague, which was a constant threat in Constantinople until the middle of the nineteenth century and regular theme of ambassadorial despatches. The plague killed the wife of Sir Thomas Glover in 1608,¹⁹ the wife of Sir Thomas Bendish in 1649,²⁰ and a daughter of Lord Winchilsea some

¹⁵ Mansell, *Constantinople*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Heywood, ‘Paget’; Mansell, *Constantinople*, pp. 179–80.

¹⁷ On life in Belgrade Forest, which was reached from Pera by horse, cart, or sedan chair, see Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople*, pp. 40–2. With local roads still in a poor condition, sedan chairs were still being used for short journeys by the embassy in the late nineteenth century, Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, p. 138.

¹⁸ For example, Murray’s *Hand-book for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Constantinople*, p. 214; see also NYT, 12 Aug. 1878.

¹⁹ MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel*, p. 222.

²⁰ Saunders, ‘Bendish’.

years later. Sir William Hussey died of the same disease shortly after arriving at the embassy in 1691.²¹

In the early centuries, houses for ambassadors were usually assigned by the Porte, and were not always found to be satisfactory. The Earl of Winchilsea described his as "incredibly vile, confined and ruinous in every part"; while Sir John Finch asserted that his was "the damd'est, confounded place that ever mortall man was put into".²² Furthermore, fire was as much a threat to them as to unoccupied summer embassies. The reasons for this were succinctly distilled in the recollections of the longest-serving British Ambassador in Constantinople and great nineteenth century figure, Stratford Canning, later Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. "Narrow streets, wooden houses, and an imperfect police are so many auxiliaries to a conflagration", he wrote. "Engines so small as to be carried by the firemen, and scanty supplies of water, help to aggravate the calamity."²³ On more than one occasion the building being used as the embassy burned down, and at others only narrowly escaped.²⁴

In 1794 the newly arrived ambassador, Robert Liston, was appalled by the condition of the existing building. It was falling down, he said, the rent was high, and the Levant Company could not afford repairs.²⁵ What he did not add to his complaints to the Foreign Office, although it probably contributed to his filthy mood, was that he found the garden full of scorpions, by one of which he was stung.²⁶ When the wealthy, young John Morritt, a classical scholar, arrived in Constantinople with his tutor shortly afterwards, Liston felt unable to accommodate him at the embassy (the ambassador's furniture had not arrived either).²⁷ To no avail he begged the foreign secretary to buy it and provide for its refurbishment, so the former Ragusan Palace was rented instead.²⁸

²¹ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 246.

²² Quoted in Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, p. 79.

²³ Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 1, p. 82.

²⁴ TNA, Ainslie to Hillsborough, 26 Mar. 1782, FO78/3.

²⁵ TNA, Liston to Grenville, 10 Feb. 1795, FO78/16; see also Liston to Levant Co., 10 July 1794, FO78/15.

²⁶ Letter from John B. S. Morritt (Smyrna) to his aunt, 29 Sept. 1794; Diary of John B. S. Morritt, 25 July–1 Sept. 1794 (text kindly supplied by Peter Hogarth).

²⁷ Morritt had to lodge instead at "a Venetian hotel, which miserable as it was is the best in the place", he recorded in his journal. Nevertheless, he had a "general invitation to his [Liston's] house at all hours" and regularly dined there, letter to his sister from Zyorlu, 25 July 1794 (text kindly supplied by Peter Hogarth).

²⁸ TNA, British Palace (Embassy House) at Pera (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834.

When Pera was swept by fire in 1799, a further move was forced on the embassy, and the Levant Company—taking up Liston’s cry—attempted to nudge the government in the direction of purchase.²⁹

By this time the Foreign Office appears to have accepted the principle that Britain should follow the example of most other states with missions in Constantinople and build its own embassy.³⁰ In principle, this would mean that it could have stone walls, thereby reducing the fire risk, while losses from the embassy’s archives and pilfering of its valuables in moving from one rented property to another would also be less likely. Several plots of land were inspected but that was as far as matters got.³¹ So the embassy moved into the French Palace, which had been vacated in 1798 after the rupture in relations between Turkey and France consequent upon Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt.³² In 1801, following the successful Anglo-Turkish operation to drive the French from Egypt and agreement on terms for the evacuation of their forces, matters between the Turks and the French were patched up and the British Embassy, now led by Lord Elgin, was faced with a further move.

Home Ownership—and Its Woes

The British role in the defeat of the French in Egypt in 1801 caused Lord Elgin’s credit at the Porte to rise along a similar trajectory to some of the fireworks set off in Constantinople to mark the occasion. A number of favours were duly bestowed upon him by Sultan Selim III. Among these was the money to purchase the land on which the embassy had stood prior to 1799, together with a major contribution to the cost of erecting Britain’s first purpose-built embassy in the Ottoman capital—or anywhere else, for that matter.³³ The new palace, designed by one of

²⁹ TNA, Bosanquet (Dep. Gov. Levant Co.) to Lord Grenville, ca. 1799, SP105/122.

³⁰ TNA, Bosanquet (Dep. Gov. Levant Co.) to Lord Grenville, ca. 1799, and 23 Feb. 1802, SP105/122. Even Sweden, although its great days were gone, had decided in 1740 to build its own embassy in Constantinople and opened it in 1757: TNA, Fawkener to Newcastle, 1740, SP97/31; Theolin, *The Swedish Palace in Istanbul*.

³¹ TNA, British Palace (Embassy House) at Pera (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834.

³² St.Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, p. 84.

³³ TNA, British Palace (Embassy House) at Pera (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834; Bosanquet (Levant Co.) to Elgin, 23 Feb. 1802; Levant Co. to Arbuthnot, 7 July 1804; Levant Co. to Straton, 5 Nov. 1805, all in SP105/122.

the artists working for Elgin on the 'marbles' in Athens and closely resembling the ambassador's own house in Scotland, appears to have been occupied by the embassy in 1803, although the work on it was not completed until 1805.³⁴ It was the only embassy building owned by the British government until 1814, when the Duke of Wellington purchased the Paris house of Napoleon's sister, Princess Borghese, for his own mission to France.³⁵

Elgin departed Constantinople in January 1803 and so never enjoyed the new palace; and exactly four years later Charles Arbuthnot (1805–7) left the premises empty upon the suspension of relations between Britain and Turkey. The result was that when Robert Adair arrived in 1809 he had a house as well as a relationship to repair. The roof had fallen in, the garden was a rubbish tip, and curtains, plate, and furniture had all either disappeared or been badly damaged.³⁶ Having been restored, the embassy was almost burned down again in April 1810.³⁷

Elgin's expensively renovated palace was not long before it was once more in trouble. When Lord Strangford assumed the tenancy in 1821 he was shocked by the building's "stark amenities and rickety decay". He also disliked its position, adjacent to "one of the noisiest and most disreputable sections of the so-called Grande Rue of Pera", where on one occasion his wife was attacked by a mob.³⁸ When Stratford Canning replaced Strangford he was unable to live in the Pera palace until it was once more renovated, living in the meantime and at some inconvenience at the summer residence in Therapia.³⁹ The building then struggled on only until 2 August 1831, when a huge fire in Pera engulfed virtually the entire district, leading to rumours that the firemen had been wilfully negligent as an act of revenge on the European quarter for the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino by a joint fleet of British, French and Russian warships four years earlier.⁴⁰ The English Palace,

³⁴ St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, pp. 84–5; Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 148; Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1815–1914*, p. 83, n. 2; TNA, Levant Co. to Drummond, 18 Nov. 1803, SP105/122.

³⁵ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1815–1914*, p. 51; Gladwyn, *The Paris Embassy*, p. 11.

³⁶ This meant renting again until the repairs were finished, Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 124–5.

³⁷ Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 1, p. 83.

³⁸ Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 195.

³⁹ TNA, Stratford to George Canning, 10 June 1826, FO165/62; Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 280.

⁴⁰ *The Times*, 27 Sept. 1831.

together with the consulate and chapel, was burned to the ground along with all the other missions except those of Austria and Sweden.⁴¹ This was a calamity for the embassy because not only was much property belonging to the ambassador, at the time Sir Robert Gordon, entirely lost but so also were its archives. All the papers in Turkish were lost for good, while providing copies of all the despatches—in an era well before photocopying machines were invented—cost the Foreign Office a great deal of time and money, and no doubt caused serious inconvenience to the embassy until these copies became available.⁴² Once more the embassy had to retreat to Therapia, where it now appears to have owned a summer residence. This was given to it in 1829 by Sultan Mahmud II following its confiscation from its Armenian owners, and this is where Stratford found himself again while on his special mission to Turkey in the first half of 1832.⁴³

*The Difficult Birth of the
Smith-Barry Embassy*

The urgent need to replace the English Palace which had been destroyed in 1831 occasioned an astonishingly long and lively debate between a new ambassador and the Foreign Office. When the argument was finally resolved, it took almost as long to construct the new building, today known as Pera House, with the costs rising all the time.⁴⁴

The issue was not only how the design of the new embassy should be modified in light of the fate of the old one but also where it should be located. Should it remain in Pera? If so, should it be rebuilt on the old site or on a new one in the quarter? Or should it instead be located

⁴¹ The consensus in reports reaching London was that the English Palace caught fire despite the large gardens surrounding it because red-hot nails and sparks were allowed to blow in through unshuttered windows. At the time the ambassador and his staff were at the summer embassy: *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1831; *Murray's Hand-book for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Constantinople*, p. 176. Auldjo blamed the ambassador's "principle servant", who, he claims, "obstinately refused to allow any one to enter the room where the fire had originated, until it was too late", *Journal of a Visit to Constantinople*, p. 100.

⁴² HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1665–7.

⁴³ TNA, British Embassy House at Therapia (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834; Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 36.

⁴⁴ Except where otherwise indicated, the account of this controversy is based on the evidence presented in Yurdusev, 'The British Embassy in Mid-Nineteenth Century Constantinople'.

somewhere altogether different, for example at Therapia or somewhere else on the Bosphorus? Lord Palmerston, who had been made foreign secretary by Lord Grey in 1830, was firm in his view that the embassy should be rebuilt on the old site in Pera. So was the increasingly influential and deeply conservative Edmund Hammond, who as a young man had shivered in the winter at Therapia when attached to Stratford's special mission in 1831–2, and by 1854 was permanent under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office.⁴⁵ The embassy had to be in Pera, maintained the Foreign Office, in order to be close to the Ottoman ministries as well as the other foreign missions; so that the dragomans, who all lived there and were under fresh suspicion at this time (see Chapter 3), could be closely observed by the ambassador and his staff; and in order that the British colony could be well served, not least by provision of a new chapel. In the journal of his visit to Constantinople in the early summer of 1833, the English mountaineer and writer, John Auldjo, echoed this view. He added, however, that there was no point in spending money on a new building until it was certain that the Russians—to whom Sultan Mahmud II had turned for assistance against the threat he faced from his over-mighty Egyptian vassal, Muhammad Ali Pasha, and who were presently encamped on the Bosphorus—were “not to be the future masters of Constantinople”.⁴⁶

The Foreign Office also favoured the old site in Pera: the nature of its legal title caused a doubt about its security for purposes of sale; in any case, as a gift from an earlier sultan it could not in all decency be disposed of. As for the construction of the new embassy, this should employ as much stone and iron as possible to guard against accidents of fire; it should also be built with a view to accommodating the most likely future needs of the embassy, and not with the aim of satisfying the whims of any particular ambassador.

Palmerston reckoned without Lord Ponsonby, the permanent ambassador who arrived in 1833. Dissolute and strong-willed, Ponsonby also enjoyed great influence in London via his sister's marriage to Grey.⁴⁷ And the trouble was that he loathed Pera, with its polyglot population, narrow and dirty streets, numerous poor buildings and constant risk of fire and plague. To his mind, furthermore, the first plans drawn up

⁴⁵ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 1548; see also Auldjo, *Journal of a Visit to Constantinople*, pp. 46, 62.

⁴⁶ *Journal of a Visit to Constantinople*, p. 101.

⁴⁷ Boase, 'Ponsonby'.

for the new embassy building were as unsuitable as the neighbourhood in which it was proposed to erect it: ill-adapted to both the country and the requirements of his mission. Rejecting the Foreign Office plan, Ponsonby argued that the new British Palace should be built at Therapia. This was a place he loved and where, despite the now somewhat dilapidated condition of the summer embassy, he spent as much time as possible, declining the Foreign Office offer of funds for renting in Pera and exaggerating the amount of time spent on the Upper Bosphorus by those he regularly needed to see. So brilliant was Ponsonby's procrastination over this matter that, by the time he left Turkey in 1841, a full decade after the fire, an exasperated Palmerston had not even achieved a decision on the new embassy, let alone started to build it. In the meantime, the foundations of the new Russian and French embassies had both been laid well before the end of the 1830s.

Shortly before Stratford Canning arrived to replace Ponsonby in 1842, Palmerston decided he could wait on the obstructive ambassador no longer, and sent out to Constantinople a new architect, W. J. Smith. Smith's orders were to find the embassy some temporary accommodation and then prepare plans for a building in Pera. The foreign secretary also decided to get rid of the unsatisfactory summer embassy at Therapia, partly to save money but partly to make it difficult for any future ambassador to live anywhere else but at Pera; and so it was given back to the Turkish government with the hope that it might be returned to its rightful owners, which was another comforting thought.⁴⁸ Well before the end of 1841 Smith had rented two wooden houses in Pera as a temporary town embassy⁴⁹ but the main project was merely approaching the next chapter of its unhappy story.

Ponsonby's replacement by Canning coincided with Palmerston's replacement by Lord Aberdeen, who attached less importance to outward appearances and more to keeping down costs. Moreover, both the new ambassador and the new architect began to have doubts about rebuilding on the old site. Some poor buildings had appeared nearby

⁴⁸ Field gives this as the only reason that the Therapia property was surrendered in 1841, TNA, British Palace (Embassy House) at Pera (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834.

⁴⁹ Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 45. Hammond said later that "we paid an enormous sum for them, and we were in daily dread of the place being consumed by fire", HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 577.

which in their opinion increased the risk of fire,⁵⁰ and the tone of the neighbourhood had been lowered. This led them to cast around for a new site. However, it was only after one had eventually been found and then lost at the last moment, others had come to suit either Canning or the Porte but not both, and relations between ambassador and architect had begun to deteriorate, that Aberdeen, the last of his patience drained away, peremptorily instructed that the old site be handed over to Smith and that work on it should commence forthwith. By now it was the middle of 1844.

Smith had by this time at least got a design; it was also one that was endorsed by his more famous colleague, Sir Charles Barry, architect of the new Houses of Parliament and acknowledged leader of the fashionable 'Renaissance Revival' style.⁵¹ The design appeared in Barry's diary in 1842⁵² but it seems clear that—contrary to a still widespread belief—the chief architect of the new British Embassy in Pera was Smith. Like that of so many other buildings of the period, its design was inspired by the *Palazzo Farnese* in Rome, a magnificent High Renaissance edifice.⁵³

A design was one thing; executing it was another, and this was complicated by the fact that there was a building boom in Constantinople at the time. In addition to technical difficulties there were problems in obtaining materials and skilled labour, and cost projections escalated. To make matters worse, Smith was diverted by the need to oversee repairs to the temporary embassy buildings and, more seriously, by lucrative side commissions from the Ottoman government. As if this was not enough, in September 1847, while still under construction, the jinxed building was badly damaged by yet another fire.

By the winter of 1848–9 Canning was nevertheless able to occupy part of the new embassy. He could also enjoy summers on the Bosphorus, for he had hired a villa at Buyukdere in 1842,⁵⁴ and was now to benefit from a fresh gift of buildings and land at Therapia, made in 1847 by Sultan Abdul-Medjid I. The gift of the new Therapia property, which was handsomely redeveloped two decades later and destined to remain the site of the British summer embassy until the First World War, had

⁵⁰ Some of these were subsequently bought by the embassy and demolished.

⁵¹ Port, 'Barry'.

⁵² Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry*, pp. 355–7; see also p. 124.

⁵³ This is today the French Embassy.

⁵⁴ Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 2, p. 131.

finally scuppered Palmerston's plan to doom the embassy to a year-long sojourn in Pera.⁵⁵

It was at the end of the 1840s, too, that another major step was taken. A large site was acquired in Galata for the erection of a cluster of important new buildings. This came to include a consulate, a supreme consular court with a small prison at the back,⁵⁶ a port office, and a seamen's hospital.⁵⁷ The site, which was just to the south of the magnificent Tower of Galata, built by the Genoese colony in the fourteenth century and since used as a look-out post for fires, was also particularly advantageous. It was in an elevated and healthy part of the district, close to the port and the houses of the British merchants, and still not too far away from the embassy, which by the end of the century it could reach by horse-drawn tram.⁵⁸ This complex of consular buildings was, however, still under construction when Edmund Hornby arrived in 1857 as the first judge of the supreme consular court.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the costs of the new embassy continued to mount, and in 1851 the grounds were still a building site. Canning had had enough of the architect, as had Palmerston (back at the Foreign Office since 1846), and in the following year Smith was recalled. The project was now in the care of a clerk of works, who appears to have ensured that most of the finishing touches were added shortly afterwards—just in time, it seems, for the Crimean War, which broke out in late 1853. Barry's embassy had finally been polished and presented to the world but it was soon to receive mixed reviews, not the least from those who had to live in it.

Mixed Reviews and Another Fire

Some were certainly pleased with the new embassy. One of these was Harriot Lady Dufferin, wife of Lord Dufferin, ambassador at the begin-

⁵⁵ See papers in TNA, FO78/3209; TNA, British Palace (Embassy House) at Pera (Constantinople), John Field (FO), 6 Mar. 1926, FO366/834.

⁵⁶ Until this prison was built, the consulate had been obliged to use the Turkish prisons "in criminal, and even in police cases", HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: App. p. 721, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Memorandum on Reforms in Consular Legal Jurisdiction in the Levant, ca. 1854.

⁵⁷ Prior to the 1831 fire the consulate had been located very close to the embassy in Pera; thereafter its location appears to have fluctuated between rented buildings and the consul's own house in the same district.

⁵⁸ Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*, pp. 92–5; Young, *Constantinople*, p. 193.

⁵⁹ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, p. 97.

ning of the 1880s. She was at first alarmed by its size but was quick to admire its facilities:

You enter through big doors into a great court, with a marble floor... All round this, with windows opening on to it on each story, is a great wide corridor, on to which the rooms open. From the court you go up a fine marble staircase, and, after looking at the gallery, you visit the reception rooms; two sitting-rooms and a waiting-room for his Excellency, two drawing-rooms and a waiting-room for me. I was pleased with these rooms; they are well furnished, and not too gigantic. Then come a big ball-room, a dining-room, and a billiard-room. This is only two sides of the square; a third side is taken up by staircases (even the back-stairs are marble), and the secretaries' rooms. Upstairs we have eleven bed-rooms, out of which I have to get school-room, day nursery, and a boudoir for myself; for as there are eighty-seven high steps up to this floor, I must have a sitting room at the top of them. The floor above is excellent too, but so high up!⁶⁰

But arguments in praise of the new embassy building tended to be drowned out by the complaints. One of the loudest and most enduring was about its cost: not only had the bill for its construction been exceptionally high, but the expense of its upkeep was also unprecedented. On this theme Sir Henry Bulwer was particularly vocal, which was a bit rich since it was an open secret that, unhappily married, he spent lavishly on a Turkish mistress whom he installed on a previously uninhabited island at the entrance to the Sea of Marmora that he had bought for the purpose.⁶¹ Surprisingly, too, there was soon to be more pressure on rooms than had been expected, as hinted at by Lady Dufferin. Despite its fashionably Italianate lines, the embassy's external appearance was not to everyone's taste either. Lady Canning thought it "a square heavy building without a column or a balcony to relieve it, good for a hospital or club in the street".⁶² Lord Cowley, who had been at the embassy in the 1840s but saw its shell before he left, was another critic: it had been "a mistake to send a London architect to build a house at Constantinople", he told the Milnes Committee in 1861.⁶³ The acerbic George Young, who was a second secretary in the embassy at the turn of the twentieth century, thought it resembled a "mausoleum".⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, p. 133.

⁶¹ On 'Bulwer's Island', see Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, pp. 331–2.

⁶² Quoted in Warr, *A Biography of Stratford Canning*, p. 89; see also Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 83 n. 2.

⁶³ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2621–5.

⁶⁴ Young, *Constantinople*, p. 229.

There was a practical as well as an aesthetic point in Cowley's objection, for the absence of balconies and verandas made the building less comfortable in hot weather and thus, ironically, strengthened the desire of its denizens to flee to Therapia when the thermometer rose. On the other hand, it was certainly big and impressive and, being strongly built, at least it would be able to survive earthquakes and fire—or would it?

In March 1855 the embassy weathered a strong earthquake with only a few stone blocks dislodged in the walls and the loss of a chimney stack.⁶⁵ However, on 6 June 1870 it suffered seriously from the more common cause—fire. Following a bombardment of sparks carried by a strong wind, the new building was almost completely gutted by a conflagration that destroyed two-thirds of Pera.⁶⁶ The embassy's stone walls, iron shutters, sloping roof of slates and lead, and surrounding garden fire-break—all of which Smith had claimed made it incombustible—had proved inadequate defences. So had the embassy's three fire-engines and large water tanks. The archives, which were housed in vaulted rooms on the ground floor, were spared and many moveables (including the plate) were saved, although the private papers of the ambassador, then Sir Henry Elliot, were destroyed. His wife, daughter and daughter's governess only narrowly escaped with their lives.⁶⁷

Announcing this "very disastrous event" on the following day, and assuming that the walls had not survived, *The Times* of London took the opportunity to condemn at some length the kind of embassy that had just gone up in flames. This particularly mixed review is worth quoting at length:

Thus will have perished one of the most pretentious and costly buildings that have ever been erected for the service of the British nation. . . . The Ambassador at Constantinople is a great personage. It has always been thought necessary that at the focus of diplomatic rivalry the British SOVEREIGN should have a personal representative entitled to personal interviews with the Ottoman Ruler. Not less has it been the tradition that he should be princely in his establishment, after the fashion which imposes on Orientals and, to say the truth, on Occidentals likewise. This theory has been carried to the furthest point in the Palace of the British

⁶⁵ *The Times*, 19 Mar. 1855.

⁶⁶ More than 3000 buildings were destroyed altogether, Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*, p. 64.

⁶⁷ Elliot, *Diplomatic Recollections*, pp. 263–73; Notes on 'Pera House, Istanbul', supplied by the British Consulate-General, Constantinople.

Ambassador. Many a sovereign has not a grander house over his head. Size, strength, solidity were in its aspect, severe and gaunt though this might be. What astonishes us is that it should ever have been burnt... It was not beautiful; people were told that it looked well at a distance, but we never found anyone who had been far enough off to admire it. But, undoubtedly, in cost and ponderous magnificence it was worthy of England and might be held to embody the national character. These, however, are parsimonious days... Moreover, the telegraph has made a difference in the position of Ambassadors themselves. When men can and do receive instructions hourly about the smallest details, and, indeed, ask for them as if anxious to escape responsibility, it is easy to conceive that the Foreign Office will not again insist on the Treasury behaving with boundless liberality. We must, therefore, anticipate that, if the Pera Embassy be really no more, future Ambassadors will have to content themselves with a more modest residence.⁶⁸

As it happened, the Bouverie Committee on Diplomatic and Consular Services was still sitting in London when news of the fire arrived, and Sir Henry Bulwer, who gave evidence to it shortly afterwards, took the opportunity to re-state his own hostility to the existing arrangements in Constantinople. He attacked the "immense palace" in Pera and, for good measure, the "immense hill" which had to be mounted to reach it and the "immense wilderness" of the garden at Therapia. It was impossible, he maintained, to live properly in the Pera palace on the salary provided to the ambassador. It would be cheaper and generate greater prestige to maintain properly a house of "moderate dimensions, or fair size" than to keep up badly a palace. Now, therefore, was the time to rebuild more modestly, and—ideally—not in Pera at all but on the Lower Bosphorus near the sultan's own palace, thereby making it unnecessary to maintain two establishments.⁶⁹

Unfortunately for these critics, the embassy building displayed the very solidity about which, on aesthetic grounds, *The Times* had been at best equivocal: its stone walls survived. The result was that by 1873 it was restored, and although in the meantime Sir Henry Elliot had to rent a house on the edge of the embassy site,⁷⁰ he was able to live in the embassy again before the end of his long posting in Constantinople.

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 7 June 1870.

⁶⁹ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 5139–44.

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 2 Jan. 1871.

The Embassy 'Fleet'

Travelling to and from the summer embassy at Therapia, which by the late nineteenth century was an attractive, white-painted, chalet-style building by the water's edge, was most speedily and comfortably achieved by boat. But vessels that could tackle the tricky currents of the Bosphorus had other uses as well. On the social side, these included pleasure cruising and picknicking (the 'Sweet Waters of Asia' were a favoured spot), and competing with the fleets of other embassies in the periodic regattas. On the business side, they included diplomatic entertaining, reaching Turkish ministers at their own summer palaces, greeting newly-appointed British ambassadors at the Dardanelles, taking ambassadors and others on special missions,⁷¹ and providing reassurance to the British colony. Most of the business functions demanded a small man-of-war permanently stationed at Constantinople but this guardship or *stationnaire* was too expensive for regular duties and—despite the fact that it was of little real fighting value—caused alarm to the colony if it disappeared.⁷² The many and varied demands for water transport meant, therefore, that the embassy required its own small 'fleet'.

In addition to the guardship, therefore, in the late nineteenth century the British Embassy usually boasted at a minimum a sea-going 'yacht', a smaller steam launch, an ornate ten-oared 'state caique' with crew to match, and a three-oared ordinary caique.⁷³ But this was just the official fleet. The wealthier members of the diplomatic staff (including sometimes the ambassador) often had their own yachts, or sailing boats, some of which had large cabins. The degree to which the whole fleet was very much at the centre of embassy life is readily grasped from the journal of Lady Dufferin.⁷⁴

Shortly after Sir Henry Layard succeeded Elliot as ambassador in 1877 it became clear that the embassy's fleet needed upgrading. Fortu-

⁷¹ The embassy's yacht, the *Antelope*, took Lord Dufferin to Alexandria on his special mission to Egypt in November 1882, Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, p. 232.

⁷² Woods, *Spun yarn*, vol. 1, p. 250; Fitzgerald, *From Sail to Steam*, p. 58; TNA, Layard to Salisbury, 16 Mar. 1880, FO78/4988.

⁷³ See papers in TNA, FO78/4988; Young, *Constantinople*, pp. 257–8.

⁷⁴ In her time in Constantinople the fleet included a steam cutter as well as a steam launch, and three private yachts, one owned jointly by Charles Hardinge and Sir Edward Goschen, and the other—a much smaller one—by her husband the ambassador, Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, pp. 222–5.

nately, Layard had an ally in the *stationnaire's* commander, Captain Fitzgerald, and as a result of his correspondence with the Admiralty a new guardship, the *Imogene*, eventually arrived in 1884, although this was itself no more than a small despatch boat.⁷⁵ In 1881 a new steam pinnace had also arrived to replace the worn out launch.⁷⁶

But the fleet was as nothing compared with the embassy's buildings as a domestic worry for the ambassador. Within a year of arriving in Constantinople Layard was threatened with increased financial responsibilities for the Pera palace and was soon echoing the sentiments of Sir Henry Bulwer. The Pera property had been built upon "an unnecessarily magnificent scale", he complained;⁷⁷ it was "a monument of lavish expenditure of public money combined with false economy, ignorance and bad taste".⁷⁸ This hand-wringing was all to no purpose: there was no going back now. Smith's embassy, complete with its grand staircase and enormous ballroom, was still the British Embassy when war broke out in November 1914, and Layard's successors after the war showed a great reluctance to leave it. As we shall see, though, this was more to do with the alternative than with the palace itself.

The summer embassy was not so resilient. While unoccupied in the winter of 1911–12 the ambassador's house and the chancery at Therapia burned down. There was no time to re-build them before the outbreak of war, although the expenditure needed was justified in the House of Commons by the need to defend British prestige.⁷⁹ The embassy's fleet, despite its partial upgrading in the early 1880s, was not in much better shape. On the eve of the First World War its condition was thought to be a scandal by both the ambassador and the Foreign Office, to compare very unfavourably with the fleets of the other embassies in Constantinople, and so to be not only an inconvenience but also a severe impediment to the preservation of British prestige. Too late, the Admiralty was urged to do something about it.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Fitzgerald, *From Sail to Steam*, pp. 1–4, 59–60; Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, p. 336.

⁷⁶ TNA, Adm. to FO, 21 Apr. 1884, FO78/4988. This itself was causing complaints by 1892 and was replaced at the end of 1897: TNA, Adm. to FO, 27 Nov. 1897; Currie to Salisbury, 19 Jan. 1898, FO78/4988.

⁷⁷ TNA, Layard to Salisbury, 11 Apr. 1878, FO78/3211.

⁷⁸ Notes on 'Pera House, Istanbul', supplied by the British Consulate-General, Constantinople.

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 5 June 1912.

⁸⁰ TNA, Mallet to Grey, 1 July 1914, with mins. by Clerk, Crowe, and Nicolson; and Crowe to Secretary of the Admiralty, 18 July 1914, FO371/2135.

CHAPTER TWO

DIPLOMATS

Although a diplomat of ambassadorial rank headed British missions of only the greatest political importance until well into the twentieth century, from the beginning an ambassador was almost always in charge of the post at Constantinople. This was partly in order to impress the sultan and facilitate access at the highest levels, and partly because—until the tradition was too well established to change without causing offence—an ambassador in Constantinople came cheaply to the government. Only during a problematical changeover or when money had to be saved was the ambassador replaced with a lower form of diplomatic life. Who were the ambassadors? How were they chosen? What did they do? Who helped them? The theme that runs through the answers to all these questions is a tussle over influence and money between the Levant Company and the British government, which was not resolved until the company was dissolved in 1825.

The Ambassador

The first five or six ambassadors were all merchants or servants of the Levant Company before their appointment. Levant Company merchants occasionally appeared much later as well. Sir William Hussey in 1691 and Sir Everard Fawkener in the middle of the eighteenth century both worked for many years in the English factory (community of merchants and factors)¹ in Aleppo before going to the embassy in Constantinople. Fawkener's friend Voltaire was astonished at his promotion, believing that such social mobility would have been impossible in France.² Following the arrival at the embassy of Sir John Eyre in 1620³ and more certainly that of Sir Thomas Roe at the end of the following year, the

¹ Factors sometimes traded in their own right and so were merchants as well as agents for merchants at home.

² Mason, 'Fawkener', and Gauci, 'Hussey'.

³ Little is known about Eyre, the sixth ambassador, but Wood believes that he was probably not previously a company servant, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 84.

ambassadors came to fit the more usual profile of British ambassadors: men of junior aristocratic lineage with a career interest in diplomacy. There remained interesting exceptions: Sir John Finch was a physician who had been for six years professor of anatomy at Pisa;⁴ Sir William Trumbull was a leading civil lawyer;⁵ Admiral Sydney Smith, who for a while shared the office with his younger brother, was a glory-seeking naval officer; and Sir Henry Layard ('Layard of Nineveh') was first and foremost an archaeologist and politician. The first peer to be appointed British Ambassador at Constantinople was Heneage Finch, the third Earl of Winchilsea, who arrived in 1661; among those following him was Lord Elgin at the end of the eighteenth century, who achieved the lasting enmity of the Greeks for his role in the transfer of so many of their priceless 'marbles' from Athens (then still a grubby town in the Ottoman Empire) to the British Museum.⁶

Ottoman tradition rejected the view that special respect for an ambassador was based on the theory of sovereign representation, for no foreign sovereign was the equal of the sultan-caliph. In other words, the emerging law of nations on diplomatic immunity meant nothing in Constantinople. Instead, an ambassador was regarded as roughly analogous to that of the leader of one of the empire's semi-autonomous religious communities (*millets*) whose privileges depended on his ability to maintain order among his followers and deliver their taxes.⁷ As a rule, therefore, the Ottomans treated ambassadors well, even subsidising their embassies until long after this custom was abandoned in Europe.⁸ They did this because they usually found their embassies flattering, valuable sources of information and alluring gifts, important props to commerce, useful mediators, and indispensable to the manipulation of the balance of power. However, at some junctures they found them less useful, and there was the risk that at any time an ambassador might fall foul of a malevolent grand vizier or sheikh-ul-Islam with a personal grudge against him. On such occasions, ambassadors in Constantinople risked humiliation, and if their princes should turn hostile towards the sultan their liberty itself was forfeit. In 1651 even the astute and

⁴ Hutton, 'Finch'.

⁵ Hanham, 'Trumbull'.

⁶ On this episode, see the splendid book by St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*.

⁷ Desperate for cash, in 1623 Sultan Murat actually tried to tax the diplomatic corps, Berridge, 'The origins of the diplomatic corps', p. 26.

⁸ TNA, Ainslie to Liston, 10 Mar. 1794, FO261/7.

energetic Sir Thomas Bendish was shackled and imprisoned—the first and last English ambassador to be so treated—after refusing to remove the English consul in Smyrna, who had been involved in a commercial dispute with a relative of the sheikh-ul-Islam.⁹

It was some time before English ambassadors at Constantinople were able to summon a warship to the Bosphorus to help them smother the anger of a sultan or the ‘insolence’ of a grand vizier.¹⁰ It was even longer before they could rely for this on the fear of retaliation against the sultan’s own ambassador in London, for such an emissary was not permanently established until the end of the eighteenth century.¹¹ Far from home and in an alien world, much therefore depended on the ambassador, who not only had to face up to Ottoman ministers but also impose his authority on factors and consuls who would have been lucky to prosper in the same alien world without strong personalities and a highly developed sense of self-interest.

Speaking from bitter experience at the French court at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli reported to his masters in Florence that the only things that counted for an ambassador were the arms and money of his prince. But he was typically over-stating a good case. These things being equal between those princes competing for the favour of another, the appearance, character, personality, and sheer professional ability of an ambassador could be decisive. Nowhere was this truer than for a north European ambassador in the alien world of Ottoman Constantinople.

The diplomatic manuals of the early modern period detail the attributes of the ‘perfect ambassador’ at great length.¹² One of these was linguistic ability, and it is no accident that some of the most successful

⁹ Saunders, ‘Bendish’.

¹⁰ Although in 1648, not long after his arrival, Bendish had become so incensed at Turkish behaviour that in a successful bid to intimidate the grand vizier he had eight English merchant vessels made ready for battle and positioned beneath Seraglio Point: Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 147–8; Saunders, ‘Bendish’.

¹¹ Selim III had decided to send resident ambassadors abroad in 1793. But this was something of a false start which petered out in 1821 under the impact of the war for Greek independence. Permanent embassies were not established on a durable basis until 1834, on the initiative of Sultan Mahmud II: Findley, ‘The foundation of the Ottoman foreign ministry’, pp. 395–9; Hurewitz, ‘Ottoman diplomacy and the European state system’, pp. 147–8. For Turkish ambassadors to Britain, see Appendix 2.

¹² This preoccupation is sometimes condemned but this is to forget that in the early modern period ambassadors even of powerful states often had few immediate resources on which to call but their own.

ambassadors at Constantinople, like Barton in the late sixteenth century, had good Turkish¹³ or—what was more usual—Italian, for long the lingua franca of the Levant. Intimate knowledge of the issues they would confront on arrival at Constantinople gained in commerce, travel, or, much later, by Foreign Office experience in the prestigious Eastern Department, established in 1881, was also valuable, although in itself insufficient, as demonstrated by the relatively unsuccessful careers of Sir Philip Currie and Sir Louis Mallet in the decades before the First World War.¹⁴ Rather, the need for affability, good manners, a striking physique, and above all a natural authority based on astuteness, courage, and firm character are the points that stand out as valuable in accounts of the most effective ambassadors in Constantinople, especially in the early years when they were so alone. But they did not come amiss in later ones either, as the careers of Stratford Canning (Lord Stratford de Redcliffe) and Sir William White (who was exceptional in beginning his career as a consul), amply testify.¹⁵ In difficult times timid men such as Edward Lello¹⁶ and Sir John Finch¹⁷ were likely to wilt, while those such as Currie, who were inclined to preach, were doomed to leave in frustration. “[M]uch more may be operated here by civility and management than by Bearishness and Blustering”, wrote the shrewd, long-serving ambassador, Sir Robert Ainslie, in 1781. “The Porte may by a little and a little be led gradually a great deal. But it is easier to make them swallow Flies than Elephants”.¹⁸

Except for two brief periods in the early nineteenth century when the ambassadors in question left Constantinople without the permission of the Foreign Office,¹⁹ between 1583 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Britain’s permanent diplomatic presence in Turkey was unbroken. On two occasions there were even *officially* two ambassadors at the same time.²⁰ Because of the cost of replacing them, heads of mission were usually required by the Levant Company to agree to

¹³ Lewis, ‘Turks and Britons over four hundred years’, p. 125.

¹⁴ Steiner, ‘Currie’; on Mallet, Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, pp. 197–203.

¹⁵ Woods, *Spun yarn*, vol. 2, p. 170.

¹⁶ Mayes, *An Organ for the Sultan*, pp. 209, 248–9.

¹⁷ Wood, ‘The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762’, p. 543.

¹⁸ TNA, Ainslie to Hillsborough, 11 Aug. 1781, FO78/2.

¹⁹ Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 215.

²⁰ The Smith brothers, John Spencer and Admiral Sydney, during the French revolutionary wars, St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, pp. 20–1 and ch. 5; and, during 1638 and 1639, Sir Peter Wyche and Sir Sackville Crowe, Saunders, ‘Wyche’.

a minimum term of five years. In the event, a few stayed for a shorter time but many remained for up to ten years and not a few for significantly longer. But by whom was the ambassador to be paid, and by whom selected?

For many years it was the Levant Company that paid the ambassador and covered most of his expenses, which included handsome presents for the sultan and his senior officials; it also financed the satellite consulates (see Chapter 4). Naturally it had not liked this but it was an unavoidable *quid pro quo* for receiving a monopoly of the trade.²¹ The methods by which the embassy was financed varied a good deal. Generally, however, the custom was that the ambassador's salary, together with the expenses of his outward and homeward journeys, were paid by the embassy treasurer as stipulated in his articles of agreement with the Levant Company. However, the recurring costs of the embassy and consulates were funded by a local tax on the English merchants in the Levant who enjoyed their protection. This took the form of a small duty on all goods moving through their factories and was known as 'consulage'.²²

Although its diplomatic and consular protection was expensive, the Levant Company could reasonably expect that the ambassador would not make excessive financial demands upon it. This was because the Constantinople post had a justified reputation for providing boundless opportunities for the ambassador to enrich himself, and at less personal risk than was originally supposed.²³ Even the otherwise mediocre Elizabethan envoy, Henry Lello, managed to supplement his salary handsomely.²⁴ How did they do this?

For one thing, the sultan, like his Byzantine predecessors, provided a significant annual sum of money (£500 according to Wood) to all ambassadors attached to his court, although it is true that the whole of this amount rarely found its way into their pockets.²⁵ Until 1615, when

²¹ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 10–12.

²² Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, p. 157; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 85ff, 160, 209–10, and 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762', pp. 535–6.

²³ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 86; Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 167. This reputation became so entrenched that it long outlasted the realities upon which it was based. Robert Liston still had "mercenary" illusions about Constantinople at the end of the eighteenth century, Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 65.

²⁴ Mayes, *An Organ for the Sultan*, p. 248.

²⁵ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 86–7, 134; Naff, 'Reform and the conduct of Ottoman diplomacy', pp. 306–7; Hill, *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, vol. I, p. 207.

the company judged it prudent to prohibit the practice, ambassadors could also trade on their own account. Even after this it was possible for them to deal in jewels and money changing, and sell locally a portion of the large quantity of wine they were allowed to import duty free.²⁶ The rewards for assisting in a successful mediation between the Porte and one or other of its perennial enemies could also be vast.²⁷ Nor is it likely that Ainslie was alone in receiving handsome payments from the Secret Committee of the East India Company for certain dubious practices in its interest.²⁸ And then there was the scandalous harvest to be reaped from the sale of *barats*, documents certifying membership of a foreign nation in the Levant which bestowed on the owner the privileges of its capitulations.²⁹ The price of these documents fluctuated with the prestige of the embassy and was its surest index but this source of ambassadorial income was already drying up in the late eighteenth century and was formally ended shortly afterwards.³⁰

During the eighteenth century the protests of poverty from a weakening Levant Company became loud; the ambassadors found their alternative sources of income too unpredictable or disappearing altogether,³¹ and more and more of the embassy's work was political. The result was that the British government was forced slowly to take on greater financial responsibility for the mission in Constantinople. Initially it had grudgingly provided ambassadors with nothing more than some token furnishings for the embassy, including a bed,³² but already in 1688 it agreed to contribute to the expenses involved in any

²⁶ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 87, 134–5.

²⁷ Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789*, pp. 57–8.

²⁸ TNA, Michel (E. India Co. Secretary, London) to Ainslie, 16 Mar. 1781, FO78/2.

²⁹ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 191; Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789*, pp. 59, 63; Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 88–91. It also became customary for a new ambassador to be paid 300 piastres by his 'barratlees' (existing holders of *barats*), although this was sometimes difficult to extract, TNA, Ainslie to Barker (Smyrna), 11 Nov. 1776, FO261/3.

³⁰ TNA, Ainslie to Carmarthen, 25 Oct. 1786, FO78/7; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 135, 191.

³¹ Finding that European governments were not so indulgent towards his own newly appointed permanent ambassadors, in 1794 Sultan Selim III brought to an end the Ottoman tradition of subsidies to ambassadors at Constantinople. It is true that he agreed to continue certain payments to allies, among them, after 1799, the British. However, the new regulation was not rescinded and the writing was clearly on the wall, Naff, 'Reform and the conduct of Ottoman diplomacy', p. 307.

³² Saunders, 'Bendish'. Nevertheless, when Winchelsea asked for his bed, Secretary Nicholas said that he "could find no precedent for it", Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, p. 90.

mediation between the Porte and its enemies.³³ In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, by which time the cash-strapped Levant Company was reckoning to need £10,000 a year for maintenance of the embassy and consulates, the government began to make a significant contribution. In 1805 it took over their funding completely, including the salary of the ambassador.³⁴ But how was he chosen?

Until the end of the eighteenth century the Levant Company may have had to foot most of the bill for British diplomacy in Turkey but at least this nourished its claim to have the sole right to appoint the ambassador. Unfortunately for the company, although its charter may have made clear its right to appoint consuls and vice-consuls wherever it should see fit,³⁵ it was silent on the question of who was to appoint the ambassador. Until the middle of the 1620s the company's claim to this right was tacitly admitted by the crown. But when at this point the issue of a new ambassador was raised by the request of the then ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, to be allowed to return home, it chose to contest it. This is not surprising because the Constantinople post was now seen as an important component of royal patronage.³⁶

Sir Thomas Roe was in many ways an outstanding ambassador, among his achievements being that of galvanising the Constantinople diplomatic corps into stout defence of its rights.³⁷ However, he was not notably successful in carrying out an important informal instruction. This was the order from the court favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, to strip the Ottoman Empire of as many of its ancient statues and other valuable relics as possible and send them home for the adornment of his properties.³⁸ Perhaps it was in part this failure, as well as Roe's entreaties that he might help him return by finding a replacement, that encouraged Buckingham to propose one of his dependants, a courtier called

³³ Wood, 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660-1762', p. 537.

³⁴ Wood, 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660-1762', p. 538, and *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 161, 180, 184; Kurat (ed.), *The Despatches of Sir Robert Sutton*, pp. 42, 50; Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, pp. 35-6.

³⁵ Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, p. 179.

³⁶ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 86, and 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660-1762', p. 533.

³⁷ Berridge, 'The origins of the diplomatic corps'.

³⁸ Roe despatched servants to many quarters of the empire in search of 'marbles' for Buckingham but they were repeatedly beaten to the best pieces by the Earl of Arundel's man, Mr Petty, Roe, *The Negotiations*, letters 'To the Duke of Buckingham' listed in the table on p. lxiii. His successor, Sir Peter Wyche, was also energetic in this fashionable quest, although his own customer was King Charles I, Saunders, 'Wyche'.

Sir Thomas Phillips, as Roe's successor. In July 1625 King Charles I, claiming royal prerogative, duly recommended Phillips to the company.³⁹ Alarmed by this move to overturn its customary right to select the ambassador and alleging in any case that Phillips was not qualified for the position, the company resisted the appointment.⁴⁰

The Levant Company was in luck. Roe may have had no gift for stealing marbles but his general effectiveness at the Porte was well known in London and he had not found his request to be recalled willingly received.⁴¹ He did not press it, and the court's nominee, Phillips, died in the following spring. However, the company's success was short-lived because the king responded by producing another candidate, Sir Peter Wyche, whose qualifications for the post were better than those of Phillips; he also offered to pay £1,000 in order to obtain it.⁴² By November 1626 Wyche had been imposed on the company.⁴³ This proved a decisive precedent, although it did not completely end this tug of war until the end of the seventeenth century, and when the crown felt weak the company sometimes won.⁴⁴ Wyche's appointment was also significant because, as Wood says, "the office henceforth went, with two exceptions only, to men of rank or diplomatic distinction and not to those who, like the early ambassadors, had served their apprenticeships under the Company in Turkey".⁴⁵ What did these men actually do in Constantinople?

The burden of the ambassador at Constantinople was large and complex, not least because of his heavy involvement in commercial questions and because, under the capitulations, he was expected to supervise not just the English traders in the capital but also those in the English factories elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. The most important of these were at Smyrna and Aleppo but there were many smaller ones, as the extent of the network of consuls—who were in effect the ambassador's provincial agents—amply testifies (see Chapter 4).

³⁹ Roe, *The Negotiations*, Roe to Buckingham, 1 May 1625; Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 180.

⁴⁰ Roe, *The Negotiations*, Conway to Roe, 20 Apr. 1626.

⁴¹ His high reputation was fostered by his political alliance and regular correspondence with the king's daughter, Elizabeth, the dispossessed Queen of Bohemia, see Baker (ed.), *The Letters of Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia*.

⁴² Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 181.

⁴³ Although he did not actually arrive in Constantinople until April 1628: Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 88; Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 181–2.

⁴⁴ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 132–3.

⁴⁵ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 88; see also pp. 182, 184.

If the privileges won in the capitulations were to be preserved and trade with Turkey was to flourish it was essential that these English trading communities should conduct their business in a fair and orderly manner.⁴⁶ The ambassador, therefore, had not only to be the champion of the English nation at the Porte—he was required by his instructions to appear in person before the grand vizier or other senior minister when an English factor had a serious complaint (see Appendix 3, para. 6)—but also peacemaker between, and judge under English law and moral chastiser of its members.⁴⁷ Since the factors were in competition among themselves and usually bachelors, such responsibilities were rarely easy to discharge.⁴⁸ This was particularly true when, as during the period of the English civil war in the mid-seventeenth century and the French revolutionary wars at the end of the eighteenth, political passions among the factors ran high.⁴⁹ It was in such circumstances that the Earl of Winchilsea, the ambassador sent out by Charles II at the restoration in 1660, was formally instructed to give appropriate punishment to any English traders who “by word or deed express any disaffection to Our Government or Person”.⁵⁰ To enforce his authority, the ambassador was permitted to order boycotts of individual factors, impose fines, imprison them in his own house or those of his consuls, and if necessary send them home.⁵¹

The ambassador was not formally relieved of his commercial responsibilities, including direct management of the English nation, until 1804. At this point, the political work created for the embassy by the French revolutionary wars had caused it to neglect its commercial duties to such a degree that the merchants were in a state of rebellion. As a result, the government not only agreed henceforward to pay the salary of the

⁴⁶ The Bark Roe affair in 1581, in which an English ship engaged in piracy against Ottoman subjects after discharging its cargo, made this obvious from the beginning, Woodhead, ‘Harborne’.

⁴⁷ This not only involved clamping down on those “notoriously addicted to gaming, drinking, or any other scandalous course of life” but also actively discouraging marriage to local women; see for example, TNA, Company Instructions to Chandos, 28 Jan. 1680, SP105/145.

⁴⁸ Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 134, 142; Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642–1660*, ch. 8.

⁴⁹ Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642–1660*, chs. 5–7; Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 75–6.

⁵⁰ TNA, Instructions to the Earl of Winchilsea, SP97/17.

⁵¹ Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642–1660*, esp. chs. 7 and 8; Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe* pp. 142–4, 162–5.

ambassador, who was now to concentrate exclusively on diplomatic matters, but also instructed the Levant Company to appoint (and pay) a consul-general in Constantinople to look after its affairs.⁵² This also meant that the provincial consuls were supposed to correspond with the consul-general rather than as formerly with the ambassador.⁵³

The year 1804 was therefore a momentous one in the evolution of the British Embassy, although the break in its relationship with the Levant Company suggested by the innovation of a consul-general to take over the latter's affairs was by no means complete.⁵⁴ The new ambassador appointed in this year, Charles Arbuthnot, did not regard the new arrangement as an unmixed blessing. While no doubt gratified at being relieved of much tedious commercial work, he believed that if the consuls corresponded only with the new consul-general, Isaac Morier, it would diminish his office and his influence at the Porte. Accordingly, he opposed this idea (and dragged his feet in securing Morier's recognition) and the Levant Company had to enlist the support of the government to force him to accept it.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the company realized that in practice it would always need the support of the political head of the mission as well as the consul-general, and, on 19 January 1810, at an important meeting in London with Arbuthnot, now one of the joint-secretaries of the Treasury, stressed its unqualified support for the supremacy of the ambassador.⁵⁶ Later in the same year, when he took charge of the post, Stratford Canning characteristically ignored the ruling that the ambassador should not correspond with the consuls.⁵⁷ With the demise of the Levant Company in 1825 and the mounting great power rivalry in the financial and commercial exploitation of the Ottoman Empire, which culminated most famously in the Baghdad Railway project at the beginning of the next century, the British Ambassador was soon as closely involved in commercial affairs as ever.

⁵² Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 184.

⁵³ TNA, Copy of Instructions sent to Lord Harrowby, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in order for their being conveyed to Charles Arbuthnot Esq., Ambassador Elect for the Sublime Porte [1804], folios 442–6, SP105/122.

⁵⁴ Compare Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 184.

⁵⁵ TNA, Levant Co. to Isaac Morier, 11 Apr. 1806, SP105/123.

⁵⁶ TNA, Green [treasurer of the Levant Co.] to Bosanquet [deputy governor], 20 Jan. 1810, SP105/123. See also, Levant Co. to Morier, 7 Mar. 1810, SP105/123. This document is essentially the revised version of the Instructions provided for Arbuthnot in 1804.

⁵⁷ Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 149.

Albeit in fits and starts, then, the ambassador simply came to add responsibility for political to commercial negotiations at the Porte. Moreover, until the arrival of Yusuf Agah Efendi in early 1794 there was no permanent Ottoman ambassador at London, so there was no possibility of sharing the burden of these negotiations. In any case, for a secretary of state to conduct negotiations through one of the king's envoys abroad rather than via a foreign envoy in London was a general British preference which became entrenched in the early modern period. This was probably in part because of the force of the axiom that it is safer to trust to one's own agent as a point of contact with a foreign government than to an agent of the foreigner (see p. 210 below) but this was not the only reason. The ambassador's instructions provided the only record of royal assent to policy towards the country in question and were thus a vital register of political consensus. A secretary of state who negotiated directly with a foreign diplomat in London forfeited this protection and exposed himself to personal blame should any mishap occur. In any case, secretaries of state, who until 1782 were responsible for domestic as well as foreign business, could well have difficulties in attempting negotiations in London, for they rarely spoke foreign languages other than French and sometimes not even that.⁵⁸

In the absence of military attachés, who did not begin to appear until the late eighteenth century (see p. 43 below), the ambassador might even be expected to accompany a sultan on campaign. In 1594 Edward Barton was with Sultan Murad III when the fortress of Raab (Yanik Kalesi) was captured from the Austrians and two years later, at the head of a large suite entirely financed by the Ottomans, he accompanied Mehmet III on his Hungarian campaign. These adventures had distinct advantages for the English Ambassador: he was able to ingratiate himself with the sultan and obtain first-hand intelligence for his despatches; he was also perfectly placed to exploit any opportunity for a mediation. However, since the sultans—like other princes—wished by taking them along to add lustre to their enterprises and implicate the ambassador's sovereign in their campaigns, Barton's action was politically risky, as was confirmed by the stories subsequently put about by his enemies that he had personally killed Christians.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789*, pp. 6–8; Kynaston, *The Secretary of State*, pp. 103–4, 165; Thomson, *The Secretaries of State: 1681–1782*, pp. 18–19.

⁵⁹ Lewis, 'Turks and Britons over four hundred year's', p. 125; Woodhead, 'Barton'. Because of this risk and the ambassador's lack of qualifications for making military

The ambassador was also expected to write regular despatches home, and until the early nineteenth century these had to be sent to the Levant Company as well as the government. Gathering and reporting intelligence, on military as well as commercial and political developments, was a task of which the ambassador in Constantinople hardly needed to be reminded, although in his instructions he always was. Some of his information on regions bordering the Ottoman Empire came from recently arrived messengers, and most of that on its many and far-flung provinces from the consuls stationed in them. The venality of the Ottoman court also made it possible to obtain sensitive information—as well as other things—by the judicious distribution of ‘presents’. This was well understood and the ambassador, in order to obtain reimbursement, regularly sent home long and detailed lists of the presents that he had disbursed to whom and at what cost.⁶⁰ The diplomatic corps in Constantinople, which was unusually intimate, was also a valuable source of intelligence for the English Ambassador, as the despatches in the 1620s of Sir Thomas Roe, who sometimes had to rely on other ambassadors for news from home, make very clear.⁶¹ Roe pooled intelligence with foreign colleagues in the diplomatic corps not only to fulfil his instructions from London but also to use as bait to elicit replies from his English diplomatic colleagues at other postings, with whom he was also instructed to correspond.

When not lobbying and negotiating at the Porte, petitioning it over particular grievances, admonishing a weak or corrupt consul, sentencing a fraudulent factor, composing a more or less eloquent despatch, or huddling with colleagues in the diplomatic corps, the English Ambassador at Constantinople was entertaining important members of his colony in the city or well connected—and sometimes trying—visitors from home. The work was also fitful, with long periods of relative inactivity punctuated by periods of high tension and frenetic business. When there was not so much to do ambassadors had many opportunities to indulge themselves, for example by cruising on the Bosphorus

judgements, in his great manual of diplomatic practice, Wicquefort, who cited Barton as an example, condemned this practice and urged that a military officer should always be employed for this purpose, *The Ambassador and His Functions*, pp. 297–8.

⁶⁰ For example, TNA, Ainslie to Carmarthen, 10 Jan., 8 May, and 22 July 1788, FO78/9 and 10; and Ainslie to Leeds, 22 June 1790, FO78/11. See also the instructive and entertaining account of present-giving in the Elizabethan period by Mayes, *An Organ for the Sultan*.

⁶¹ Berridge, ‘The origins of the diplomatic corps’, pp. 23–4.

or—when travel became easier in the nineteenth century—taking long periods of home leave. Some cultivated hobbies suitable to the East and became well known in their fields: James Porter in astronomy, Sir Robert Ainslie in numismatics, Lord Elgin in the collection of Greek sculptures and other antiquities, and Sir Henry Layard in archaeology, while few resisted the temptation of the bazaars of Constantinople to collect rugs and antiques. Plague, fire and earthquakes aside, it was a life which provided many consolations.

The Domestic Family

The ambassador's 'family' consisted of both his relations who accompanied him to Turkey or joined him subsequently and all those employed to assist him in his embassy. In other words, it consisted of both his 'domestic family' and his 'official family'.⁶²

In the ambassador's domestic family it was his wife who was the most important figure, although it was a commonly held view in the early modern period that women were a serious liability in diplomacy. Not only were they supposed to be too frail to withstand the rigours of a perilous journey but they were also believed to be congenitally incapable of keeping secrets. These considerations, together with general attitudes to the proper role of women, not only ruled them out as envoys but also argued against permitting them to accompany ambassadors to whom they were married. An ambassador of the much-admired Venetian diplomatic service was expressly forbidden to take his wife with him by a law of the thirteenth century.⁶³ But Venetian ambassadors also had strictly limited terms of office, and at least by the seventeenth century attitudes were becoming less firm on the point. De Vera, for one, writing in 1620, admitted the force of the old argument but added coyly that it was not conclusive because there were reasons for allowing wives to accompany ambassadors that were of "no less consideration".⁶⁴ Only a little later, Richard Zouche, the English lawyer, asked "what more honorable thing for men returning after their labor than a wife's con-

⁶² On the family embassy in the British diplomatic service generally, see Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, ch. 3.

⁶³ Hill, *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, vol. I, p. 360.

⁶⁴ In *Le parfait ambassadeur*, reprinted in Berridge, *Diplomatic Classics*, pp. 96–7.

solution?” Marriages were difficult enough to hold together, he added, and were likely to be destroyed by years of separation. Ambassadors must simply make sure that their wives kept their mouths shut.⁶⁵

Wives (and children) actually accompanied most married British ambassadors to Constantinople from as early as the time of Sir Thomas Glover at the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁶⁶ This was well before this became normal in the British diplomatic service, and was a practice adopted presumably because of the distance from home and the consequent expectation that the ambassador was likely to be away for a very long time. Sir Thomas Roe, who had married in December 1614, just seven weeks before abandoning his new wife Eleanor for nearly five years while on his epic mission to Mughal India, decided that another long separation could not be borne and the Levant Company raised no objection to her going with him.⁶⁷

The most famous British ambassadress in Constantinople was not, however, Lady Eleanor Roe but Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Just as colourful if somewhat less serious was Mary Nisbet, Countess of Elgin, who was two months pregnant when she set sail from Portsmouth for Constantinople with her husband in a 38-gun frigate in September 1799.⁶⁸ A sensible and likeable ambassadress was not just a consolation to her husband but a valuable asset in overseeing his household, counselling his junior staff, and organizing the entertainments—from picnics and sailing parties to large dinners and balls—that were both a relief to the embassy and often an important asset to its business.

⁶⁵ Zouche, *An Exposition of Feical Law and Procedure*, pp. 91–3.

⁶⁶ MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel*, pp. 57, 221–5; Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 225. Of Glover’s predecessors, Harborne did not marry until 1589, shortly after returning to England; Barton never married; and Lello, who had gone out first as secretary to Barton, appears also to have been unmarried.

⁶⁷ Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, pp. 58, 135.

⁶⁸ On Lady Mary, see Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*; Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*; and Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*. On Mary Nisbet, see St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, and Nagel, *Mistress of the Elgin Marbles*. There are snippets about these two as well as about other British ambassadresses in Constantinople in Hickman, *Daughters of Britannia*. See also Dufferin, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*.

The Official Family

Nominally the most important members of the ambassador's official family were his secretaries and the junior diplomats apprenticed to him, his attachés. These gentlemen were, however, only the most socially prominent component of an increasingly large household. In fact, they were not always the most influential of its members; and if the ambassador had trouble inside the embassy it was also usually from this quarter that he might expect it to come.

Until 1804 it was customary for the ambassador to have two secretaries, one for Levant Company business and the other for political and private matters. The former was elected and paid by the company's general court in London; he also doubled as chancellor (administrator and archivist) of the Constantinople factory. Despite the fact that he did not hold a royal commission he was effectively deputy to the ambassador and served as *chargé d'affaires* in the event of his absence or illness, or in the interval—sometimes considerable—between the departure of one chief and the arrival of another. For example, when the disgruntled Sir Everard Fawkener, who believed the embassy was ruining him, departed Constantinople in November 1742, ostensibly for only a short leave to attend to family business, he left the embassy's secretary, Stanhope Aspinwall, in charge. This was the last Aspinwall saw of Fawkener, and he was not relieved until the arrival of James Porter as the new ambassador in February 1747. In the meantime, Aspinwall, who had no credentials other than "a kind of letter of attorney", had to face a hostile and all-powerful French ambassador and an Ottoman government angered by Fawkener's behaviour and insulted by the British government's obvious indifference to the need to make a swift replacement.⁶⁹ The private secretary, who was junior to the company-appointed secretaries such as Aspinwall, and more poorly paid, was appointed by the ambassador.⁷⁰

The end of this anomalous arrangement came with the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars towards the end of the eighteenth century, and was a harbinger of the final assertion of government control over the embassy in 1804–5, noted earlier in this chapter. John Spencer Smith, younger

⁶⁹ TNA, Fawkener to Newcastle, 20 Sept. 1742, SP97/31; Aspinwall to Harrington, 22 May 1745, and to Newcastle, 20 Aug. 1746, SP97/32; Mason, 'Fawkener'.

⁷⁰ Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*, p. 25; Wood, 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762', p. 538; and Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 222.

brother of the more famous admiral, who had been the secretary in charge of affairs since 1795, was in early 1798 first given a commission as secretary of legation and then, in swift succession, credentials as minister plenipotentiary *ad interim* and a commission as secretary of embassy.⁷¹ When he was recalled in early 1801 his successor as secretary of embassy, Alexander Straton, was at once given a commission, as was Stratford Canning, who began his extraordinary career at Constantinople in 1809 with a commission for the same rank.⁷² David Morier, who had already assisted Sir Arthur Paget in 1807 and Robert Adair in 1808–10 and succeeded Canning when the latter was promoted to minister in 1810, was refused a commission but probably because he was a member of the despised class of Anglo-Levantines.⁷³

Secretaries of embassy were initially prescribed no duties while the ambassador was in effective charge of a mission, their sole responsibility being to take over in his absence. With nothing officially to do but prepare themselves against this day, their routine was much at the mercy of the whims of their chief. Not surprisingly, this situation was “the cause of many desperate rows and disputes” in the British diplomatic service in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ As it happens, the worst of these rows occurred at the embassy in Constantinople, where in 1860 the ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, had got into the casual habit of allotting the confidential political work to his private secretary, the Levantine, Count Pisani, who was also the keeper of the archives and *de facto* head of chancery. To the secretary of embassy he gave the lowly consular correspondence, which was heavy.

This worked well enough until the appointment of a new secretary of embassy, Savile Lumley, who did not like this eccentric arrangement at all. The poisonous dispute between Bulwer and Lumley which ensued led the Foreign Office to clarify their relationship. It was laid down that henceforward the secretary of embassy was not to be employed at the whim of the ambassador but always treated as the most senior of his confidential advisers on public matters, be appraised of all public business passing through the embassy, and so be in the best position possible to act as *chargé d'affaires* when this became necessary; in other words, the order of precedence in the chancery should be respected

⁷¹ On Smith, see Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 71, 92, 95.

⁷² Bindoff et al., *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1789–1852*, pp. 165–7.

⁷³ Lane-Poole, ‘Morier’.

⁷⁴ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 51.

Box 2.1 British Embassy and Consulate-General, Constantinople, 1862: staff positions

<i>Ambassador</i>	
<i>Chancery</i>	Treasurer and Accountant
Secretary of Embassy	Keeper of Archives
Oriental Secretary	Clerk of Registers
Paid Attachés (4)	Chief Police Clerk
Attachés [unpaid] (2)	Assistant Police Clerk
Keeper of the Archives	Clerk of Papers
<i>Dragomanate (Political)</i>	Clerk of Correspondence
Dragomans (4)	Chief Constable
<i>Private Secretary</i>	<i>Dragomanate (Consular)</i>
<i>Physician</i>	Chief Dragoman
<i>Chaplain</i>	Assistant Dragomans (2)
<i>Consulate-General</i>	<i>Supreme Consular Court, Levant</i>
Consul-General	Judge
Vice-Consul Cancellier	Vice-Consul Chancelier and
Vice-Consul	Registrar
Chief Clerk of English and Maltese business	Law Clerk
Chief Clerk for Ionian business	<i>Surgeon to the British Seamen's Hospital</i>

Source: FO List, July 1862

(see Box 2.1). The ambassador could, however, still employ an attaché as his private secretary if he so desired.⁷⁵ Later in the nineteenth century the more senior of the paid attachés came to be known as first, second and third secretaries,⁷⁶ and in the first decade of the twentieth century the secretary of embassy was renamed the councillor (in 1914 'counsellor') of embassy.

An ambassador's attachés, already mentioned in passing, were the men who joined his embassy usually because they saw it as either the most important step to a diplomatic career, part of the preparation for a future in politics—or simply as a congenial base from which to

⁷⁵ This affair is described in some detail and its significance sharply analysed in Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, ch. 5 and Appendix B. Jones rightly sees it as marking the demise of the family embassy in the British diplomatic service as a whole.

⁷⁶ The term 'attaché' originally meant all unpaid junior diplomats; in the course of the nineteenth century it came to mean all diplomats (paid or unpaid) below secretarial rank; and in the last decades of that century, with appropriate adjectival prefixes, it came to mean a specialist of some sort who was not an established member of the diplomatic service, which is the chief modern meaning.

explore the region in which it was located.⁷⁷ This was no less true of the embassy in Constantinople than of other British embassies; indeed, by the middle of the nineteenth century the Ottoman capital had already become a popular destination for British attachés. For example, in 1862 it had six of them (see Fig. 2.1), with only Paris, Berlin and Washington, as a rule, providing it with competition.

The attachés were sometimes members of the ambassador's extended family (a nephew perhaps), or the sons of political allies or friends, in which case they might well be a godson. In the early nineteenth century attachés were still unpaid but in return for their labour usually received board and lodging from the ambassador, which helped them in learning their trade. Charles Hardinge, a permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office in the early twentieth century who was an unpaid attaché in Constantinople during the time of Lord Dufferin, later wrote that "By studying his methods of diplomacy and by listening to his views on political questions, I learnt during those three and a half years, more of the science of diplomacy than at any other time, for the mind is particularly receptive of knowledge and friendly counsel between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-six".⁷⁸

The attachés were naturally given the most routine and undemanding kind of work (largely clerical), although a sensitive and sympathetic chief might let a young man cut his teeth on more responsible and stimulating tasks. The scope for this was in some measure restricted at the Constantinople embassy by the large number of attachés; on the other hand, the workload was always increasing and many of the routine tasks were done by the dragomans. As already noted, Bulwer had preferred an attaché to his secretary of embassy for the most important work of all.

Later in the nineteenth century the government began to professionalise the diplomatic service and, in the process, assert more influence over the appointment of attachés (eventually by means of examinations) and even pay some of them small salaries.⁷⁹ No longer choosing their young men themselves, faced with a growth in their number and spiralling costs, ambassadors soon lost their enthusiasm for sharing

⁷⁷ On the other ways to prepare for a diplomatic career in both the early and late modern periods, see Berridge, 'Diplomatic training'.

⁷⁸ Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy*, p. 13.

⁷⁹ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815-1914*, pp. 51-53, 66-67; Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782-1846*, pp. 217-18.

their houses and dinner tables with the attachés. In giving evidence to the Monckton Milnes committee in 1861, Stratford de Redcliffe had a firm view on the question. As ambassador in Constantinople he had not enjoyed the company of one particular attaché and had felt obliged to insist that a separate kitchen be made for all of “the gentlemen” in the new palace, and that rooming in the embassy and taking their meals with him should be “expressly a matter of invitation”.⁸⁰ In short, boarding and lodging with an ambassador should henceforward be a privilege rather than a right.⁸¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century the family embassy may have withered away but this did not dent the enthusiasm of rich young men for attaché posts at the embassy in Constantinople. On the contrary, it became much the most popular first destination for entrants to the diplomatic service. Of the 124 men in the 1914 establishment, 22 had been sent first as attachés to this post. If those following unusual career paths are eliminated from this list, this amounted to 1 in 5 of those following what was by now the normal route.⁸² Constantinople—focus of the ‘Eastern Question’ and perhaps the greatest of all centres of international intrigue—had come to be regarded in the diplomatic service as a particularly valuable diplomatic training ground, and there was always plenty of work to be done there.⁸³ Add to this that the legendary city was tinged with the exotic, spectacularly situated, and abundant in its opportunities for pleasures of every sort, and its magnetism is not difficult to understand. After improvements in the Orient Express, first introduced in 1883, it was also only three days from London. Even unpaid attachés continued to be attracted to the Constantinople embassy until the First World War, although they were now called ‘honorary attachés’. Aubrey Herbert, Mark Sykes, and George Lloyd made a notable trio in the time of Sir Nicholas O’Conor.⁸⁴

In addition to the diplomatic attachés, two sorts of specialist attaché were to be found at the Constantinople embassy before the First World

⁸⁰ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1667–72.

⁸¹ Yurdusev, ‘The Mid-Nineteenth Century British Embassy in Constantinople’.

⁸² *FO List 1914*. Berlin, which took fifteen young men from the 1914 establishment, was next in popularity for first destinations, and then there was little to choose between the other embassies. However, in giving their first taste of diplomacy to only seven, the Paris Embassy was possibly being held out after all as a reward for good service elsewhere.

⁸³ Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy*, p. 12.

⁸⁴ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, pp. 75–6.

War. The first of these was the military attaché. Military and indeed naval officers had been informally attached to it on an *ad hoc* basis at least since the period of the French revolutionary wars, which brought to a head the great, late eighteenth century shift in British policy to active support for the Ottoman Empire in the European balance.⁸⁵ George Frederick Koehler, a German employed by the British army, had spent six months in Turkey in 1791–2 in order to report on the condition of the country's defences.⁸⁶ Shortly afterwards he was followed by Sir Sydney Smith, who reported on the Ottoman fleet.⁸⁷ The intelligence gathered was obviously valuable to the government but visits of this kind by men of such prominence caused a certain amount of unease on the part of the ambassador, Sir Robert Ainslie, because they were bound to cause speculation. "Major Koehler departed Eight Days since for Vienna," he told the foreign secretary, Lord Grenville, on 26 March 1793, "and will, I hope, be soon followed by Sir Sydney Smith, after which I hope soon to quiet the uneasiness and jealousy to which their sojourn here has so amply administered".⁸⁸

In the early spring of 1812, with a French offensive against Russia imminent and the British government anxious to galvanise peace negotiations between its Turkish friends and its Russian ally, another *ad hoc* military attaché arrived in Constantinople. This was the cavalry colonel, Sir Robert Wilson, who was attached to Liston's new embassy with the local rank of brigadier-general and instructions to assist the ambassador in advancing the cause of allied unity. He might do this, the foreign secretary told Liston, by helping him "to judge with accuracy of the forces of the contending powers, and the probability of the military results which are likely to arise, and also, from his acquaintance with Russian officers, to open channels of communication which may be useful".⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Compare Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 220.

⁸⁶ TNA, Ainslie to Grenville, 8 Oct. 1791, FO78/12A, and 10 Aug. 1792, FO78/13; Black, 'States, strategy and struggle', pp. 477–8.

⁸⁷ TNA, Smith to Grenville, 22 Feb. 1793, FO78/10.

⁸⁸ He was too optimistic about Smith, but at least he was able to report later that "he quitted my Hotel, and took a private House to be more at his Ease", Ainslie to Grenville, 10 May 1793, FO78/14.

⁸⁹ TNA, Castlereagh to Liston, 27 Mar. 1812, FO78/79. In the event, so dire was Russia's position by this time that it had made peace terms with Turkey before Liston and Wilson arrived in Constantinople. Nevertheless, Wilson seems to have played a part in consolidating the settlement: Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923*, pp. 45–7; Vetch, 'Wilson, Sir Robert Thomas'.

Thereafter, military officers appeared sporadically at Constantinople under the protection of the embassy. In the main they were formally employed as instructors to the Turkish army but doubled informally as gatherers of military intelligence.⁹⁰ It was not, however, until the 1870s that a military attaché was formally and permanently appointed. This was Colonel Wilbraham Oates Lennox, a distinguished officer of engineers who had won a VC in the Crimean War. Appointed in October 1876, he was instructed to report directly to the ambassador “on all matters of interest relating to military affairs in Turkey”.⁹¹ After first serving as British military delegate in armistice negotiations between Turkey and Montenegro, during the Russo-Turkish war in the following year he accompanied the Turkish armies in Bulgaria.⁹² Lennox then enjoyed a huge—albeit temporary—increase in assistance as further soldiers were attached to the embassy when Russia’s successes threatened Constantinople and the Straits in early 1878.⁹³ As Turkey’s own soldiers became more involved in politics in the decade before the First World War, the military attachés found their sphere of reporting broadening somewhat. Reporting on the politics of the military was approved as much by the War Office as by the Foreign Office.⁹⁴ A naval attaché was not appointed until 1905 and then was based in Rome, presumably because the Ottoman government’s reliance on British naval advice had led to the presence of many other British naval officers in Constantinople.

The other specialist attaché post established in the embassy before the First World War was a commercial attaché. The experiment with such attachés, whose task was to look out for opportunities for the advancement of British trade, began in 1880. However, their areas of responsibility were far too large and their difficulties were compounded by the tendency of ambassadors to load them up with routine commercial work.⁹⁵ The first commercial attaché to be appointed at Constantinople, in 1895, was William Wrench, who had been head of the commercial section of the consulate-general for over 20 years. Wrench

⁹⁰ Yurdusev, ‘The Mid-Nineteenth Century British Embassy in Constantinople’.

⁹¹ TNA, FO to Lennox, 24 Oct. 1876, FO78/2526.

⁹² TNA, FO to Lennox, 2 Nov. 1876, FO78/2526; and Vetch, ‘Lennox’.

⁹³ The *FO List 1878* records seven military attachés altogether in the embassy.

⁹⁴ TNA, Notes with Regard to the Collection of Intelligence in Peace Time, April 1907, WO279/503; Instructions for Military Attachés, 1908, WO279/647.

⁹⁵ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, App. A.

died suddenly in October 1896 and in the following year was replaced by Ernest Weakley, a very able and hard-working man who remained in this post until the outbreak of war in 1914.⁹⁶

In the centuries of Levant Company control, the ambassador's household also included a treasurer, whose duties included collecting all monies due to the company and paying Ottoman tax demands and bribes to officials.⁹⁷ It also had a chaplain, who was usually the ambassador's nominee.⁹⁸ A doctor was also essential and at least at one period gave his professional advice free of charge to seamen and distressed British subjects.⁹⁹ An embassy doctor in the early eighteenth century, Charles Maitland, achieved some fame in his professional sphere by virtue of his association with the experiments in smallpox inoculation encouraged by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.¹⁰⁰ The doctor was sometimes loaned to the sultan and some of his senior ministers, and thus could be as important for the ambassador's diplomacy as for the health of his family.¹⁰¹ At a further social remove, the ambassador had a large number of additional staff, some of them locally engaged. These included his dragomans (see Chapter 3) and a scribe known as an 'efendi'. To assist with entertaining and the general running of his house, he had many servants—a butler, grooms, cooks, housemaids, footmen, and pages, all supervised by a steward. When the British government acquired its own embassy building in the early nineteenth century and re-building, renovation and expansion became constant preoccupations, the ambassador also obtained a clerk of works. In the nineteenth century, too, he acquired a separate consular staff with—in mid-century—its own court assistants (see Chapter 4). Until their legendary corps was disbanded in 1826, janissaries were provided by the Porte to act as guards and sometimes as messengers within the confines of the empire, although the ambassador was obliged to pay them.

⁹⁶ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, pp. 74, 94.

⁹⁷ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 220–1.

⁹⁸ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 222–4.

⁹⁹ TNA, George Liddell (Secretary, Levant Co.), List of Officers and Consuls of the Levant Company, 26 Mar. 1825, FO78/137.

¹⁰⁰ Curling, *Edward Wortley Montagu, 1713–1776*, pp. 34–6.

¹⁰¹ On the importance to Stratford of Dr Samuel McGuffog's services as a go-between, see Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 10, 38, 43, 50.

The Importance of Size

From fairly early days the staff of the embassy in Constantinople was large, and, although its size dipped from time to time, by the middle of the nineteenth century it was much larger than that of any other British embassy of the period.¹⁰² Diplomatic, consular and ancillary staff all tended to be larger. This was not accidental.

From the time of William Harborne, household staff in excess of the ambassador's own needs were required to cope with the "travellers of rank" who were likely to descend on the embassy at any time.¹⁰³ In such an alien environment, European travellers were more likely to gravitate to this one than to embassies in other cities. A more important consideration, however, was prestige. There was a long and firmly held view in British diplomacy that Constantinople was a capital in which the size of the ambassador's household, as well as its liveried magnificence on ceremonial occasions, determined to an unusual degree a nation's standing in the eyes of the host government.¹⁰⁴ Until the Congress of Vienna in 1815, when the general problem of precedence was resolved, anxiety about this was fired further by the struggle for precedence between the major diplomatic missions in the capital, the more so because they were all usually headed by ambassadors—and so by public ministers having the 'full representative character'. The British vied particularly with the French embassy, which had been established longer in Constantinople and claimed the right of protection over all Christians in the sultan's dominions. Attention to "exterior demonstrations", reported Sir Everard Fawkener in 1739, in words resembling those employed by almost every ambassador before and after him, is "particularly necessary here, where pomp and ostentation, especially in point of retinue, are carried to great heights, and everything of this kind is observed with great exactness".¹⁰⁵

The need to defend and execute the special rights given to the English nation in the Ottoman Empire under its capitulations was a further reason for the need of a large staff. Yet another was the need to employ local men (dragomans) knowledgeable in the languages of the empire

¹⁰² Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 87.

¹⁰³ Wood, 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762', p. 541.

¹⁰⁴ Wood, 'The English embassy at Constantinople, 1660–1762', p. 541; Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 69–70.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, Fawkener to Newcastle, 15 Mar. 1739, SP97/30.

and in the ways of the Ottoman bureaucracy, courts and custom houses. Then in the nineteenth century a final spur to staff growth was provided by the new and intense reforming interest taken by successive British governments in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

Exactly how large was the English Ambassador's family at Constantinople in the first centuries of the embassy's existence is not entirely clear. This is not so much because of the sparseness of figures but because ambassadors tended to exaggerate the size of the entourage they needed in the perennial attempt to wring more money out of the Levant Company and, subsequently, the government. The easiest way to do this was to emphasise the large retinue they needed on presenting their credentials to the sultan and each time thereafter that they had audience with the grand vizier, while glossing over how many members of the retinue were just hired for the occasion.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, some figures seem reliable and those available for other periods can be assessed fairly accurately.

Harborne seems to have had a very modest establishment: just two secretaries, one dragoman, several domestic servants, and two or more janissaries for protection. However, by 1594 the household of his successor, Edward Barton, was already more than twice as large, with some 18 to 20 members.¹⁰⁷ A century later, during the embassies of Sir John Finch and Sir William Trumbull, the permanent embassy household, excluding the domestic family but including janissary guards, was probably about 30-strong.¹⁰⁸ At least a third of these consisted of diplomatic and other staff, and the remainder of liveried servants. During the early eighteenth century embassy of Edward Wortley Montagu, whose wife felt compelled to compete with the vast retinue of the French ambassador,¹⁰⁹ the household was at least as big and probably around

¹⁰⁶ This seems to have been a common practice. Paul Rycout, previously a secretary of embassy, advised Sir William Trumbull that "it was a good idea to take about twenty extra liveries from London to outfit men hired for special occasions, such as the day of audience", Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁷ Woodhead, 'Harborne' and 'Barton'.

¹⁰⁸ For Finch, see Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, pp. 178–9; for Trumbull, TNA, 'A relation of what passed at the audience which His Excellency Sir William Trumbull...had of the Vizier' [16 Jan. 1688], SP97/20. The procession was led by 37 persons in full livery: six janissaries, two grooms, a steward, 26 footmen, and two *valets de chambre*. Following these were 12 interpreters, a gentleman of the horse, the ambassador himself with four pages, the secretary "and other people", and the merchants.

¹⁰⁹ Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, p. 67.

40-strong. The Wortley Montagus took out with them 20 servants alone and almost certainly acquired more after their arrival.¹¹⁰ Fawkener, in begging for more money from the government, claimed that “to live with decency and as the other ministers do, one must have a family of 45 to 50 people”.¹¹¹ According to official Ottoman records, his successor, James Porter, had a total staff of 55.¹¹²

As the fortunes of the Levant Company declined during the eighteenth century, however, so did the size of the ambassador’s entourage. When Robert Liston arrived in Constantinople in 1794 he found a staff, excluding servants and janissary guards, of ten—and those underpaid.¹¹³ Shortly afterwards, with the growth in the political importance of Turkey and the assumption of complete government responsibility for the embassy, the household began to grow again.

When Stratford Canning sailed for Constantinople in 1825 he took with him—in addition to his wife—four secretaries and twenty-one servants,¹¹⁴ and probably had a total household beginning to regain mid-eighteenth century heights. By the last years of his final embassy, in the late 1850s, the chancery staff alone usually had 14 or 15 members and the consulate-general had been augmented by the staff of a new ‘Supreme Consular Court of the Levant’ under Edmund Hornby. In 1862 the embassy and consular staff combined amounted to 37 persons, *excluding* all domestic and ancillary staff (see Box 2.1). By this time, then, the embassy staff was probably much larger than it had ever been. On the eve of the First World War it had—by the same measure—shrunk somewhat from the 1862 level but still had an embassy and consular staff of 30 persons, and the chancery itself remained as large.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, pp. 58, 88. For the staff they found at the embassy on arrival, see Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, pp. 140–1.

¹¹¹ TNA, Fawkener to Stone, 24 Jan. 1736/7, SP97/29. In a later letter he said that at audiences with the grand vizier “I have never less... than four led horses, and a retinue of at least 50 people”, Fawkener to Newcastle, 15 Mar. 1739, SP97/30.

¹¹² Cited in Mansel, *Constantinople*, p. 194. The same source says that the Dutch Embassy had 38, the French 78 and the Venetian 118 (including 50 priests).

¹¹³ Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 69–70. Cunningham counts eight interpreters, an “embellisher” (a Turkish scribe, more usually described as an ‘efendi’), and a cancellier/secretary.

¹¹⁴ TNA, Planta to Croker, 23 Sept. 1825, FO78/138.

¹¹⁵ *FO List 1914*.

CHAPTER THREE

DRAGOMANS

A dragoman of the British Embassy was a local expert, and analogous to an 'oriental secretary' at the mission in Teheran, a 'Chinese secretary' in Peking, and a 'Japanese secretary' in Yedo. In Constantinople such men were usually recruited from Christian families of European origin long resident in the Ottoman Empire. Typically Italians of Pera, among whom the Pisani dynasty was pre-eminent, they sometimes numbered men from Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and other local communities as well. The dragomans of all the embassies secured the work for their sons, nephews, and grandsons, and it was not unusual for one family to have served one or more of them for many generations.¹ Their section in the embassy came to be known as the 'dragomanate' or, in the French word used formally by the British until very late, '*drogmanat*'. Such was the significance of the work of these men that, at least by the end of the nineteenth century, meetings consisting of a representative of each dragomanate to discuss matters of mutual interest were a frequent and important feature of the life of the city's diplomatic corps.²

The dragomans were indispensable to the ambassador when he had to meet the sultan and his ministers, and when official documents needed to be translated. This was because, after the early years and until comparatively recently, few British ambassadors appear to have spoken Turkish and found it easy to pick up quickly the manner of conducting business at the Porte;³ and until the nineteenth century it was rare for even senior Ottoman figures to speak any European language. However, the dragomans were employed for a whole raft of other purposes as well, and this extended their life until after the First World War. They were most occupied with pursuing the embassy's 'cases' at the Porte,

¹ On the dragoman families, see van Gelder and de Moor (eds.), *Orientalisms 2*; Mansel, *Constantinople*, pp. 210–15; de Testa and Gautier, 'Les Drogmans au Service de la France au Levant', pp. 7–102.

² See for example TNA, Réunion des Drogmans. Procès-Verbal No. 5, 12 Dec. 1906, FO195/2221.

³ Abbott, *Under the Turk at Constantinople*, p. 46.

more often than not dealing with commercial matters.⁴ They were also message-bearers, and oiled the wheels of the Custom House to ensure that English goods passed through unhindered. They served as intelligence gatherers, not least because the Levant Company refused to give ambassadors a secret service allowance. The most trusted and astute were political advisers to the ambassador. And much more than the diplomatic secretaries, the dragomans provided institutional memory and continuity in the practice of the embassy.

From the beginning the English Embassy had employed a substantial body of dragomans. As the system became established, younger men learning the craft, known as *giovani di lingua* or later as student interpreters, were attached to them. In the interests of economy, the Levant Company laid down a maximum of three dragomans and three *giovani*.⁵ But this formula was hard to enforce because ambassadors nearly always seemed to feel the need for more.⁶ “By the ancient records of the Company it appears that there were, at times, no less than nine officers in their service on pay at Constantinople”, remarked Bartholomew Pisani, first dragoman at the embassy in the early nineteenth century, in advancing his own case for more dragomans.⁷ The embassy chaplain sometimes needed a dragoman as well, although in that event he employed one at his own expense.⁸ Enjoying new prosperity and under pressure of increased work in the embassy, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the company appears to have agreed to increase the approved formula to four dragomans and four *giovani di lingua*, and by the early 1820s to five plus five.⁹ They were ranked by seniority as ‘first dragoman’, ‘second dragoman’, and so on, and salaried accordingly. The

⁴ Seventeenth century Levant Company instructions specifically permitted the ambassador to leave to his dragomans the seeking of redress at the Porte for all but the most serious grievances of English factors; see for example TNA, Instructions to Sir William Hussey, 17 July 1690, SP105/45.

⁵ By the second half of the seventeenth century, company instructions to the ambassadors were generally quite explicit on this; see TNA, Co. Instructions to Chandos (1680), Trumbull (1687), Hussey (1690), Paget (1692), and Sutton (1701), all in SP105/145; compare Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 227.

⁶ Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II & James II*, p. 75. See for example, TNA, Levant Co. to Bendysh, 6 Feb. 1650, SP105/112.

⁷ TNA, Pisani to Morier, 10 Feb. 1814, SP105/134.

⁸ Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II & James II*, p. 76.

⁹ TNA, Castlereagh to Liston, 7 Mar. 1812, FO78/79; Levant Co. Treasurer’s Account Books, SP105/205 and SP105/206; FO78/157 (folio 61) and FO366/569 (folio 169) for the ‘establishment’ in 1825 and 1827 respectively. Note: in practice, there were only four rather than five students in 1825, C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, folio 52, FO78/135.

first or chief dragoman, sometimes also known as the ‘confidential’ or ‘political’ dragoman, handled the most sensitive business and usually had a free run of the embassy’s archives.

By the end of the French revolutionary wars, therefore, the dragomanate was a sizeable establishment. At this juncture it also became one which was more responsive to the political needs of the ambassador as more financial responsibility for the embassy was assumed by the government (see p. 32 above). With unquestioned authority to allocate dragomans as between political and commercial work now in the hands of the ambassador, in 1814 the Levant Company began to inform newly appointed *giovani di lingua* that they could not, as before, “look to seniority alone for progressive rank or separate functions” but would be “employed at the pleasure of their superiors according to their respective qualifications”.¹⁰ Shortly after his arrival as ambassador in 1821, Lord Strangford even made his fifth dragoman his ‘political dragoman’.¹¹

During these first years of the nineteenth century the purchasing power of the dragomans’ salaries was severely depressed and, afraid of losing men for whom they not only had great need but often also great respect and affection, the ambassadors were keen that they should be paid more. Praise of their virtues was, therefore, at this point more audible than complaints about the vices of which they were sometimes accused: at best, timidity in advancing the embassy’s interest; at worst, venality and treachery.¹² This was to change, for being both Levantines and subjects of the sultan, the dragomans were especially vulnerable in the age of nationalism now in full swing. There was a well-founded belief that no ‘English gentleman’ could be asked to suffer the daily drudgery and humiliation of genuine dragoman work.¹³ There was also acute apprehension at the difficulties and expense of training for it a native Englishman of any kind. Nevertheless, it was not long before the cry went up for ‘natural-born Englishmen’ to be introduced into the dragomanate.

¹⁰ TNA, Levant Co. to Morier, 10 June 1814, SP105/123.

¹¹ TNA, Bosanquet to Strangford, and Liddell (secretary of the Levant Co.) to Cartwright (consul-general), 4 Oct. 1820, SP105/124; Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 8–9. The fifth dragoman was George Wood.

¹² TNA, Canning to Wellesley, 7 May 1811, FO78/73; Liston to Castlereagh, 11 July 1812, FO78/79; Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 88–91, and vol. 2, p. 8.

¹³ TNA, Memorandum by Mr. Locock, 18 Mar. 1880, FO881/4129; see also Layard to Salisbury, 10 Feb. 1880, in the same file.

*Raising the Cry for
'Natural-Born Englishmen'*

Some of the impetus behind the growing sentiment in favour of introducing men born and bred in Britain into the dragomanate may have had its origins, as has been claimed, with the young Stratford Canning, who was exceptional among heads of mission of this period in his generalized dislike of the Levantine dragomans, not to mention Turkey in general.¹⁴ However, Stratford had many other things on his mind at this time and there is no evidence that he waged any sustained campaign against them. It is also probably fair to say that he held the Pisanis in high regard,¹⁵ and was fulsome in his praise of the courageous action of the third dragoman, Francis Chabert, when fire seriously threatened the embassy buildings in May 1810.¹⁶ It seems likely that the initial support for the campaign came more from the Levant Company than from the embassy or the Foreign Office.

In 1804 the Levant Company had agreed to continue to pay the salaries of all the embassy staff other than the ambassador. This included the dragomans involved exclusively in political work, and it continued to pay them all until its demise in 1825.¹⁷ The company also knew that it would probably need the dragomans more than ever after 1804. This was because the change in the position of the ambassador introduced in that year had given him ample excuse to wash his hands of its affairs, and a consul-general, as the company well knew, could carry nothing like the same authority at the Porte.¹⁸ It is against this background that it began to agitate for reform of the dragomans when in 1814 it began to suspect that 'want of zeal' on their part was responsible for recent embassy failures to secure redress of commercial grievances at the Porte.¹⁹ Five years later it expressed itself in particularly strong terms,

¹⁴ Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 1, 6–7; Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 1, pp. 68–9, 70, 135–6.

¹⁵ Byrne, *The Great Ambassador*, pp. 44–5.

¹⁶ TNA, Canning to Wellesley, 16 May 1810, FO195/7.

¹⁷ All the company's 'Out Letters' dealing with the dragomans up to 1825 refer to its payment of their salaries, TNA, SP105, pp. 122–4; see also C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, folios 51–2, FO78/135; George Liddell (secretary, Levant Co.), List of Officers and Consuls of the Levant Company, 26 Mar. 1825, FO78/137. But compare Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 8, and Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 184.

¹⁸ TNA, Instructions to Arbuthnot, 1804, SP105/122.

¹⁹ TNA, Levant Co. to Morier, 10 June 1814 and 6 Apr. 1815, SP105/123.

not excusing the ambassador, Sir Robert Liston, either. Complaining directly to the foreign secretary of serious breaches in the capitulations by the Turks, the company's secretary in London charged that this was a consequence of

our too ready acquiescence in repeated previous encroachments, and by too mild a conduct on the part of the Ambassador. . . . [If] any new instructions be sent to HM Ambassador they might be effectively seconded by an official note of similar import addressed to the Turkish resident here: at least the feeling of His Majesty's Government would thereby be more certainly conveyed to the Porte than through the doubtful medium of a dragoman, who may not choose or who may not dare to deliver it with all its original energy.²⁰

The reform tendency had begun to stir into life in 1810, although its first steps were slow and faltering. In March of that year, in announcing the new salaries and embassy establishment, the Levant Company drew the attention of the consul-general to the fact that it had increased the salaries for the *giovani di lingua* even beyond the original increase proposed. It had done this, he was told, "with a view to induce young men of respectable connections to enter our service".²¹ What the company had in mind became clear when George Wood, who was British-born but not so young (he had served Lord Elgin as an interpreter in Egypt), was appointed a *giovane di lingua* in the following year. The company secretary told Morier on that occasion that "It would give singular satisfaction to the Company to have frequent opportunities of employing our countrymen in that department".²²

In 1814 the Levant Company went further. Ask the ambassador, it directed its consul-general, to "favour us with a plan for supplying the class of *giovani di lingua* with our young countrymen, and we will strenuously endeavour to carry it into immediate execution".²³ Liston seemed sympathetic but did not share the company's sense of urgency.

²⁰ TNA, Liddell to Castlereagh, 27 Dec. 1819, SP105/124. At this time the British factory in Constantinople was particularly exercised by outrages at the Custom House; see TNA, Proceedings of an Assembly of the British Factory held at the house of HBM Consul General in Pera the 30 June 1819 [Minute Book of the Constantinople Factory], SP105/212.

²¹ TNA, Levant Co. to Morier, 7 Mar. 1810, SP105/123.

²² TNA, Liddell to Morier, 3 Sept. 1811, SP105/123.

²³ TNA, Levant Co. to Morier, 10 June 1814, SP105/123. This was confirmed by Liston in his letter to the company of 25 November 1814.

Nevertheless, towards the end of 1814 he provided it with his preliminary answers, copying his letter to the Foreign Office.

Having acknowledged the usual arguments against the Levantines and saying that at least some of the dragomans should be “native Englishmen”, Liston proceeded to outline his draft plan, which was influenced in particular by the training of the *jeunes de langues* of France.²⁴ The career entailed much drudgery, he wrote, and would have to be regarded as a profession for life, so children from well-favoured families would have to be ruled out. Instead, the right sort of material might come from “some of our charitable institutions”, by which he probably meant orphanages. Since the English dragomans would need perfect Turkish, they would have to be sent out to Turkey between the tender ages of 10 and 15, and be placed in the care of a “respectable family” in a small house close to the embassy. As to what they would then do, Liston was silent; but he emphasised that “with a view to perfect their education, to refresh their patriotism, perhaps even to preserve their native language, it would be essential that they should return and spend a year or two in their own country”.

It was partly because his proposal was experimental and would be expensive to implement, Liston said, that only a small number of students should be recruited. But there was another reason for this:

It does not strike me [Liston continued] that we ought entirely to overthrow the present system and to confine the service strictly to British subjects. The establishment contains individuals of great merit—and besides, there may be cases where a native of England might perhaps unseasonably think himself called upon to uphold the firmness of our national character, and where the pliability and mild deportment of the class of men from whom our present interpreters are selected might secure a point of importance to the nation.

The sagacious ambassador had come out for a mixed dragomanate, that is, British and Levantine, even if this meant the inclusion of only one natural-born Englishman.²⁵

Liston had informed Castlereagh that he would write in more detail later but appears to have forgotten his promise. He was already in his seventies and no doubt looking forward to his retirement. In April 1816 the company told its consul-general that it was still waiting for “the

²⁴ Casa, *Le Palais de France à Istanbul*, p. 66.

²⁵ TNA, Liston to Castlereagh, 1 Dec. 1814, FO78/82; see also Liston to Bosanquet, 25 Nov. 1814, SP105/134.

advantage of Mr Liston's cooperation" in the matter. In the meantime, since "the present plan of employing natives is not to be wholly abandoned", it would take the first dragoman's grandson into the service.²⁶ The company's agitation had certainly left its mark, although the first real evidence of this was the creation of the new post of 'oriental secretary' rather than the appointment of true Englishmen to the ancient post of dragoman.

*Oriental Secretary and First Dragoman:
"two bad public servants instead of one good one"*

At some point in the period when Lord Wellesley was Foreign Secretary, from late 1809 until early 1812, it had been decided to send out to the embassy an Englishman to be trained for the post of 'Principal Interpreter'. Terrick Hamilton, 31 years old and the fourth and youngest son of the vicar of the important church of St Martin-in-the-Fields in central London, was the first to be chosen.²⁷ The thinking behind the creation of his post is best seen in a letter sent by Liston to Wellesley's successor, Lord Castlereagh. This recommended one of his own protégés as the eventual replacement for Hamilton.

It appears to be essential to the public interest [began Liston] that there should be permanently attached to the embassy at Constantinople a person well acquainted with the oriental languages, and perfectly master of the Turkish, whose assistance may render the ambassador in some degree independent of the common class of interpreters, natives of the country. He ought to be a natural-born subject of his Majesty, to have had a good education, and to have imbibed English ideas and English principles.

By this time, then, Liston was no longer using the term 'dragoman' in connection with the post for which he wanted a natural-born British linguist; in fact, he did not apply a title to it at all. What he did say

²⁶ TNA, Liddell to Morier, 4 April 1816, SP105/123.

²⁷ TNA, Castlereagh to Liston, 27 Mar. 1812, FO78/79; see also Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 7. Like Cunningham, I have been unable to find any papers bearing directly on the origins of this decision, perhaps because Wellesley, "an unconscionably bad Foreign Secretary", had reduced the FO to "a state of incredible confusion", Hinde, *George Canning*, p. 234. I am grateful to Alex May for establishing Hamilton's origins. He was not a good interpreter and never replaced the first dragoman, Bartholomew Pisani, instead being promoted to secretary of embassy when Strangford became ambassador in 1820. Strangford did not think much of him in this capacity either, Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 195, 220–1; and vol. 2, pp. 8–9.

was that the occupant of the post should be separate from and, by clear implication, *above* “the common class of interpreters”. This was further underlined by the candidate the ambassador had in mind.

In 1812 Liston had taken out with him to Constantinople a youth called Robert Liston Elliot, with whose family the ambassador had long and close connections, as might be readily deduced from the name by which the boy had been christened. As he told the foreign secretary in May 1817, Elliot was of “respectable connections, well disposed, with a turn for languages, and at so early a period of life that he acquired the Turkish accent in perfection”. He had subsequently sent him home to complete his education and his father had despatched him to the University of Cambridge. Except that he was not a product of one of England’s “charitable institutions”, young Elliot’s early career was a carbon copy of the sketchy plan presented for such boys by Liston to the Levant Company in 1814. But the social difference was crucial: someone from Elliot’s background could not be a mere dragoman. Instead, Liston asked Castlereagh to post him to the embassy in the new rank of a paid attaché.²⁸

The foreign secretary readily fell in with Liston’s suggestion, in the course of his reply referring now to Hamilton as the ‘oriental secretary’. As for Elliot, who was in effect the first ‘oriental attaché’ at the British embassy although the title was not formally introduced until the 1840s, payment of his salary was to commence in July 1817 and the ambassador was to oversee his studies.²⁹ When Hamilton was promoted to secretary of embassy in 1820, Elliot duly took his place as oriental secretary. His instructions were to continue his studies of Eastern languages and study Ottoman legal and commercial procedures. He was also to “so far associate with the dragomans of the Levant Company” as to learn how to deal with the Ottoman authorities should it be necessary for him, from time to time, to perform the functions of first dragoman. And he should generally be on hand to assist the ambassador “in transacting the public business of the embassy”.³⁰ Elliot turned out to be more successful than Terrick Hamilton and so, despite an appeal from his father, was not permitted leave of absence until relations with Turkey were broken in 1828.³¹ Nevertheless, he was no more capable than

²⁸ TNA, 4 May 1817, FO78/89.

²⁹ TNA, Castlereagh to Liston, 20 May 1817, FO78/89.

³⁰ TNA, Planta to Elliot, 11 Oct. 1820, FO78/96.

³¹ TNA, Thomas Elliot to Planta (FO), 17 Oct. 1825, FO78/139; Stratford Canning to Dudley, 5 Oct. 1827, FO78/157; Stratford to Aberdeen, 13 Oct. 1828, FO78/166.

Hamilton of becoming first dragoman, even after Chabert, who replaced Bartholomew Pisani in 1824, fell under suspicion of disloyalty.

Compared with the difficulty of obtaining suitable English boys as *giovani di lingua*, the post of oriental secretary seemed a clever second-best solution to the problem of how to anglicize the dragomanate. Since the oriental secretary had higher status than a dragoman, it was reasonable to assume that it would be easier to attract the right sort of recruit; his family was also likely to be able to afford the cost of his British university education. As in the case of Elliot, he could still be brought out at an early age as a member of the ambassador's official family and so be fairly well placed to acquire good Turkish. While both Hamilton and Elliot appear not to have been up to chief dragoman's work, their local knowledge and command of Turkish presumably made it possible for them to help the ambassador supervise the native dragomans more effectively. It was indeed particularly for its usefulness in this respect that the post was valued by Edmund Hammond, the future permanent under-secretary of the Foreign Office, when he was stirred to comment on the issue by Palmerston in 1838. If the oriental secretary turned out to be very good, then he could replace the chief dragoman; but this would be a bonus.³²

The flaw in this system emerged only in the middle of the nineteenth century, and demonstrated that more discreet ways of keeping a check on the loyalty and efficiency of the first dragoman were advisable. Sir Henry Bulwer put his finger on this when he told the foreign secretary that the oriental secretary, who was in effect a kind of "private" first dragoman, signified "a system of suspicion and counter action" relative to the "public" first dragoman. "The official dragoman of the Embassy", he insisted, "must be trusted to so great a degree in order to carry on business satisfactorily that it would be most impolitic to allow him to think that he did not enjoy entire confidence. You, in fact, by this system get two bad public servants instead of one good one".³³

It proved difficult to obtain and hold good oriental secretaries anyway. Robert Liston Elliot appears not to have returned from his leave in 1828 and the post was left vacant until the appointment of the brilliant but eccentric Charles Alison at the end of 1844.³⁴ Alison held the post

³² TNA, Memorandum respecting Dragomans, 14 Feb. 1838, FO366/569.

³³ TNA, Bulwer to Malmesbury, 10 Nov. 1858, FO78/1369.

³⁴ Hammond's Memorandum respecting Dragomans of 14 Feb. 1838 said that "the office of Oriental Secretary might be re-established" if a suitable candidate could be found, TNA, FO366/569. Alison was appointed as a paid attaché in April 1839.

until promoted to secretary of embassy at the beginning of 1857.³⁵ It was then taken by Percy Smythe (see p. 59 below) but spurned within months when he inherited his father's title, Lord Strangford, in November. Thomas Fiott Hughes, who secured the appointment in 1859, was regarded by Sir Henry Elliot as "perfectly useless",³⁶ but clung to it until his retirement in 1875. At this point the post was abolished.

Notwithstanding the doubts about trying to anglicize the dragomanate that was behind the experiment with an oriental secretary—doubts which were echoed in 1825 by John Cartwright, the long-serving, well respected consul-general³⁷—there was simultaneously some progress in this direction. But it was anglicization of a special kind. A natural-born Englishman, George Wood, had been appointed a *giovane di lingua* in 1811, as already noted, and in 1817 was promoted to full dragoman. In the early 1820s he served ably as Strangford's confidential dragoman, and would have been reinstated in this position had he not died in 1834.³⁸ However, although two of the four new *giovani* appointed in the early 1820s—George Wood's son, Richard, and Henry Simmons—were regarded as "English by blood and feeling", they both appear to have been born in the Levant.³⁹ This gave them the obvious advantages of fluency in Turkish and intimate knowledge of the country that came to be so prized by Stratford Canning⁴⁰ but they remained Levantines.

The Weakening of the Dragomanate

The Levant Company's pressure for a scheme for the training of its countrymen as dragomans having come to very little, the British Embassy remained in this regard in much the same position as most other missions in Constantinople, although it was well behind the

³⁵ Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 75–80; Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 1, p. 69.

³⁶ TNA, Elliot to Hammond, 23 Aug. 1869, FO391/21; and 10 Jan. 1873, FO391/22.

³⁷ TNA, C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, FO78/135.

³⁸ TNA, Liddell to Morier, 15 May 1817, SP105/124). On Wood's background and career, see Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 9, 12; and Cunningham (ed.), *The Early Correspondence of Richard Wood, 1831–1841*, pp. 3–4.

³⁹ Cunningham, vol. 2, p. 9, especially fn.16. See also Cunningham (ed.), *The Early Correspondence of Richard Wood*, intro.; TNA, Liddell to Cartwright, 1 July 1824, SP105/125; Canning to Clarendon, 3 June 1856, FO366/569.

⁴⁰ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., para. 1675.

French and the Austrians. Matters began to change in 1826 when Francis Chabert, the first dragoman, fell under suspicion of betraying the secrets of the embassy to the Prussian envoy, Baron Miltitz.⁴¹ This stimulated the interest of the Foreign Office itself in anglicizing the dragomanate, although it was not until the early 1840s—following a savage attack on the dragomans by the Constantinople correspondent of *The Times*⁴²—that a serious experiment with it was finally made.

At the instigation of Palmerston, posts were created in the embassy for four ‘oriental attachés’. After a three-year probationary period, the holders might be appointed attachés “in the same manner and on the same footing as all other attachés”, that is, as junior diplomatic staff.⁴³ It was assumed that this would make the positions attractive to young men of good family, and between 1841 and 1845 they were duly filled by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. One of them was Percy Smythe, the bright, youngest son of the former ambassador, Lord Strangford. However, Edmund Hammond, who had helped Palmerston launch the scheme, wisely observed that the narrow specialization of the oriental attachés would make opportunities for advancement elsewhere rare and so make their contentment depend on good salaries and their own promotion ladder.⁴⁴

On the assumption that the new men would be able to take over the political work of the Levantine dragomans (their commercial and legal duties would admittedly take longer), new appointments to the ranks of the latter duly ceased. The consequence was that the dragomanate was steadily weakened by age and infirmity and, after three deaths in quick succession, was halved in size by 1855. Unfortunately, the oriental attachés had not proved up to taking over even the political work from the Levantines, and one of them, Almeric Wood, had expired at his

⁴¹ Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, vol. 1, pp. 391, 410–14; Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 9–11. This was reminiscent of the case of the mid-seventeenth century embassy dragoman, Giorgio Draperis, Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660*, pp. 130–1.

⁴² 24 Feb. 1837.

⁴³ TNA, Account of the Salaries of the Dragomans at Constantinople together with a Statement of their respective periods of Service, FO366/569.

⁴⁴ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2289–90. See also HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 151–63, 216–19. On this already well documented experiment, see Strangford, *A Selection from the Writings of Viscount Strangford*, pp. 59–61; Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 10–19; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 164–5; Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, pp. 84–7.

post. Already in 1848 Sir Stratford Canning had given this damning verdict on them:

The students selected from Oxford and Cambridge, however well qualified by their proficiency in the Oriental languages, and also by the independence of their characters, are, nevertheless, more fitted in other respects for general diplomatic service than for the more immediate object of their appointment. Living as attachés in the ambassador's family, they contract habits which accord but ill with their daily duties as interpreters, and indispose them to the attendance and drudgery inseparable from an effective performance of those duties.

Nor have they, at the same time, sufficient opportunity of acquiring more than a local and contracted knowledge of the business in which they are employed, or sufficient motives to pursue steadily the course for which they were prepared at the expense, and under the care, of Government. Comparing them with the young men employed for similar purposes in other embassies, it may be remarked, that the national character of Englishmen whose early impressions have been confirmed by an academical education in their own country adapts itself with difficulty to that submissive and patient demeanour which is still expected in the East from persons in the situation of interpreters.⁴⁵

In short, the oriental attachés were useless as replacements for the dragomans and Stratford employed them merely on routine duties in his over-worked chancery.⁴⁶ Forced like all of his predecessors to rely on the Pisanis, the ambassador was led to look upon the native dragomans more warmly than in his youth. But they were now too few. What was to be done?

For the pragmatic Stratford, the answer was obvious: start to recruit Levantines again but preferably *Anglo*-Levantines, that is, the sons of English merchant families or consuls long established in Turkey.⁴⁷ These men were themselves suspected at home of over-sensitivity to Turkish interests as well as low moral standards;⁴⁸ applied to them, the term 'Levantine' even conveyed reproach.⁴⁹ It was also pointed out by Percy Smythe that they spoke only colloquial Turkish, "an accent and

⁴⁵ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, No. 4, p. 728, Stratford to Palmerston, 10 Mar. 1848.

⁴⁶ TNA, Canning to Malmesbury, 29 May 1852 and Canning to Clarendon, 3 June 1856, FO366/569; HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1713–14.

⁴⁷ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, No. 4, p. 729, Stratford to Palmerston, 10 Mar. 1848.

⁴⁸ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Report, p. v; and, more harshly, *The Times*, 22 May 1858.

⁴⁹ Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 22.

idiom identifying them, in the minds of the ruling or educated classes, with the illiterate or despised part of the community". Furthermore, he argued, their parents were not usually rich enough to have them educated in England.⁵⁰ But to Stratford—whose life-long friend David Morier, who had served him as secretary in Constantinople in 1810–12, was an Anglo-Levantine—such men literally gave the embassy the best of both worlds. They knew Turkey and its language, and tended to be physically fitter than young Englishmen; and yet, provided they had been sent for some elementary schooling in England, retained "a sufficient portion of English spirit" while lacking the high expectations of the natural-born.⁵¹ Charles Alison was an Anglo-Levantine.⁵²

By the time that Stratford finally left Constantinople in 1858 the numbers of the Levantine dragomans had already begun to swell, although the proportion of Anglo-Levantines among them was not as high as he would no doubt have liked. Count Pisani still ran the chancery, while his able and energetic brother, Etienne Pisani, had just been re-instated as first dragoman at the insistence of the Foreign Office; this followed a contretemps with Stratford which had provoked Etienne's resignation in March 1857 and was the background to Bulwer's criticism (see p. 57 above) of the 'private' first dragoman/oriental secretary regime.⁵³ The legendary Frederick Pisani—who had been in the dragomanate since 1799 and confidential dragoman between 1834 and his nominal retirement in 1852⁵⁴—was also still up to a little translating. Vincent Alischan

⁵⁰ Strangford, *A Selection from the Writings of Viscount Strangford*, pp. 57–8, 62–3.

⁵¹ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., para. 1675. See also HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix No. 4, Stratford to Clarendon, 30 Jan. 1857, p. 729.

⁵² Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 75–80.

⁵³ On the basis of rumours of venality which—despite increasingly ill-tempered demands from the foreign secretary, Lord Clarendon—he was unable to substantiate, Stratford claimed that he had lost confidence in Etienne and instead been forced to communicate with the Porte via a Greek called Revelaky. Hammond thought the real reason was that Stratford had become jealous of the influence that Etienne had "justly acquired and which he honestly exerted for the promotion of British interests", TNA, Hammond, 11 Apr. 1858, FO78/1485. See also TNA, Hammond to Elliot, 21 Sept. 1868, FO391/21; compare *FO List 1852*.

⁵⁴ It had become habitual at the beginning of the century for ambassadors to choose for sensitive political work the dragoman who was the most able and trusted, without regard to his formal rank in the dragomanate. Hence the 'first dragoman' was no longer necessarily the so-called 'confidential' or 'political dragoman', who enjoyed the addition of a large responsibility allowance to his salary. Technically, Frederick Pisani was 'third dragoman', although there was some confusion—or perhaps embarrassment—over this in the FO, for he was described in the *FO List 1864* as having been appointed "first dragoman" in 1834. In fact, however, as Cunningham rightly notes, the semi-disgraced

(actually Armenian) and Constantine Stavrides had been added in 1855 and Robert Casolani in 1857. The Anglo-Levantine contingent consisted of only Henry Simmons and Philip Sarell, the latter having been appointed in 1850 but promoted to full 'interpreter' in 1856.⁵⁵

The condition of the dragomanate was, however, still so weak that Sir Henry Bulwer, who followed Stratford as ambassador in 1858 and shared this aspect of his view of the matter, lost little time in conveying his own dismay at what he found to the foreign secretary, Lord Malmesbury. Certainly, he agreed, it would be ideal if good Englishmen could be found, and he advised the establishment of a training school for them in Constantinople. In the meantime, the career had once more to be made attractive to good Levantines by elevating its status, for example by abolishing the post of oriental secretary (see p. 57 above), and ranking the first dragoman immediately after the secretary of embassy. In the defence of the Levantines Sir Henry was especially eloquent:

In regard to the old condition of things I should observe that certain families of European descent long settled in this country, and employed through successive generations by different Embassies, formed a class apart. It was the highest Christian class born in the country, and the position they occupied was held by those with whom they associated in the greatest esteem; respected by others, they respected themselves; their honesty, whatever was lightly said to the contrary, was proverbial; and they almost always lived and died poor,—(Mr. Frederick Pisani is still an example of this kind)—after being during a long life the depository of secrets by which they could frequently have made a large fortune. It is a great mistake to speak sneeringly of these men. It is a great mistake to have disgusted their families with the calling they hereditarily pursued. It is a great mistake to have undervalued their acquaintance with local customs and feelings.⁵⁶

When Bulwer left the embassy in 1865, the Pisani dynasty still controlled the dragomanate and chancery, Robert Casolani had been designated chief dragoman of the consulate, and the Anglo-Levantine, Alfred Sandison, had joined the staff. Lionel Moore, also an Anglo-Levantine, who

Francis Chabert remained first dragoman until the beginning of the 1850s, although he was confined to commercial work, vol. 2, pp. 6, 11.

⁵⁵ *FO Lists*; Cunningham, vol. 2, pp. 17–19; Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 111.

⁵⁶ TNA, Bulwer to Malmesbury, 17 Nov. 1858, FO78/1370. See also Bulwer to Malmesbury, 10 Nov. 1858, FO78/1369; and Bulwer to Russell, 11 Sept. 1861, PRO30/22/89; 20 Dec. 1862, FO366/566; 7 Sept. 1864, PRO30/22/93.

had been appointed a paid attaché by Stratford a decade earlier and was regarded as a first-rate orientalist, was now senior second secretary.⁵⁷ The prediction of Lord Lyons, who replaced Bulwer as ambassador, that his example of dealing directly with Ottoman ministers would cause the dragoman system to “languish” and thereby provide the opportunity to give it “the *coup de grace*”, proved completely naïve.⁵⁸

The attitude to the system of Sir Henry Elliot, who was ambassador from 1867 until 1877, was coloured by the fact that one of the first problems to confront him was another charge of venality against the confidential dragoman, Etienne Pisani. Elliot thought he was probably guilty but had to admit that he was indispensable.⁵⁹ He subsequently shared a great deal of hand-wringing with Hammond about the evils of the Levantine dragomans⁶⁰ but had made no more impression on them after ten years than Lord Lyons had after two. Indeed, in 1874 he defended Etienne when the grand vizier took a dislike to him and asked the embassy to sack him.⁶¹ Etienne duly remained first dragoman until his retirement at the end of 1875, when he was replaced by Sandison, who was knighted three years later. Another Anglo-Levantine, Henry Cumberbatch, had been a student dragoman in the embassy for a year when Elliot left. Casolani was still a fixture in the embassy dragomanate and—Simmons having been lost in 1871—had actually been joined in 1876 by another Levantine, Hugo Marinitch, who was of Dalmatian origin (although born in Constantinople) and had previously been for ten years first dragoman in the Spanish Legation.⁶² Stavrides and Alischan remained the consular dragomans, and the amazing Count Pisani, “a singular-looking dried up little man” now in his mid-seventies, was *still* Keeper of the Archives.⁶³

Nevertheless, times were changing. Already in 1858 a parliamentary select committee investigating the consular service had been impressed

⁵⁷ TNA, Elliot to Hammond, 28 Jan. and 11 Aug. 1868, FO391/21.

⁵⁸ Newton, *Lord Lyons*, pp. 146, 150, 175.

⁵⁹ TNA, Elliot to Hammond, 18 Nov. 1867, 1 and 28 Jan. 1868, FO391/21.

⁶⁰ TNA, Elliot to Hammond, 11 Aug. 1868; and for Hammond’s own attack on the dragoman system, Hammond to Elliot, 21 Sept. 1868, FO391/21.

⁶¹ TNA, Sublime Porte to Musurus Pasha, 12 Aug., and min. of Lord Tenterden, 21 Aug. 1874, FO78/2363.

⁶² TNA, Marinitch to Granville, 18 Feb. 1882, HO144/96/A14614; Layard to Salisbury, 26 Dec. 1879, FO881/4129; Goschen to Granville, 18 Aug. 1880, FO78/3092; Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 16.

⁶³ Wynter, *On the Queen’s Errands*, pp. 236–7. Count Pisani retired (allegedly) on 1 Jan. 1878.

by the argument that the Palmerston experiment had not been given a fair chance. As a result, it had recommended that young Englishmen with linguistic potential should be recruited so that, following training at Constantinople, they might gradually come to replace those Levantines remaining at British consular posts in the Levant, whether serving as dragomans or consuls proper. In 1877 its advice was finally acted upon and the specialised Levant Consular Service was born (see Chapter 4). As Cunningham says, with the advent of this service “the days of the Levantine dragoman were numbered”.⁶⁴ However, he died hard.

Levantine Rearguard

The first cohort of six students of the new Levant Service entered the doors of the school provided for them at Ortakeui, not far from Constantinople, in November 1877, and it was not long before the embassy’s Levantine dragomans were voicing their fears at the long-term threat they posed to their livelihoods.⁶⁵ The dragomans were also in a strong position at this time, for with the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war and the lead being taken by Britain in pressing the sultan, Abdul Hamid II, to keep a promise of better treatment for his Christian subjects, the pressure of work in the embassy was great.⁶⁶ To make matters worse, the new ambassador, Sir Henry Layard, was facing criticism from the British community in Constantinople that the embassy was no longer effectively defending its interests. In these circumstances, and with the students unlikely to be of any practical use to him for some years, what Layard needed was more Levantine dragomans, not fewer, and he pressed repeatedly for them.⁶⁷ But London turned a deaf ear.

It was against this background that, in a rare joint memorandum presented to the ambassador in 1880, the embassy’s dragomans made a bold plea. Emphasising their special expertise, the length of time required to attain it, and the unpredictable results of the Ortakeui experiment, they urged the need to increase the embassy establishment to seven trained dragomans. They also demanded the local ranks of second and third

⁶⁴ Vol. 2, p. 19.

⁶⁵ TNA, Malet (Cairo) to Salisbury, 11 Feb. 1880, FO881/4129.

⁶⁶ TNA, Elliot to Salisbury, 3 Feb. 1880, FO881/4129.

⁶⁷ TNA, Layard to Salisbury, 26 Dec. 1879, FO881/4129. See also FO to Treasury, 26 July 1879, T1/17127; FO to Treasury, 24 Sept. 1879, T1/17127; Layard to Salisbury, 2 Nov. 1879, T1/17127; Salisbury to Layard, 26 Nov. 1879, T1/17127.

oriental secretary (they were the real McCoy) in place of the despised title of 'dragoman'. This would improve morale, they claimed, and give them greater weight in dealing with Turkish officials.⁶⁸

This whiff of rebellion in the ranks was all too much for Arthur Nicolson, the second secretary, soon-to-be father of the more famous Harold, and future permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, who had only months previously been appointed superintendent of student interpreters in Turkey. "An army of mercenaries, however well composed, lacks the energy, enthusiasm, and loyalty of native levies. The sooner we can employ the latter", by which he meant Englishmen, "the more effectively will the service of the country be performed", he told the ambassador.⁶⁹ In a report replying to the dragomans' memorandum produced some months later, Nicolson and his colleagues then sought to show that this day was near since the number of high Turkish officials who spoke French was already large and still increasing. This meant, he maintained, echoing a point made by Clarendon to Stratford over 20 years before,⁷⁰ that the diplomatic staff of the embassy should even now be able to take over a significant proportion of the work hitherto done by the first dragoman. Rather than there being a need to expand the embassy dragomanate, therefore, two dragomans plus an assistant was a sufficient establishment for both the embassy *and* the consulate-general—six in all.

The diplomats' report admitted that the Austrian embassy gave diplomatic rank and title to its dragomans but waved this away with the vague assertion that this was "an exceptional circumstance... governed by conditions which do not apply to the case before us". The dragomans could be called 'interpreters', they said condescendingly, if this made them feel better. As for their argument that more status would give "fresh stimulus to their activity", this was simply ignored.⁷¹

It was one thing for the diplomats to be able to communicate with those high officials who spoke French; quite another to handle them effectively. So it was no surprise that three recent heads of mission in Constantinople as well as the then ambassador, Sir Henry Layard, all

⁶⁸ TNA, Memorandum enclosed in Layard to Salisbury, 10 Feb. 1880, FO881/4129.

⁶⁹ TNA, Nicolson to Layard, 16 Feb. 1880, FO881/4129.

⁷⁰ TNA, Clarendon to Stratford, 2 Apr. 1857, FO78/1485.

⁷¹ TNA, Messrs. St. John, Jervoise, and Nicolson to Goschen, 25 Aug. 1880, enclosed in Goschen to Granville, 30 Aug. 1880, FO881/4305.

advised Lord Salisbury, then foreign secretary, that more dragomans were needed.⁷² But it was still the opinion of Nicolson and his colleagues which prevailed.

Over the next few years the dragomanate certainly had to shift and make do, as Nicolson had conceded was likely, especially after it was reduced to a staff of three full dragomans with the death of the consular dragoman, Alischan, later in 1880; there were also now no orientalist among the diplomatic staff. The freshmen in the new Levant Service were put to work on translating important newspaper articles, while the more advanced among them were quickly apprenticed in the dragomanate. By the mid-1880s Adam Block and another junior who seemed promising, Justin Alvarez, were formally added to the dragomanate as ‘assistant dragomans’ with the promoted rank of vice-consul. Stavrides in 1881 and Marinitch in the following year both became naturalized British subjects, probably in order to reinforce their positions, although both gave other motives in their petitions.⁷³

The dragoman establishment had now more or less assumed the size recommended by the embassy’s proto-managerialists in 1880. At about the same time the British juniors—although not the Levantines—were favoured with the new title of ‘vice-consul interpreter’. However, the dragomanate had still not assumed the national character sought by Nicolson and his colleagues. Naturalization notwithstanding, the Levantine element was still dominant and remained so until Sandison was eased into retirement almost a decade later and replaced as chief dragoman by Adam Block in August 1894. Even then the much-respected Greco-Levantine, Stavrides, remained consular dragoman until after the turn of the century. And it was to be another five years until, in July 1906, the last of the officially recognised Levantine dragomans,

⁷² TNA, Correspondence respecting the Dragoman System at Constantinople, FO881/4129. Earlier, Stratford had admitted that he could now communicate directly with the grand vizier and the foreign minister “with good effect” but insisted that “many things peculiar to this country make it altogether impossible for him [the ambassador] to wait upon them with that degree of frequency which is required”, TNA, Stratford to Clarendon, 19 Apr. 1857, FO78/1485.

⁷³ Stavrides, at the time a Turkish subject, stated that his only motive was to make sure that on his death his property was administered under English rather than Ottoman law, TNA, Stavrides to Granville, 12 Aug. 1881, HO144/86/A8376. Marinitch was originally an Austrian subject but was granted Spanish nationality while serving in Spain’s legation. He lost this on transferring to the British Embassy, and since then had lived under British protection with no nationality of any kind, TNA, Marinitch to Granville, 18 Feb. 1882, HO144/96/A14614.

Hugo Marinitch, who had been acting chief dragoman during Block's absence in the summer of 1903, finally retired from the embassy and the 'English' take-over was complete. Or was it?

In fact, there remained an unacknowledged Armenian dragoman in the embassy, Onik Efendi, who was nominally just a messenger but was in fact paid out of the secret service fund to do dragoman work of increasing importance after the turn of the century. He died in May 1907, whereupon Gerald Fitzmaurice, then second dragoman, remarked privately that "He is of course an irreparable loss to us all... he was the mainstay of the dragomanate".⁷⁴ Onik Efendi was replaced by another Armenian, Kevork ('George') Tchamitch, hitherto Turkish clerk in the consulate-general, whom we shall come across again.⁷⁵

No Career for the Dragomans

The attempt to graft the new system of English dragomans onto the old regime generated problems not expected by Nicolson in 1880. The first of these surfaced during the investigation into the working of the consulate-general at Constantinople conducted by Edward Law in 1891 (see Chapter 4). Law soon discovered that the greatest ambition of all the new Levant Service officers arriving in Constantinople was to get transferred as soon as possible to a consular post in the provinces, where they would have more variety, more leisure, and more scope for independent initiative—and earn higher salaries. He recommended, therefore, that the rare students with real aptitude for dragoman work should be given more tangible incentives to devote themselves to "this particular branch of the Service".⁷⁶

This report went unheeded until Sir Philip Currie, previously permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, arrived as the new ambassador in Constantinople at the beginning of 1894 and found the situation exactly as Law had described it. Arguing that "the position of Dragoman to the Embassy should be such as to attract the ablest men in the Service", in July he proposed a significant modification of the scheme of which he had himself been the father. This amounted to a return to

⁷⁴ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, p. 89.

⁷⁵ Compare the evidence of the senior Levant consul, Robert Graves, to the Reay Committee, HCPP (Cd. 4561), 1909: Mins. of Ev., para. 5787.

⁷⁶ Report by Mr. E. F. Law, pp. 11–12, 63.

the old numerical ranking system employed for the Levantines, even giving renewed prominence to the title with which they had been so uncomfortable, ‘dragoman’. The embassy (excluding the consulate-general), argued Currie, should have four dragomans in all: a chief or first dragoman, a second dragoman, a third dragoman, and a dragoman-archivist. Each of these positions should have a prescribed salary range through which there would be automatic incremental progress, and the salaries should be at least as good as those obtainable at consular posts in the provinces. It was implicit in Currie’s proposal that vice-consular and consular commissions would no longer be given to members of the dragomanate working for the embassy, although they would continue to be issued to those in the consulate-general. This would underline the idea that the former should henceforward think of the embassy dragomanate as providing a separate career from the consular service in the rest of the Ottoman Empire. In short, they should from now on think of themselves as career dragomans and not as ‘consuls’ temporarily employed in Constantinople.⁷⁷

Currie’s proposal was accepted⁷⁸ and titles such as ‘consul and interpreter’, to be found on the *Foreign Office List* prior to his arrival, disappeared. According to Gerald Fitzmaurice, one of those who were initially to benefit from Currie’s scheme, the reform was warmly welcomed by the dragomans.⁷⁹

During the remainder of Currie’s time in Constantinople and the first half of that of Sir Nicolas O’Conor, the embassy dragomanate was briefly well staffed and stable. There were also no significant changes among the consular dragomans until Stavrides was replaced as legal dragoman in 1901 by Telford Waugh, who had spent a number of years as his junior. However, Currie’s reforms had not created universal satisfaction, and O’Conor—despite a genuine desire to support the career structure of the Levant consuls in general—succeeded in exacerbating remaining grievances and creating a significant new one.

Currie might have tidied up the personnel structure of the dragomanate and made it look more like a self-contained career but it remained unattractive to the new breed of English dragomans. The chief dragoman was still earning no more than a Levant consul-general at

⁷⁷ TNA, Currie to Kimberley, 23 July 1894, FO78/4542.

⁷⁸ TNA, Currie to Kimberley, 16 Oct. 1894, FO78/4543.

⁷⁹ CAC Cam., Fitzmaurice to O’Conor, 22 Aug. 1905, OCON 6/1/53.

places such as Beirut, Smyrna, Salonica, and Crete—and considerably less than he might obtain outside the service. There was little that could be done about the drudgery of the work, and a consular post in the provinces remained more alluring. The special service that might take a dragoman away from Constantinople for months or even years offered not just adventure but more promise of early honours. In addition to all this was mounting resentment among the English dragomans that they continued to be denied opportunities for promotion to the diplomatic service: institutional conservatism, the guild mentality reinforced by the growing professionalization of diplomacy in the nineteenth century, and sheer class prejudice stood firmly in their way;⁸⁰ long gone were the days when an English consul at Aleppo could after only two years of holding that post be received as ambassador at Constantinople, as was Paul Pindar in 1611.⁸¹

Anger at the obstacles to diplomatic status was especially strong among the English dragomans, who were convinced that they were more valuable to the ambassador than the secretaries on the diplomatic staff, and infinitely more so than the ‘gilded youths’ who composed the honorary attachés. This was sometimes privately admitted by senior diplomats.⁸² It is true that the diplomats were now given a financial inducement to acquire conversational Turkish but the test, which was administered perforce deferentially by the dragomans themselves, was regarded as a farce and roundly condemned by all those who gave evidence on it to the Reay Committee in 1908.⁸³ Not surprisingly, the English dragomans now took up the complaint voiced by the Levantines in 1880 that their colleagues in other embassies, even the Levantines among them, were treated altogether better, which, by and large, was true.⁸⁴ The distribution of a few honours among them was not enough, as was soon apparent.

Barely had Sir Nicholas O’Conor settled in as ambassador in 1898 before his chief dragoman, Adam Block, who had been right-hand man to ambassadors going back to Sir William White, was agitating for an improvement both in status and in salary. Obtaining insufficient

⁸⁰ Berridge, ‘Nation, class, and diplomacy’, pp. 422–3.

⁸¹ Ashton, ‘Pindar’.

⁸² CAC Cam., O’Conor to Villiers, 17 Jan. 1900, OCON 4/1/18.

⁸³ HCPP (Cd. 4561), 1909: Mins. of Ev., notably Valentine Chirol, paras. 1418, 1420; Sir Charles Eliot, paras. 2764, 2765; and Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who said ‘I have never known a diplomatist speak Turkish well’, para. 5453.

⁸⁴ Berridge, ‘Nation, class and diplomacy’, p. 424.

satisfaction, in 1899 he applied unsuccessfully for the post of British representative on the Ottoman Debt. He applied with similar result in 1901. By the end of 1902 he was boiling with resentment, for although O'Connor had given him limited support, the most that he had obtained was the "fictitious" promotion to the local rank (without royal commission) of secretary of legation. In 1903 he applied again to the Debt and this time was successful, almost tripling his salary and greatly enhancing his status in the British community by his departure from the dragomanate.⁸⁵ O'Connor also failed to convince the dragoman-archivist, Edward Blech, that the dragomanate was a career in itself,⁸⁶ and in 1906 he escaped to a provincial consulate.

O'Connor's most serious failing in regard to the embassy dragomanate was probably his treatment of the third dragoman. This was the clever, linguistically gifted, charismatic, and hard-working middle class Irish Catholic, Gerald Fitzmaurice, who had initially seemed set on a different course, having been trained for the priesthood by the Holy Ghost Fathers at Blackrock College near Dublin.⁸⁷ Marked out by the embassy as early as 1890 as an exception among the nervous weaklings who made up the bulk of the student interpreters, he had been told that he would become chief dragoman on Block's departure. However, at the end of 1902 O'Connor had sent him as his personal trouble-shooter to bring the Aden Boundary Commission's work to a rapid conclusion, which was a matter of great importance to the ambassador. When Block's resignation appeared inevitable, in September 1903, he manoeuvred Fitzmaurice into agreeing that his continued presence on the fever-ridden Yemen frontier was indispensable. He then passed him over in favour of Harry Lamb, an able enough Levant consul but one who had never worked in the dragomanate at all and whose choice the ambassador soon came to regret.

This action alienated Fitzmaurice, who later complained to O'Connor that he had only spent years of drudgery in the dragomanate on the understanding that it had been made a distinct service by Currie and that outsiders like Lamb would not be brought in. To make matters worse, O'Connor kept him under canvass on the frontier without break

⁸⁵ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, pp. 36–7, 59–60.

⁸⁶ CAC Cam., Blech to O'Connor, 11 Aug. 1904, OCON 6/2/29.

⁸⁷ The subsequent paragraphs are based largely on my biography, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*.

until April 1905, during which time his health suffered significant damage. He was then given a CB by the Foreign Office in July, although he had hoped for a knighthood, while his colleague on the Boundary Commission, Colonel Wahab, who was regarded by Fitzmaurice as an amiable layabout, was mistakenly given two honours. In the following month he accepted in silence a commission as consul at Constantinople, which merely ratified the overthrow of Currie's separate career for the dragomans.⁸⁸ Logically enough, Fitzmaurice then begged O'Connor to reward him with a consular post, and not require his return to the dragomanate, the prospect of which he found "repugnant" but his request was denied. To add insult to injury, everyone (even O'Connor) had for years referred to him as 'second dragoman' since in practice he had been number two to Block, although formally he remained third dragoman and was paid accordingly.

Following a long leave in England, at the beginning of 1906 Fitzmaurice returned to the "Byzantine dungheap", as he now called it, a bitter and disillusioned man. It was not until July, following the retirement of Marinitch, that formally he became second dragoman, and finally chief dragoman in October 1907. In the intervening period, however, no suitable appointments could be made to the positions recently vacated in the dragomanate, and Fitzmaurice and Onik Efendi found themselves stretched almost to breaking point. Then in May 1907 Onik Efendi died, an event attributed by Fitzmaurice (albeit somewhat implausibly) to O'Connor's contemptuous rejection of his desire simply to be given the title of 'Assistant Dragoman'.

Although Fitzmaurice's status and salary were both much increased after his appointment as chief dragoman in October 1907, his position remained little higher in the embassy order of precedence (fifth, after the judge) than that in which Block had earlier fumed with such injured pride. As for admission to the diplomatic service, the nearest that he came to this was being given the local rank of first secretary in May 1908.⁸⁹ Since Fitzmaurice was widely understood thereafter to be the dynamo of the embassy, as well as to occupy the most important position in the whole Levant Service, it is hardly surprising that it was

⁸⁸ Blech had also been given a consular commission.

⁸⁹ Local rank was just a device to flatter the recipient and impress the natives; it did not signify that Fitzmaurice had been admitted to the 'Diplomatic Service'.

only a few years before he was once more complaining of his treatment, and that he was strongly suspected of hating every chief under whom he had served.

The dragomanate over which Fitzmaurice presided until shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, in its consular as well as embassy divisions, was—at any rate nominally—completely stripped of Levantines and staffed now wholly by British members of the Levant Consular Service. Although some stability and able leg-work was provided by Telford Waugh and Andrew Ryan, also an Irish Catholic, none of these, apart from Fitzmaurice himself, was especially talented. Moreover, until he stepped into Fitzmaurice's shoes as second dragoman in October 1907, Ryan's experience had been wholly in the consular section of the embassy. Reader Bullard, the son of a London dockworker, was appointed third dragoman in 1909 and was subsequently to make quite a mark after his transfer to the diplomatic service in 1936, but he was still only in his twenties while serving in the dragomanate.

The pool of student interpreters on which the dragomanate could draw for fresh blood was also not as well trained as in the past. The school at Ortakeui had been closed for economy reasons in 1890 and when recruitment had been resumed in 1894 the first two years of training were held at Oxford or Cambridge, eventually just Cambridge. Much of the teaching was of no relevance to their future tasks, which had added to Block's exasperation.⁹⁰ The dragomanate as a whole was also generally smaller than the norm of six (including assistants) established by Currie in the 1890s, although its workload does not appear greatly to have diminished. For long periods there was no archivist, and in two years there were only four on the strength altogether. Only in 1914 was the norm of six formally achieved. However, since Bullard had been permitted to leave for the provinces at the end of 1913 and Fitzmaurice himself went home on sick leave in late February, in practice this meant little, for neither ever returned.

The cause of Fitzmaurice's departure from Constantinople in early 1914 was described in the notes of his London doctor as "severe nervous breakdown" brought on by overwork and the unhealed damage to his constitution suffered on the Yemen frontier. He had also been

⁹⁰ Morray, "The selection, instruction and examination of the student interpreters of the Levant Consular Service, 1877–1916", pp. 145–55; Bullard, *The Camels Must Go*, pp. 45–52; TNA, Waugh to Lamb, 12 Mar. 1906, FO195/2221.

under great pressure after being blamed for intervening in support of the wrong side during the counter-revolution against the Young Turks in April 1909, and in 1911 was again publicly attacked in Turkey for seeking to influence local politics. It is probable nevertheless that he would have returned to Turkey before the outbreak of war had this course not been discouraged by the new ambassador, Sir Louis Mallet, who regarded him as too hostile to the Young Turk government.

There was, finally, another factor that had contributed to the demoralization not just of Fitzmaurice but also, in some degree, the dragomanate as whole. This was the question mark that, following the Young Turks' revolution, had begun to hover over its very *raison d'être*. For the fact of the matter was that the Young Turks believed themselves to be on the same wavelength as Europeans and so to be quite capable of speaking in French to their diplomats without the need for intermediaries. As the dragoman system was one of the most obvious emblems of the insulting regime of the capitulations, they were resolved to get rid of it. It is true that in 1909, faced with the united hostility of the European embassies, they were quickly forced to revoke an announcement that they would have nothing to do with the dragomans but the writing was on the wall. The senior and influential Foreign Office official, Sir Eyre Crowe, thought so, telling the MacDonald Commission on the eve of the First World War that it was "extremely likely" that the whole dragoman service would "gradually be transformed to the point of dying out".⁹¹

The dragomanate of the British embassy in Constantinople changed in three significant respects between 1810 and 1914, all for the worse. First, it gradually lost most of its local expertise. This was largely a result of the nationalist temper of the nineteenth century and its distrust, not to say contempt, for persons of cosmopolitan character. Secondly, it shrank in size. This was due chiefly to the difficulty in obtaining suitable 'natural-born Englishmen' to replace the Levantines and a misplaced belief in the ability of the embassy to cope without them. Thirdly, it became a dispirited establishment. This was a consequence not only of the question mark over the rationale of the dragomanate that appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century but also of over-work, the failure to preserve the Currie reforms designed to make it an attractive career, and the class prejudice which still prevented consular officials

⁹¹ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., para. 43,460.

(among whom the dragomans were numbered) from becoming diplomats; for most of its members, it was a trap. In short, between 1810 and 1914 the dragomanate of the British Embassy in Constantinople was diminished in quality, size, and spirit. This did not help British diplomacy in Turkey in the decade before the First World War when the struggle for influence with the German Embassy became so intense.⁹²

⁹² Berridge, 'Nation, class and diplomacy', pp. 430–1.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSULS

The English consuls in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, which to begin with were established chiefly in the major ports of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean seas, had unusually important responsibilities. Not only were they the representatives to the local authorities of the English factors settled at these ports, especially on questions concerning their capitulatory rights, but also magistrates and mediators in their communities.¹ It is for these reasons that, as the sultan held the ambassador hostage for the good behaviour of his nation in Constantinople, so Ottoman governors held the consuls responsible for the good behaviour of the English factories in their provinces. They also expected the consuls to set a good example. In the late seventeenth century the pasha of Tripoli in Barbary, who had graciously permitted the English consul to return home to settle his affairs, was so offended by his failure to resume his post that he declared war to avenge the slight.² How were the consuls appointed and where precisely were the first ones to be found?

Creation of the Network

Under the arrangements established by the Levant Company in the Elizabethan era the ambassador himself had the power to decide where consulates should be opened in the Levant and select the individuals he wanted to run them. These matters were a priority for William Harborne, who appears to have appointed a consul at Aleppo as early as 1580, the year in which he negotiated the English capitulations and well before he was formally established as English Ambassador at Constantinople.³ Having properly established himself at the sultan's

¹ On the roles of the early consuls, see Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 217–20; Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, ch. 1; Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–60*, *passim*.

² Barbour, 'Consular service in the reign of Charles II', p. 571.

³ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, Appendix II.

seat in the spring of 1583 (where he was consul as well as ambassador), in April he appointed consuls at Alexandria and Cairo, and in June another on the Syrian coast at Tripoli. In March 1585 he appointed a man on the Barbary coast to cover Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, and it is possible that he also established consulates on Chios and at Patras in the Morea.⁴

In 1605 the ambassador's formal right to appoint consuls was removed. Under the new charter negotiated by the Levant Company with James I in this year, which with only slight modifications made after the Restoration in 1660 and again in 1753 governed its procedures until its demise in 1825, this right was instead vested in the company's general court. This applied also to the appointment of the consul-general at Constantinople, whose post was newly created in 1804 in order to relieve the ambassador of the burden of commercial work (see p. 32 above). However, in practice the ambassador sometimes continued to have great influence over even the most important appointments, while the business of filling the inferior positions (vice-consuls and consular agents) which subsequently emerged was usually left entirely to his discretion, or to that of the consul in whose district they were located.⁵

The appointment of the consuls in the Levant by a trading company made them something of an exceptional breed, especially after the middle of the seventeenth century, when the civil war in England led governments to take a great interest in the right to appoint consuls elsewhere.⁶ But when the government had a particularly strong political motive for interference in the appointment of a Levant consul, it did not hesitate to do so; and it took the task upon itself along the Barbary coast in the seventeenth century because by this time the Levant Company had abandoned it as too dangerous.⁷

The consuls were generally merchants themselves, although as compensation for the time and energy devoted to their consular duties they were permitted to supplement their incomes by charging 'consulage',

⁴ Woodhead, 'Harborne'. Perhaps 'revived' would be a better word than 'established' in connection with Chios since a consul had been established there by Henry VIII as early as 1513, Dyer, *The History of Modern Europe* vol. I, book III, p. 26.

⁵ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, pp. 41, 217; TNA, C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, FO78/135. This report also suggested that at some unspecified date the company had formally delegated to the ambassador the authority to appoint consuls as well, folio 40.

⁶ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 6–9.

⁷ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 173; see also pp. 59–64, 173, 184–5.

a small duty on the goods moving through their factories. Eventually, consulage was abolished and consuls at the larger posts began receiving small salaries from the Levant Company, while all of them were generally permitted to charge fees for various services.⁸

As with the dragomans, Levantines of many descriptions loomed large among the English consuls, although Anglo-Levantines were a much larger proportion of them. Indeed, English merchant families such as the Werrys, Boddingtons, Calverts and Cumberbatches came to play a very significant part in staffing the consular posts in the Levant, the prize among which soon came to be the rich port of Smyrna (modern Izmir). William Prideaux, previously an ambassador sent to Moscow and subsequently chosen by the East India Company to go as ambassador to China, was pleased to capture this position in 1659;⁹ as was Paul Rycout in 1667, a man who had already proved himself not only an outstanding diplomat in Winchilsea's embassy at Constantinople but also an eminent scholar of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰

With the appointment of a consul at Smyrna in 1611, posts had been established at all three of the English factories in the Levant which by the 1620s were the focal points of English trade in the region, the others being Constantinople and Aleppo.¹¹ Despite this concentration on a small number of centres, which was fostered by the Levant Company because of its economic and regulatory advantages, a fluctuating but expanding number of smaller posts also came to be scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire. When the Levant Company was disbanded in 1825 and responsibility for its consular establishment was transferred to the civil list as part of George Canning's reform of the consular service as a whole,¹² 13 consular officers at 11 separate posts were found on its books. There were 11 additional posts to which appointments were made by the ambassador and a further 11 to which appointments were made by his consuls, making 33 in all. The consul-general, John Cartwright, who compiled the report containing this evidence, also remarked that there were probably "various Agents and Sub-Agents"

⁸ TNA, C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, FO78/135.

⁹ Venning, 'Prideaux'.

¹⁰ Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*.

¹¹ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, Appendix II; Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-60*, p. 29.

¹² Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 125-6.

who had not been recorded with him.¹³ Among the Levant consular posts the one at Smyrna was much the largest, although at the time it was still not headed by a consul-general.¹⁴

Trading Consuls, and Levantines

No sooner had the Levant consuls been taken over by the state than the number of their posts and the size of their staffs began to expand even further. Apart from political reasons, which, as we shall see, became increasingly important, one explanation for this was the great increase in the nineteenth century in the number of British subjects residing in or visiting the Ottoman Empire, where consular protection was believed to be of unusual importance because of its uncivilized ways. This view fell from the lips of almost every witness who gave evidence before the various select committees of parliament which investigated the diplomatic and consular services in the course of the century.¹⁵ Another reason for the expansion was that governments began to see the opening of new consulates as a means of encouraging British trade; with other powers doing the same thing, their growth was fostered by competition. In the Levant, the posts at Trebizond, Erzeroum, and Diarbekir were frequently cited as successful examples of new consulates promoting a spurt in British trade.¹⁶

Altogether, then, it is not surprising that by 1852 the number of consular posts in the Levant had increased to 49 (see Appendix 4). When unpaid vice-consuls, usually about 20, were added to the list, it is evident that the Ottoman Empire was crawling with British consular posts. This

¹³ TNA, C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, FO78/135; compare Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, p. 127. Platt overlooks the men appointed by the ambassador and his consuls and so radically underestimates the size of what he calls "the Levant establishment" at this time.

¹⁴ In addition to a consul, this post had a vice-consul, cancellier, chaplain, surgeon, three dragomans, two *giovanni di lingua*, and a treasurer, as well as the usual janissary guards, TNA, George Liddell (secretary, Levant Co.), List of Officers and Consuls of the Levant Company, 26 Mar. 1825, FO78/137; but *four* dragomans and *three* *giovanni*, according to C-G Cartwright, Report on Consular Establishment in the Levant, Constantinople, 10 Oct. 1825, FO78/135.

¹⁵ See also Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 126–9.

¹⁶ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 203, 220–8. On the history of the Trebizond post, see Wright, 'Trabzon and the British connection'.

was no bad thing, thought Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.¹⁷ Governments in London, however, shook their heads over the expense.

The expansion had come at a price in principles as well as in public expenditure. To keep the cost down, an earlier decision to pay salaries to all consuls in order make it unnecessary for them to trade on their own account was abandoned. Trading consuls, as they were known, were as a rule disliked not only by their non-trading colleagues but also by the Foreign Office and the embassy in Constantinople, where Stratford was their weighty opponent. It was feared that they spent more time on private than public affairs, and degraded their office in the eyes of the local Ottoman authorities, who associated commerce with the 'subject races', chiefly Armenians and Greeks. It was also feared that they were bound to experience conflicts of interest (especially when serving as judges) and that their statistical reporting was likely to be vitiated by the reluctance of fellow merchants to divulge accurate intelligence to a commercial rival.¹⁸ They were, however, cheap. The result was that while the more important posts had been restricted to full-time consuls, the trading consul was still very prominent in the Levant in the 1850s (see Appendix 4).¹⁹ This position was accepted by the 1858 Select Committee on Consular Service and Appointments, which had been established in response to the long-building disquiet with the consular service and received strong bipartisan support.²⁰ It recommended that only consuls and vice-consuls holding "any large independent jurisdiction" should be prohibited from engaging in trade.²¹

Despite the age of nationalism born in the French Revolution, many of the Levant consular officers also remained Anglo-Levantines or, in lesser degree, 'foreigners' and Ionians (see Appendix 4), whose local connections were believed to make it impossible for them to discharge their official functions impartially even if they did not trade.²² Just about everybody who gave evidence to the 1858 Select Committee lamented

¹⁷ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Stratford to Palmerston, 10 Mar. 1848, esp. p. 729, and Stratford to Clarendon, 30 Jan. 1857, esp. p. 726.

¹⁸ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 197–214, 230–32; and, for example, Stratford to Clarendon, 30 Jan. 1857, Appendix, page 724.

¹⁹ It should be borne in mind that consuls authorised to trade did not always avail themselves of the right.

²⁰ *The Times*, 22 Mar. 1858.

²¹ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Report, p. v.

²² As late as 1872 only four of the nine vice-consuls in the Constantinople consulate-general's own district were English natives, TNA, Francis to Granville, 2 Jan. 1872, FO78/2245.

this situation; they would much prefer, they claimed, to see natural-born Englishmen predominate among the Levant consuls.

The fact that there were still too many trading consuls and too few Englishmen staffing the consular posts in the Levant was widely felt to be the more serious because of the low pay and poor promotion prospects in the service. This obviously made the temptation to apathy or corruption—or both—difficult to resist. In addition to this the Foreign Office had no means of its own of checking up on the consulates and had to rely on supervision by the embassy in Constantinople, which—like British embassies elsewhere relative to their own outlying posts—was supposed to have “full authority and control” over all the consulates in the Ottoman Empire.²³ In practice, however, its control was weak: “we are irregulars, without system, and without discipline”, the acting-consul general in Alexandria, John Green, told the Foreign Secretary in 1857.²⁴ Two particular issues in this connection were the rights of the consulates to have direct correspondence with the Foreign Office and to make subordinate appointments without reference to Constantinople.

Before the Crimean War it was the rule that consulates should only communicate to the Foreign Office via the embassy. However, because of the importance of speed of communications in this emergency and the new opportunities provided by the electric telegraph (see Chapter 5), this appears to have broken down on the Foreign Office’s own initiative. At least by the 1850s, therefore, consuls were able to communicate directly with London provided they sent a copy of their despatches to the embassy.²⁵ This strengthened their sense of independence from Constantinople, which is presumably one reason why Stratford advised the foreign secretary that this right should be restricted to “the principal consuls or those who, from local position, may correspond more rapidly with the Foreign Office than with the embassy”.²⁶

More serious still, at least in the view of Stratford, was the completely free hand enjoyed by the consuls in the appointment of their subordinate staff, which meant that weak or badly informed consuls

²³ HCPP (380), 24 July 1871: Appendix, p. 78, paragraph 12 of received General Instructions, dated 14 May 1868, Public and Private Correspondence.

²⁴ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Green to Clarendon, 3 Dec. 1857, pp. 684, 686; see also Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 163–4; but compare Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1816–1914*, p. 87.

²⁵ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2551–65, 2874–8, 2899–903.

²⁶ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Stratford to Clarendon, 30 Jan. 1857.

could find themselves in the hands of complete rogues. Stratford had been sounding the alarm on this point for some years, and thought not only that embassy sanction for these appointments should be required but also that cavasses (constables, guards and messengers) should be sent out from Constantinople.²⁷

To strengthen the general supervision of the consulates, Green urged the introduction of inspectors,²⁸ although a more popular idea before the 1858 Select Committee was to give consuls-general—whose own number might be increased—more authority over the consular posts in their large districts. This would roughly parallel the Ottoman hierarchy of authority as it extended from the centre into the provinces.²⁹

By the time that the Select Committee convened in 1858, therefore, plenty of suggestions for reform of the rapidly growing consular network in the Levant had already been elicited. Some of these saw a good part of the answer in strengthening the influence over it of the embassy in Constantinople. But in one important area, reform of precisely this nature had just been achieved. This was judicial reform, and it showed every prospect of success.

Hornby's Supreme Consular Court

The role of the Levant consuls as magistrates and judges over all British subjects in the Ottoman Empire had been regularized in the 1840s. However, they had no legal training, their private interests tended to come into conflict with their legal duties, and they had few if any resources to support their administration of justice. To make matters worse, in the first half of the nineteenth century their judicial workload had shot up along with the great increase in the total number of British passport holders in the Ottoman Empire, which by mid-century was "little short of a million".³⁰ (This happened chiefly because the Maltese and Ionians living in the Ottoman Empire became 'British subjects')

²⁷ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Stratford to Clarendon, 30 Jan. 1857, and Stratford to Palmerston, 10 Mar. 1848.

²⁸ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Green to Clarendon, 3 Dec. 1857. He restated this opinion in 1871, and was supported by the consul in Janina, Major Robert Stuart, HCPP (C. 530), 1872, pp. 15, 102.

²⁹ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2956, 3074–7; Appendix, Memorandum by Brant, 3 Dec. 1857.

³⁰ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, p. 93; see also HCPP (C. 530), 1872, p. 33.

following the acquisition of their home islands by Britain during the Napoleonic Wars, and in lesser degree because the increase in trade had multiplied the number of British seamen in the ports.) In Constantinople alone there were “upwards of 1,000 law-suits and civil actions at law in a year” by the 1850s.³¹ The position was particularly difficult here because the Crimean War had greatly increased the general burden of the consulate-general, which had neither adequate buildings nor staff to cope with it.³² The result was that “scandalous confusion reigned supreme”, according to the worldly and outspoken British barrister, Edmund Hornby, who in 1855 had gone out to Constantinople on other business but had been persuaded by Stratford to advise on reform of the whole system of consular courts in the Levant.³³

On Hornby’s advice, the over-burdened consul-general in Constantinople was allowed to hand over his legal responsibilities to a legal officer, thereby enabling him to concentrate on his commercial work. The new officer was styled the ‘Judge of the Supreme Consular Court at Constantinople’,³⁴ and to assist him he was allowed a legal vice-consul and a law secretary, both barristers. The judge’s task was fourfold: to preside over a criminal and civil court of first instance in his own district; to lay down rules for and oversee the administration of justice by the provincial consuls; to visit them at periodic intervals in order to take the more important cases out of their amateurish hands; and to sit on appeals from them in his court in Constantinople. In assuming the last of these tasks the judge gave relief to the ambassador as well as to the consul-general, for prior to this the ambassador had been the appellate judge.³⁵ Subsequently, legally trained officers with the rank of vice-consul were also sent to Smyrna and Egypt.³⁶

The first judge of Britain’s Supreme Consular Court at Constantinople was Edmund Hornby, and so he proceeded to act out with impartial

³¹ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., para. 2833.

³² HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Appendix, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Memorandum on Reforms in Consular Legal Jurisdiction in the Levant, ca. 1854, p. 721; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, p. 148.

³³ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, p. 94; see also p. 79.

³⁴ He was also given consular rank in order to keep within the capitulations, HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., para. 2241.

³⁵ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 146–9; Hornby, *An Autobiography*, pp. 97, 101; HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2213, 2232–9, 2269–72. Under the new regime, any appeal from the judge of the Supreme Court in Constantinople had to go to the Privy Council in London.

³⁶ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, p. 121.

vigour the script that he had written. Hornby spared not even Protestant missionaries, whom he believed to be, “next to habitual criminals, the most troublesome people to deal with in the world.” Two of these he briefly gaoled for pasting on the walls of St. Sophia a poster announcing the date on which, from the steps of the mosque itself, they proposed to denounce Mahomet as an impostor. He was particularly severe with those who broke out of his prison. Commenting on the occasion when one group who had spurned his hospitality thought better of it and returned of their own accord, he said: “I gave the leader, a Maltese gaol-bird, three dozen lashes and never had any further trouble”.³⁷ He could imprison for up to 20 years and transport for life but could not order an execution, although the Law Officers—who appear not to have been impressed by Vattel on this point—had favoured this ultimate punishment.³⁸

Another aspect of what Hammond called the effort to “re-cast” completely the consulate-general at Constantinople was financial. All fees coming into it would henceforward go to the public account, while the Foreign Office would cover all of its expenses.³⁹ A further possibility now being canvassed was less welcome. This was that, in view of the reduced responsibilities of the consul-general, money should be saved by reducing his rank to that of consul.⁴⁰ This proposal was not acted on at the time but when the judge’s own workload was considerably reduced by the transfer of the Levant Ionians from British to Greek protection in 1864, the same object was achieved—to the dismay of the constitutionalist Hornby—by merging the functions of judge and consul-general in the same person.⁴¹ This was made easier by the fact that the then consul-general, Carlton Cumberbatch, was of an age to be retired with a compensation allowance;⁴² and that Hornby, who made no secret of his contempt for Stratford’s replacement, Sir Henry Bulwer,⁴³ and felt his constructive work in Turkey was done, was content to accept Hammond’s offer of a new field for his reforming zeal

³⁷ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, pp. 104, 124–6.

³⁸ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., para. 2230.

³⁹ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., para. 456.

⁴⁰ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Mins. of Ev., para. 4444.

⁴¹ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, pp. 123, 144, 191. The posts of legal vice-consul and law secretary were also combined, HCPP (380), 24 July 1871: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1700–5; and HCPP (C. 530), 1872, p. 44.

⁴² *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1864; *FO List January 1874*.

⁴³ Hornby, *An Autobiography*, pp. 114–21, 144, 191.

in China and Japan. It was not until the appointment of Sir Edward O'Malley as judge at the end of 1897 that the two functions were once more separated.

The Founding of the Levant Service

The harmful potential of the exceptional powers of the Levant consuls had led the 1858 Select Committee to give them particular attention, although it thought that little more judicial reform in Constantinople was required. It was also silent on the question of any increase in Foreign Office or embassy authority over the consular network, although the concern expressed about this by various witnesses no doubt served to put the ambassadors on their mettle.⁴⁴ As we have already seen, it also accepted the need to retain trading consuls. It was on the presence among the consuls of foreigners and Levantines that it was more radical.

The Select Committee announced its firm belief that consular posts in the Levant should be restricted "as far as possible to British subjects". Impressed by Hammond's evidence that Palmerston's experiment with oriental attachés (see Chapter 3) had not been given a fair chance and that a similar arrangement was already working in Persia, it recommended that the experiment should be extended to the consular department. However, since the task of recruiting the large numbers of competent Englishmen needed for this was infinitely more daunting than getting hold of the small number required by the embassy, it urged that:

no time should be lost in sending out a limited body of young men, whose general sound education, and aptitude for the acquisition of languages, has been tested by previous examination, and who, after some probationary experience and instruction at Constantinople, might be transferred to the chief consulates to act as clerks, until they were capable of performing the duty of interpreters.

⁴⁴ For example, Sir Henry Bulwer, who started his own embassy in the year that the Select Committee met, later claimed that he gave "general instructions every month to our consuls as to the course they should pursue. Those instructions I wrote myself, and then", he added, "I read their correspondence", HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 5228.

The committee also recommended the payment of decent salaries and a system of promotion on merit, so that able and hard-working native-born Englishmen might progress from being clerks and dragomans to the highest positions in the Levant service.⁴⁵

The Foreign Office saw many objections to extending the Palmerston experiment, and the seed for a general training scheme planted by the 1858 Select Committee did not sprout at once. It would be too expensive, it was claimed, and independent-minded ambassadors like Stratford would come along and wreck it by appointing outsiders to whom they took a fancy. More seriously, within such a specialized consular service there would be insufficient opportunities for advancement to provide incentives to able applicants.⁴⁶ As a result, Charles Kennedy's revival in 1872 of the idea of training young Englishmen as consular dragomans,⁴⁷ and the retirement of Edmund Hammond in 1873, were both needed before the Foreign Office was finally brought to act on the recommendations of the 1858 Select Committee.

The final push came from Lord Salisbury, who believed the embassy to be excessively Turcophile.⁴⁸ Philip Currie, head of the Eastern Department at the Foreign Office, introduced the new scheme. In 1877 the specialised Levant Consular Service was born. It was to be based on natural-born British citizens recruited by written examination in open competition, the chief purpose of which was to identify an aptitude for and existing skill in foreign languages. Successful candidates, who at the time of their entrance to the service were to be aged between 18 and 24 and unmarried, were then to be publicly funded for two years of training in oriental languages and other subjects at a small school in Ortakeui, a village on the European side of the Bosphorus about three miles from the embassy. A second secretary would keep an eye on the progress of the 'student interpreters', who would be promoted to the new rank of 'assistant consul' immediately upon passing their exams. Thereafter the consular promotion ladder would be freely available to them in so far as vacancies became available at the British posts in

⁴⁵ HCPP (482), 27 July 1858: Report, pp. v–vii.

⁴⁶ See for example TNA, Hammond to Elliot, 21 Sept. 1868, FO391/21.

⁴⁷ Head of the FO's Commercial Department, Kennedy had been sent to investigate consular arrangements in the Levant in 1870, HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Report, para. 26. See also Mins. of Ev., para. 407 (Kennedy); and Appendix 6, Kennedy (Cairo) to Granville, 30 Jan. and 10 Feb. 1871.

⁴⁸ Roberts, *Salisbury*, ch. 10; compare Elliot, *Diplomatic Recollections*, p. 381ff.

Persia, Morocco and Greece, as well as in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ In regard to the last, the British Ambassador at Constantinople would have a large say in the postings of the new English Levant consuls, his authority having been already stamped on them by their first two years directly under his eye in the capital.

The first entrance examinations for student interpreters under the new scheme were held in August and September 1877 and the six successful candidates arrived at Ortakeui in November. In 1890 the Ridley Commission reported that, although “costly”, the scheme had “already produced good results” and was now full.⁵⁰ For reasons of economy and because of strong lobbying against it from rival educators in England—but to the great regret of the secretary of embassy, Edmund Fane—the school was then closed.⁵¹ When recruitment resumed in 1894 the student interpreters were required to spend their first two years of language instruction at university in England; limited competition was also re-introduced in 1909 in an attempt to prevent the admission of any more of the physically frail and socially maladroit men who were believed to have crept in under open competition.⁵² By 1916, when the modified training regime itself came to an end, the Levant Service had recruited a total of 88 consular officers.⁵³

Political Consuls

Most of the entrants into the Levant Service were able and well suited to the work, and some became highly successful. The first cohort had included Harry Eyres (see p. 93 below) and Adam Block, who was destined to be chief dragoman at the Constantinople embassy and subsequently a major figure in the British colony in the capital.⁵⁴ Among notable later entrants were Harry Boyle, who became Lord Cromer’s right-hand man at the Cairo agency, and Gerald Fitzmaurice, who

⁴⁹ Morray, ‘The selection, instruction and examination of the student interpreters of the Levant Consular Service, 1877–1916’; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 166–8; Roberts, *Salisbury*, pp. 160, 163, 166; Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*, pp. 22–3.

⁵⁰ HCPP (C. 6172), 1890: Report, para. 48; see also HCPP (C. 6172–1), 1890: Appendix, p. 177.

⁵¹ HCPP (C. 6172–1), 1890: Mins. of Ev., paras. 27968–75, 29568–75.

⁵² Berridge, ‘Nation, class, and diplomacy’.

⁵³ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 166–8; Morray, ‘The selection, instruction and examination of the student interpreters of the Levant Consular Service, 1877–1916’.

⁵⁴ Hulme-Beaman, *Twenty Years in the Near East*, pp. 1–3.

became the embassy's controversial chief dragoman in the years prior to the First World War. Of these three only Fitzmaurice had been a 'political consul' earlier in his career and such consuls pre-dated the formation of the Levant Service. Nevertheless, it was the political importance of its work which, added to the difficulties of its entrance exams and the exceptional responsibilities of its officers, had led the Levant Service to replace the China Service as the most prestigious branch of the whole British consular service by the outbreak of war. Competition for entry was consequently strong⁵⁵—although all was not well in the service, as we shall see.

Political considerations had been one of the main reasons for the expansion in the number of consular posts in the Levant in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Some were believed to be needed for political reasons where there was no other justification for them at all, while such reasons were thought to tip the balance in favour of others where commercial and judicial reasons alone would have been insufficient. Moved by morality and religion, as well as by its political interest in a stable Ottoman Empire, the Foreign Office maintained political consuls, as they were officially known, chiefly in the Balkans and Asiatic Turkey. They had three main tasks: to encourage reform of Ottoman provincial administration, prevent violence against Christians, and provide early warning of events in the provinces that could have wide implications.⁵⁶ Upon being pressed by the 1871 Select Committee, William Wyld, head of the Foreign Office's Commercial and Consular Department, listed Beyrout, Erzeroum, Monastir, Janina, Trebizond, Damascus, and Bosna-Serai as the most important political consulates at the time.⁵⁷ From 1873 until 1885 the one at Trebizond was run by the Italo-Levantine, Alfred Biliotti, which illustrated the continuing dependence of the Foreign Office on the talent and energy of those who were not natural-born Englishmen, although Biliotti had taken the precaution of becoming a naturalized British subject in 1871.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 168–9.

⁵⁶ HCPP (380), 24 July 1871: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1762–4, 2098–2182, 2295–8; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 130–5.

⁵⁷ HCPP (380), 24 July 1871: Mins. of Ev., paras. 2522–6. See also HCPP (314), 16 July 1972: Mins. of Ev., paras. 154–5.

⁵⁸ Biliotti was born into an Italian family in Rhodes, English was his fourth language, and his wife was French. His highly successful career, crowned with a knighthood and a consul-generalship, subsequently took him to Crete and Salonica, Barchard, 'The fearless and self-reliant servant'.

Political consulates were durable because they were difficult for cost-conscious parliamentarians to call into question. A political consulate that seemed to be doing nothing, judged say by the number of despatches it generated (which was the kind of crude index typically clutched at by parliament), could be easily defended: either it was located at a spot which was currently quiet but might explode at any moment,⁵⁹ or it was inactive precisely because of its success in behind-the-scenes conflict prevention.⁶⁰ As for the protest that one travelling political consul based at a regional centre might replace the holders of three or four minor posts located in relatively close proximity, this was also easily countered. Remote and mountainous areas, as in the Balkans, were difficult of access and often lacking telegraphic connections; and a consul forced to travel to a trouble spot would not only have imperfect knowledge of local conditions but also probably arrive too late. The idea of the travelling political consul could come only from persons who had not the faintest idea of the country, observed William Holmes, consul in Bosnia, in 1872.⁶¹

Had the Select Committee on Diplomatic and Consular Services of the House of Commons which gathered again in the first half of 1872 met as little as three years later, it may well have taken a more sympathetic attitude than it did to the need for political consuls in the Levant.⁶² For in 1875 fresh uprisings against Turkish rule in the Balkans began which had particularly savage sequels first in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, then in Bulgaria, and eventually in Macedonia. In the 1890s violence also began to erupt in the Armenian-populated districts of Turkey's Asiatic provinces. In all these localities the embassy's consular outposts were the only means that it had for attempting, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances, to cool tempers and chivvy the provincial governors into keeping the sultan's promises of better treatment for Christians. They were also the only real means it had to obtain relatively objective reports on the legion of murderous 'outrages' which occurred in these years, reports which were vital correctives to

⁵⁹ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1342–5; HCPP (380), 24 July 1871: Mins. of Ev., para. 2523.

⁶⁰ HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Mins. of Ev., para. 489.

⁶¹ HCPP (C. 530), 1872: Supplementary Report by Consul Holmes, p. 232.

⁶² HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Report, para. 27.

the highly coloured ones produced by the warring bands, including their respective supporters in Britain.⁶³

Such was the indispensability of the consular network to the leading role taken by Britain in pursuing Ottoman reform that in Anatolia 'military consuls' were added to political ones after 1878 in order to beef it up, although spying on Russian moves on the frontier was probably the more important of their tasks.⁶⁴ However, the Foreign Office was at best lukewarm to them; they were expensive; and importing such outsiders did nothing for promotion prospects in the newly created Levant Service. At least one important member in their ranks, Colonel Charles Wilson, who was military consul-general for Anatolia with his base in Sivas from 1879 until 1882, was frustrated by his lack of executive authority, depressed by the failure of the humanitarian aspect of his work, and uncomfortable with the false expectations raised among the Armenians by appointments such as his own.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, although a decision was taken in 1882 to end the experiment, the issue of whether or not new military consuls should be appointed, especially at posts of strategic significance such as Erzeroum and Bitlis, for long remained a live one,⁶⁶ and they did not disappear overnight. Indeed, the most celebrated of them all, Captain Charles Doughty-Wylie, was not appointed until 1906, when he became vice-consul at Konya and remained there until 1909.⁶⁷

The consuls were sometimes sent alone on special missions or as members of commissions of investigation to inquire into political violence in remote parts of the Balkans and the Asiatic provinces, and their reports were packed, suitably doctored by the Foreign Office, into numerous and voluminous Blue Books. In 1877 there were 28 of these on Turkey alone,⁶⁸ and they were regularly quoted in parliament and the press, sometimes amid great controversy. At the beginning of that year Consul Holmes, who retired in September after 17 years as political consul in Bosnia, found himself at the centre of a minor

⁶³ Elliot, *Diplomatic Recollections*, p. 353ff; Barchard, 'The fearless and self-reliant servant', p. 17.

⁶⁴ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 132–3.

⁶⁵ Watson, *The Life of Major-General Sir Charles William Wilson*, p. 195; see also Vetch, 'Wilson, Sir Charles William'.

⁶⁶ See for example TNA, de Bunsen to Salisbury, 5 Sept. 1898, FO195/2007.

⁶⁷ On the truly heroic exploits of Doughty-Wylie, both during these years and the later Gallipoli campaign, see Bourne, 'Wylie'.

⁶⁸ Temperley and Penson, *A Century of Diplomatic Blue Books, 1814–1914*, p. 252.

public storm over his reporting of the alleged ‘impalement’ of Bosnian Christians.⁶⁹ As for Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice, his reports on the massacres of Armenians in 1896 were praised in the House of Lords and cited with approval in a leading article in *The Times*.⁷⁰ Both consuls received honours for their work.

A little over a decade later, by which time Fitzmaurice was chief dragoman at the embassy, reports from the consuls on the popular mood in their districts and especially on sentiment among the Turkish soldiery, was of the first importance in shaping embassy thinking first about the Young Turks’ revolution in July 1908 and then about the attempted counter-revolution in the following April. On the latter occasion it also tried to use the consuls, in the event unsuccessfully, to spread anti-Young Turk propaganda.⁷¹

The Consulate-General: Controversy and Contraction

Away from the excitement that was periodically making the consuls in the provinces earn their money, the consulate-general in Constantinople was suffering its own problems. Since the cession to Greece of the Ionian Islands in 1864 and the sharper spotlight that had since been shone on the number of persons in the Ottoman Empire claiming British protection,⁷² it had been under pressure to save money by shedding staff. As noted above, the offices of judge and consul-general had already been merged in one man and by 1870 at least half a dozen clerical posts had also been axed.⁷³ In this year Charles Kennedy, accompanied by a representative of the Treasury, had been sent from the Foreign Office to make a general report on the mission and in the process see whether even more economies might be achieved.

Kennedy did not find that the consulate-general was any longer significantly over-staffed, although he did agree that the treasurer might be dispensed with.⁷⁴ He had been forced to resist pressure from Sir Philip Francis, judge and consul-general since 1867, to get rid of the commercial vice-consul as well. It was essential, Kennedy maintained,

⁶⁹ This was waged in part in the letter columns of *The Times* in January.

⁷⁰ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, p. 31.

⁷¹ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, pp. 133–7.

⁷² HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Mins. of Ev., paras. 404–6.

⁷³ *FO List 1864 and 1870*.

⁷⁴ HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Mins. of Ev., paras. 26–33, 514–18.

to retain a knowledgeable person holding a consular commission at the head of the commercial section in such an important port as Constantinople, while loss of the treasurer would make such a man even more important in helping to control the large sums of money passing through the mission.⁷⁵

The attempt by Sir Philip Francis to get rid of the commercial vice-consul in 1870 had an unpleasant echo in a controversy involving the same post within the consulate-general some years later. This surfaced in 1891 when Edward Law, a man of great ability and broad experience in business and commercial diplomacy, was sent to conduct a further investigation into its working. At this juncture the judge and consul-general was Sir Henry Fawcett and the head of the legal section was Charles Tarring, a barrister with an academic background who had come to Constantinople as legal vice-consul in 1883. What Law discovered was that there had for some time been a feud between Tarring and the head of the shipping and commercial section, William Wrench, who had an impressive record as a Levant consul going back to 1857.⁷⁶ Tarring, who regarded himself as an authority on matters relating to consular jurisdiction in the East,⁷⁷ alleged that Wrench—out of a craving for power—had arrogated to himself judicial responsibilities which properly belonged to the judges.⁷⁸ For his part, Wrench, who stood on well established custom and the authority given to him by his royal commission, counter-charged that Tarring's naïve and confused attitude to British vagrants had fostered the impression that Constantinople was a good place to desert ship and thereby made his own job more difficult by swelling the ranks of "pier-head jumpers".⁷⁹

Having heard both sides, the shrewd and pragmatic Law came down squarely on the side of Wrench. In reality, concluded Law, the commercial

⁷⁵ HCPP (314), 16 July 1872: Mins. of Ev., 634–7, 659–63, 2241–4.

⁷⁶ Previously for seven years at the busy shipping consulate at the Dardanelles, he had been appointed commercial vice-consul at Constantinople in 1872 and promoted to consul 1879. In 1885, in recognition of his contribution to the negotiation of a commercial treaty with Turkey, he was made a CMG, *The Times* (obit.), 14 Oct. 1896.

⁷⁷ Four years earlier he had published a book on the subject: *British Consular Jurisdiction in the East. With topical indices of cases on appeal from and relating to Consular Courts and Consuls, etc.* (Stevens and Haynes: London, 1887).

⁷⁸ TNA, Supplementary Statement by Charles James Tarring, 18 Feb. 1891, *Report by Mr. E. F. Law*, p. 51.

⁷⁹ W. H. Wrench, Memorandum respecting Vagrants, and Seamen without Money and of Bad Character; and letters and statements, *Report by Mr. E. F. Law*, pp. 57–8, 81–6 *passim*.

consul had been a victim of the assistant judge's jealousy and suspicion: jealousy of his prominent position in the British colony in Constantinople, and his suspicion that he had been secretly obstructing his own bid to achieve a similar elevation. Law's opinion of Tarring was further lowered by discovering that his "remarkable leniency" was a "matter of common talk and complaint at Constantinople", and that he had also failed almost completely in his duty to supervise the consular prison efficiently. And he was impressed by neither judge insofar as both had "far too great and frequent personal pecuniary interest in questions directly connected with the business of the Court"; indeed, he thought, "the present system, and the most unpleasant rumours to which it gives colour, are little short of a public scandal". Wrapping up a devastating criticism of the Supreme Consular Court system generally, Law observed that the little work the judges now had to do did not justify their considerable expense and recommended that the handful of appeals currently being heard at Constantinople should be dealt with instead at either Malta or Cyprus.⁸⁰

The upshot of Law's report was that when Sir Henry Fawcett retired in 1895, the opportunity was taken by the ambassador at the time, Sir Philip Currie, to reconstruct the consular department. On the legal side, Tarring, despite his well justified battering in 1891, was made judge of the Supreme Consular Court but not consul-general as well. An assistant judge was, however, to be retained. At the head of the commercial department there was to be only a consul. There was also to be a new vice-consul, which as it happens was to be the cause of another nasty dispute in the consulate-general.⁸¹ As for Wrench, he was further removed from the reach of the vindictive judge by being given the new position—"in reality more strictly diplomatic than consular"⁸²—of commercial attaché, while retaining his rank as consul. Unfortunately, he died suddenly in late 1896, while Tarring got his just deserts by meeting an analogous fate: a year later he was posted to be chief justice in Grenada.

⁸⁰ *Report by Mr. E. F. Law.*

⁸¹ This was because this post was sought by both Henry Silley, the chief clerk to the consular court, and his junior, Philip Sarell, who was the clerk of registers. Sarell got the job, whereupon Silley charged first of all conspiracy and then libel, and the affair ended up in the high court in London. The case was dismissed and Silley ended up losing his pension, *The Times*, 2 June 1897, 29 Apr. 1898, and *FO List 1903*.

⁸² HCPP (C. 6172), 1890: Report: para. 54.

On the eve of the First World War the consulate-general had shrunk to a staff of only about a dozen, although this was mainly a result of a reduction in the number of clerks. At the top end, the legal section was as strong as ever, with a judge and an assistant judge. So, too, was the commercial department, to which the Levant Service officer, Harry Eyres, had been appointed in 1896 and in 1905 promoted to consul-general. Unfortunately, during a private symposium held by the Oriental Circle at the Lyceum Club in London in December 1913, Eyres made some unguarded comments on the present condition of Turkey. To his dismay, these appeared in the press a few days later, without either varnish or context,⁸³ and provoked questions in the House of Commons. The Turkish government took strong exception to his remarks as reported and it was clear to both the Foreign Office and the embassy that, despite some sympathy for his position, he could not remain in Constantinople. After some discussion of the possibility that he might be moved to Salonica, in June Eyres was granted early retirement on grounds of ill health, presumably bogus.⁸⁴ In the space of a few months, the embassy had lost its consul-general as well as—as recorded at the end of the previous chapter—its chief dragoman. But, as with Gerald Fitzmaurice, the world was to hear of Eyres again.⁸⁵

“The step-child of the Foreign Office”

In March 1912, in response to long-standing unease about the operation of a spoils system and poor promotion prospects in the civil service, a royal commission was appointed by the government to subject it to a wide-ranging review; it would take in the diplomatic and consular services. This stirred Andrew Ryan, the second dragoman at the embassy in Constantinople and a man who was the very opposite of a trouble-maker, to canvass opinion among his colleagues in the Levant Service and in June 1912 to draw up a memorandum for possible submission to the commission.

⁸³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 Dec. 1913.

⁸⁴ See papers in TNA, FO195/2456.

⁸⁵ The rehabilitation of Eyres began in 1916 when he was employed on special service in Albania, where he had begun his career. In 1921 he was appointed British representative in the country, before long at his old rank of consul-general, and served there until 1926, whereupon he received a knighthood, *The Times* (obit.), 20 July 1944.

Ryan's memorandum compared conditions in the Levant Service with those in the army and navy, the diplomatic service, the Indian civil service, and the home civil service. Prospects of personal distinction, substantial earnings, and comfortable conditions of life were offered in greater or lesser degree by all of them, he maintained, but none of these, he concluded sorrowfully, was offered by the Levant Service—"even to its most accomplished members". Instead, on pay that was no better than that in the home civil service, they had to endure "a lifelong expatriation" in posts which for the most part were remote, primitive and unhealthy. The limited number of consulates-general in the Levant that crowned the career failed to confer the distinction merited by the qualities needed to fill them, he claimed, adding that since their occupants were now "robust quinquagenarians" they were in any case sealed off for years to come. This, he said, explained "the pessimism which pervades the Service as a whole", and which would inevitably depress the quality of its work and discourage able young men from applying for it in the future. The Levant Service, he lamented, was "the step-child of the Foreign Office".⁸⁶

The royal commission, which was chaired by Lord MacDonnell, did not get round to taking evidence on the diplomatic and consular services until the end of April 1914. In the meantime, in response to rumblings of discontent about pay and conditions throughout the consular service as a whole, a Foreign Office committee had met later in 1912 which made various emollient recommendations which on the whole were accepted by the Treasury.⁸⁷ However, no doubt with the outbreak of the first Balkan War in mind, this report specifically stated that this was hardly the moment to make proposals for the Levant Service. This was perfectly true because, aside from the fact that some posts were changing in importance, if Turkey was to be rolled right out of Europe by the Balkan League, as many expected, the Turkish-speaking and capitulations-steeped Levant consuls would hardly be in as much demand in the countries thus liberated.⁸⁸ The committee added nevertheless that it would be glad to look favourably at Levant Service complaints later,⁸⁹

⁸⁶ MECA Oxf., Memorandum by Andrew Ryan, June 1912, Ryan IV/1, DS42.3GY.

⁸⁷ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., para. 43234; and Appendix XC, Report of Foreign Office Committee on the Consular Service, 18 Nov. 1912, pp. 322–6.

⁸⁸ TNA, Lowther to Grey, 24 June, and Mallet to Grey, 20 Dec. 1913, FO195/2451.

⁸⁹ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Appendices, App. XC, Report of Foreign Office Committee on the Consular Service, 18 Nov. 1912, p. 326.

and in 1914 an attempt to ease the promotions block was made by offering it more posts in Persia and even Russia.⁹⁰

It is not clear whether the royal commission had the benefit of Ryan's memorandum,⁹¹ and Fitzmaurice did not appear before it as a witness despite the fact that he was recovering his health in London in 1914.⁹² Ryan was not called either since he was stuck in Constantinople deputing for Fitzmaurice. In fact, the only serving member of the Levant Service to whom the commission was able to give a platform was Harold Satow, consul at Trebizond, who admitted to being out of touch with the situation in the service generally and made only the most diffident and mildest of complaints about life as a Levant Service officer.⁹³ Edward Blech, a senior member who had left just a month earlier to become the Librarian of the Foreign Office, was also interviewed, but he was at pains to emphasise that he would not complain of being denied promotion into the diplomatic service because he knew what the position was when he joined; he maintained at first that this was in any case "not a serious complaint" in the Levant Service; and agreement that this had caused good people (like Sir Adam Block) to be lost to it had to be dragged out of him.⁹⁴ The more rebellious members of the Levant Service must have wept when they read the minutes of these replies.

Nevertheless, it is obvious from the questioning that the royal commission was well aware of the state of morale in the Levant Service, and especially of the effect on this of the barriers to advancement into the diplomatic service facing even its most gifted members. For one thing, it had before it a letter of July 1912 from Constantinople from the much respected Sir Edwin Pears in which this situation was attacked with considerable vigour. The diplomats who went to Turkey were on the whole, he implied, nothing but "loafers" interested only in having "a good time"; they were at best ignorant and at worst contemptuous of commercial questions; it was consuls like Fitzmaurice, Block, Lamb and Graves who did the real work, much of it diplomatic; and yet a

⁹⁰ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, p. 169; HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., para. 39912.

⁹¹ He had been diffident about sending it in without the blessing of the ambassador, Sir Gerard Lowther, and it was not included in the appendix to the royal commission's report.

⁹² Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865-1939)*, pp. 205-6.

⁹³ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., paras. 39911-20, 39945-53.

⁹⁴ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., paras. 42265-342.

consulate-general was the highest prize to which they could aspire.⁹⁵ The Levant Service also had supporters among witnesses outside its ranks. Arthur Ponsonby, who had served his own diplomatic apprenticeship in Constantinople in the mid-1890s and was now a radical Liberal member of parliament, agreed with Pears. He had been particularly impressed by Levant Service men, he told the commission, and thought them “quite well suited to come into the Diplomatic Service”.⁹⁶ As for the widely travelled editor of the *Economist*, Francis Hirst, he agreed as well, insisting that it was “a matter of notoriety” that consular officers, especially in the Near East, were “infinitely superior on an average in calibre to the diplomatic officers”.⁹⁷ H. A. Roberts, secretary of the Cambridge University appointments board, stressed their inadequate pay.⁹⁸

Unfortunately, the steam had to some extent been taken out of the Levant Service’s complaints by the gestures made by the Foreign Office since the report of its own committee in November 1912. Together with the diplomatic service, it also had numerous and powerful witnesses before the royal commission, notably Sir William Tyrrell, Sir Arthur Hardinge, Sir Eyre Crowe, Sir Maurice de Bunsen and John Tilley. All speaking more or less in unison, they expressed much respect and sympathy for the Levant Service. But they minimised the extent of disgruntlement among its members on the point of advancement into diplomatic posts, and repeatedly drew attention to the fact that there was nothing in current regulations to prevent this, while here and there hinting that more sympathy might be given to this in the Levant itself. Tyrrell went so far as to suggest that a Levant Service officer “may certainly be perfectly well qualified to become Ambassador at Constantinople”.⁹⁹

The upshot was that when the MacDonnell Commission reported after the outbreak of war, in December 1914, the thrust of its recommendations on the Levant Service was something of a compromise. It noted that “the Foreign Office are now arranging for a wider extension of the operations of this branch of the service”¹⁰⁰ but recommended

⁹⁵ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Appendix LXXXIX, Pears to Buxton, July 1912, pp. 321–2.

⁹⁶ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., paras. 39320–6.

⁹⁷ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., paras. 40631–9.

⁹⁸ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev., paras. 41619, 41627–8.

⁹⁹ HCPP (C. 7749), 1914: Mins. of Ev. para. 40892; see also paras. 38236–65, 38374–98, 43455–60.

¹⁰⁰ HCPP (C. 7748), 1914, p. 30, para. 9.

that the block on promotions should be further eased by improving the ratio of consuls to vice-consuls; salaries should also be raised.¹⁰¹ While resisting the mounting pressure for an amalgamation of the consular and diplomatic services, it also added—with the Levant Service clearly in mind—that “interchanges” between the two “may with advantage be made even more frequently than has been the case hitherto”.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ HCPP (C. 7748), 1914, pp. 31–2.

¹⁰² HCPP (C. 7748), 1914, p. 38, para. 14.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMUNICATIONS

A diplomatic mission without some form of secure and reasonably swift form of communication with its own government is of limited use. It can still discharge important tasks, for example in the protection of any expatriates, but it cannot send home timely reports or ask for—or be sent—timely new instructions. For long periods out of touch with home, it may also feel forgotten and find its morale dropping. Poor communications also impede the exchange of information with sister missions in its region and reduce the usefulness of consular outposts.

Constantinople was the most remote of all the European capitals at which Britain had permanent diplomatic representation, so distance in itself was a major obstacle to communication. The overland route, which usually went via Vienna, also traversed wild territory, especially in the south-east of the continent, and here messages periodically fell victim to rebels and bandits.¹ If sent by the common post, they met the same fate more routinely at the hands of the ‘black chambers’ of the Vienna or Venice post offices.² Couriers coming out of the Ottoman Empire were also delayed by the need for quarantine, and the contents of their packets were liable to inspection on the pretext of ‘perfuming’ them against the plague.³ The sea route, which usually started with a ship from Marseilles, passed through waters infested with pirates, particularly off the Barbary coast. Whether over land or sea, or a combination of both, matters were particularly bad during the winter and when there was war with a country overlapping or adjacent to part of a normal route;

¹ A northerly version of this overland route was preferred by William Harborne, the first English ambassador. Also used by his couriers and agents, this went via Hamburg and Poland “since it helped maintain good Anglo-Polish relations and also avoided the suspicions and hostility of the Venetians and Spanish which would inevitably have been raised by a sea voyage through the Mediterranean”, Woodhead, ‘Harborne’.

² Cassels, *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 73–4; Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822–1827*, pp. 267–8; Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, pp. 66, 86.

³ TNA, Ainslie to Hillsborough, 12 Apr. 1782, FO78/3; see also Ainslie to Elliot (Berlin), 17 Apr. 1778, FO261/3.

this was particularly true of war with France.⁴ In short, communications between London and Constantinople, not to mention those between the embassy and its consular posts in the Balkans and Asiatic Turkey, presented special challenges.

In the pre-telegraphic era, diplomatic messages were carried through Europe in many different ways. The great bulk of British diplomatic mail was consigned to the scheduled or 'ordinary' services of the emerging national post offices, while messengers were used for more urgent communications.⁵ King's or Queen's Messengers, the body of couriers in the full-time employment of the government itself, could also be employed—as they still are today—if maximum security was needed as well, for example in the delivery of new ciphers. But the services of official agencies by no means exhausted the options available for the carriage of diplomatic mail. Embassy servants, merchants, ships' captains, bankers, and private visitors known or recommended to the ambassador were among those also pressed into service. It was even common for ambassadors to entrust their despatches to colleagues in the missions of friendly states if they happened to be returning or have a courier due to depart at an opportune moment.⁶

These various options were also available to the ambassadors in Turkey, where in the early modern period their communications also benefited from a degree of orchestration by the Venetian diplomatic service.⁷ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that communications with the secretaries of state in London, whether by sea or land, were in general slow, insecure and unpredictable until well into the nineteenth century.

"Ye surest, and most speedy conveyance you can"

Use for your communications with us "ye surest, and most speedy conveyance you can", read the royal instructions to Lord Chandos, the newly appointed ambassador to Turkey in 1680 (see Appendix 3), which at first glance was challenging but contained a clear hint of

⁴ Heywood, 'English diplomatic relations with Turkey, 1689–1698', pp. 34–5.

⁵ Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789*, p. 219.

⁶ Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, p. 26.

⁷ Brown, *Studies in the History of Venice*, vol. II, p. 32; Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, pp. 38, 66, 86.

sympathy for the problems that his mail was likely to encounter. These were problems concerning which no ambassador had any illusions. Sometimes it was discovered that despatches did not even get out of Constantinople: “our letters of May”, the earlier ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, observed drolly to Sir Dudley Carleton, “were intercepted and sold in the city to wrap pepper”.⁸ This was in 1623, and Roe was probably no more surprised to learn from London in the same year that all of his letters were being opened and inspected at leisure in Venice.⁹ Writing to the British consul in the same city over a century and a half later, Sir Robert Ainslie said: “The steps you have taken for the security of our correspondence is in fact all that can be done. I have not a doubt that all letters are liable to be opened in this transit, and am equally convinced that it is frequently practised by fair or foul means, notwithstanding every precaution”.¹⁰

As the ambassadors were aware, no precautions designed to increase the security of messages were foolproof. But some were more effective than others, and the most effective precaution of all was employment of a trusted messenger; he was also the fastest means of getting a message delivered, and had the bonus of being able to provide useful intelligence on the lands through which he passed.¹¹ Tough, resourceful, well armed, and at least an adequate linguist, this was a man so personally dependent on the ambassador or the government at home that he would suffer drastically if he lost his bags through carelessness. Even in the more enlightened world of early twentieth century employer-employee relations a King’s Messenger who lost his bags would be dismissed instantly, without pension or gratuity.¹² King’s Messengers en route overland between London and Constantinople travelled by carriage where the roads were good enough (and later by train) but always rode on horseback south of Vienna until well into the nineteenth century.¹³

The messengers were of two main types: the express messenger and the one who tried to maintain a regular timetable. The more colourful express, sometimes referred to as an ‘*estafette*’, departed as soon as letters

⁸ 30 May 1623, *The Negotiations*.

⁹ Calvert to Roe, 6 June 1623, *The Negotiations*.

¹⁰ TNA, Ainslie to Richie, 8 Dec., 1788, FO261/6; see also Ainslie to Peter Mitchell (London), 17 June 1782, FO261/4.

¹¹ TNA, Ainslie to Fox, 25 Oct. 1783, FO78/4.

¹² Antrobus, *King’s Messenger, 1918–1940*, p. 11.

¹³ Wheeler-Holohan, *The History of the King’s Messengers*, pp. 157–8.

were ready for despatch. For urgent messages this was essential since the regular messenger may just have left, while the ordinary international posts—even if considered sufficiently trustworthy—were regulated by schedules with days or even weeks intervening between departures. In England at the end of the seventeenth century the ‘ordinary’ post travelled at an average speed of about four miles an hour, while an express messenger would travel at between five and seven miles an hour depending on his burden and the quality of the fresh horses available at the staging posts on his route. An express would consist sometimes of one rider carrying the message for the whole journey, sometimes of relays of riders; in either event, the express would often be accompanied by a guide and, if necessary, by one or more armed guards.

The King’s Messengers certainly proved their value to the embassy in Constantinople. However, they were not initially the elite body that the name suggests and a dedicated corps did not begin to emerge until the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ They were also used sparingly because they were expensive, and Constantinople was by far the most costly of their standard runs, comfortably exceeding the expense even of going to St. Petersburg.¹⁵ Expresses were particularly expensive; they also attracted attention and excited rumours.¹⁶ It did not help that the messengers tended to be well known, and in Britain in the nineteenth century their movements were watched closely by the press for clues to the tempo of diplomatic events.¹⁷ On one occasion in Constantinople, at a particularly delicate juncture, an ambassador sought to solve this problem by passing off a messenger just arrived from London as

¹⁴ Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp. 266–8; Wheeler-Holohan, *The History of the King’s Messengers*, chs. 3–5; Thomson, *The Secretaries of State*, p. 142.

¹⁵ TNA, Estimate of the Charge for Journeys to the Principal Foreign Capitals, on the New Scale of Allowances, ca. 1824, FO351/10. Constantinople was also the most profitable to the messengers and thus, despite its hazards, also the most popular, Wheeler-Holohan, *The History of the King’s Messengers*, p. 232; Estimate of the Profit which will be received by Messengers on Journeys to the Principal Foreign Capitals on the New Allowances, ca. 1824, FO351/10.

¹⁶ TNA, Fawkener to Newcastle, 7 Jan. 1738, SP97/29; Ainslie to Elliot (Berlin), 3 June 1778, FO261/3; Ainslie to Secret Committee of the East India Co. (London), 10 Sept. 1782, FO261/4. See also Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782–1846*, p. 234.

¹⁷ Wheeler-Holohan, *History of the King’s Messengers*, pp. 83–5. There was even a cartoon of the senior messenger, Captain Conway F. C. Seymour, in the popular periodical *Vanity Fair*: ‘Despatches’, 16 Feb. 1884.

“a gentleman in trade”, although the secret was soon out.¹⁸ Messengers were also liable to attack not only because of their despatches but also because of the large sums of money which they had to carry to meet their heavy travelling expenses.¹⁹

To reduce the damage caused by hostile interception, messages could be ciphered but this had to be done sparingly. One reason for this was that the greater the number of ciphered despatches that fell into hostile hands the more likely it was that the codes would be broken.²⁰ Another was that the ciphering and deciphering of lengthy messages was until very late a tedious and time-consuming business. One way of minimising these drawbacks was to cipher just the most sensitive parts of a message, Ainslie spotting that a further advantage of this was that the open parts could be used to plant misinformation and the ciphered parts used to explain to the Foreign Office what the cunning ambassador had done.²¹

How long did messages take to travel between Constantinople and London? On 18 May 1624 the secretary of state, Sir George Calvert, sent highly important fresh instructions to Sir Thomas Roe. These informed the ambassador of a dramatic change in the king’s attitude to the Habsburgs and of his consequent desire that Sir Thomas should encourage the sultan’s Protestant vassal in Transylvania, Prince Bethlen Gabor, to adopt a threatening posture towards the emperor. Although this letter completely reversed the chief political thrust of Roe’s initial instructions, which was to ‘divert’ the Ottomans from falling on Christendom, it seems clear that the ambassador did not receive it until 20 August, that is, three months after its despatch. At the end of the seventeenth century, six weeks to two months was reckoned to be good going for a special courier.²² Towards the end of the following century the enterprising Ainslie told the Foreign Office that it could be done in half this time²³ but it was not dramatically reduced until roads were improved in the late eighteenth century and steamships and railways

¹⁸ TNA, Ainslie to Consul Abbott (Aleppo), 3 Apr. and to East India Co. (London), 12 Apr. 1782, FO261/4.

¹⁹ Wheeler-Holohan, *History of the King’s Messengers*, p. 157.

²⁰ Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789*, p. 219.

²¹ TNA, Ainslie to Carmarthen, 10 Feb. 1787, FO78/8.

²² Heywood, ‘English diplomatic relations with Turkey, 1689–1698’, p. 36. Fraser suggests 46 days for the journey “in good conditions” in the 1660–88 period, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State*, map facing p. 64.

²³ TNA, Ainslie to Hillsborough, 1 Feb. 1781, FO78/2.

arrived in the nineteenth.²⁴ At the end of 1833, albeit it in winter and in a sub-standard carriage as far as Semlin (thence on horseback), it still took a King's Messenger a month to reach Constantinople.²⁵

Even if special couriers were used in both directions and the secretary of state replied by return, for most of the pre-nineteenth century period therefore it could still take three to five months before an ambassador received a reply to an urgent request for fresh instructions. Ainslie himself wrote five letters to the Foreign Office between 10 July and 25 September 1793 begging to know whether a permanent Ottoman ambassador would be welcome in London, and did not receive the brief and laconic reassurance which he sought until 18 November.²⁶

One way to maximise the chance that an important message would get through quickly, or just get through at all, was to send as many as three or four copies by alternative routes. At least one might make it rapidly to its destination.²⁷ This was usually effective but at the price of increasing the risk of interception. For example, in a letter of 8 September 1627 to Sir Thomas Roe, the secretary of state referred to the "hazard of the conveyances, whereof I have had proof by the loss of some of mine... and some from yourself; whereof I have received the duplicates, but never saw the originals".²⁸

The Consequences of Poor Communications

Insecurity and slowness were thus endemic to diplomatic communications in the pre-telegraph era. Long intervals between messages were the more usual and, at critical times, the more serious of these drawbacks because they could cause an ambassador at Constantinople, out of ignorance of important developments, to adopt an attitude that was no longer appropriate.²⁹ For example, Calvert's letter of May 1624 informing Roe that the king now wished him to stimulate Bethlen Gabor's

²⁴ However, mail packet sailings, most of which had been taken over by the Admiralty in 1823 and extended from Malta to the Ionian Islands in 1819 and Alexandria in 1835, never went to Constantinople, Robinson, *Carrying British Mails Overseas*, pp. 91–3, 106, 161.

²⁵ Wheeler-Holohan, *The History of the King's Messengers*, pp. 167–79.

²⁶ TNA, FO78/14.

²⁷ Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, p. 137; Heywood, 'English diplomatic relations with Turkey, 1689–1698', pp. 35–6.

²⁸ *The Negotiations*.

²⁹ Cunningham, vol. 1, pp. 135–6.

hostility to the Austrians (see p. 102 above) took such a long time to reach him that he had looked on benignly while the prince had signed a peace with them. In consequence, lamented the ambassador, “more force must be used to raise him again, then would have served to keep him up while he was in motion”.³⁰

Alternatively, in fear of adopting the wrong attitude, even the most experienced and self-assured ambassador could be completely paralysed by the absence of mail from London. Inaction thus induced could at best cause loss of ‘credit’ and at worst missed opportunities to advance his country’s interest. Even Sir Thomas Roe, whose instructions had given him no guidance on how he should react to the French ambassador’s strenuous assertion of precedence at Constantinople, once said in a despatch to his secretary of state: “I should take it as a great favour, if you would also please to inform me what I should do.... I am very diffident of my discretion in these times, and therefore resolve to sit as quiet as I may”.³¹ In regard to Bethlen Gabor, the fresh instructions which finally arrived in August 1624 were so vague as to how far he should go with him that Roe felt obliged to insist that “it may be more necessary than formerly, that I should receive punctual directions for my rule and discharge”. Please send me, he concluded, “a speedy answer, that may be unto me a star of direction to sail by”.³² Over a year later, with still no ‘star of direction’, the ambassador wrote that “I am utterly disabled, and do fear to lose a fair harvest”.³³

In times of war with the French, the obstacles to communications were so great that fresh instructions could take up to a year to travel between London and Constantinople. As can be imagined, this seriously impeded the efforts of William III, initiated in 1689, to use his ambassador to mediate a peace between the Turks and the Austrians so that the latter could concentrate on the War of the Spanish Succession. Sir William Trumbull was the first to suffer³⁴ but poor communications were also among the factors which obstructed the efforts of Lord Paget, sent to Constantinople in 1692 in pursuit of the same objective, and it was not until five years later that a mediated peace between the

³⁰ Roe to Conway, 21 Aug. 1624, *The Negotiations*.

³¹ Roe to Calvert, 24 Aug. 1623, *The Negotiations*.

³² Roe to Conway, 21 Aug. 1624, *The Negotiations*.

³³ Roe to Conway, 25 Feb. 1626, *The Negotiations*.

³⁴ Heywood, ‘English diplomatic relations with Turkey, 1689–1698’, p. 35.

Turks and the Austrians was finally signed.³⁵ Important information acquired by the ambassador could also arrive in London too late to be of use, while the consequences of intercepted communications which were deciphered—sometimes because the cipher itself had fallen into the wrong hands—are too obvious to require elaboration.

It is clear, then, that considerable damage could be caused by slow and insecure diplomatic communications. Nevertheless, this should not be exaggerated because it was possible—at Constantinople as elsewhere—to reduce the need for diplomatic communication in the first place. Considerable resourcefulness was demonstrated to this end.

Reducing the Need for Good Communications

The first step was to give an ambassador some discretion in his initial instructions and full powers to conclude any negotiation.³⁶ Provided circumstances at his post did not change drastically, it was unlikely, therefore, that he would feel the need to make frequent requests for fresh instructions and be paralysed until he received replies. All he had to do was send home frequent reports of his actions—usually at least twice a month³⁷—so that the secretary of state would be alerted to any that were inconsistent with current policy. These reports were not likely to go unread, even if they were unacknowledged, since they contained the intelligence which was the life-blood of the secretaries of state.³⁸ They also protected the ambassador since no-one at home could make retrospective complaints of his actions if they had been kept informed but remained silent. It was also not unusual to provide a new ambassador, as in the case of Lord Chandos in 1680, with two versions of his letter of credence, the one more mild and the other more severe in tone, and leave him to choose which was the most appropriate to deliver in light of the circumstances which he found on his arrival at Constantinople.³⁹ In short, this system did not require by any means

³⁵ Heywood, 'Paget'.

³⁶ Wicquefort, *The Ambassador and His Functions*, Book I, ch. XIV; Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II*, pp. 18–27; Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, vol. I, p. 155.

³⁷ Thomson, *The Secretaries of State, 1681–1782*, pp. 96–7; Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State*, pp. 65–8.

³⁸ Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State*, ch. 3.

³⁹ Chandos was actually given one of each sort addressed to both the sultan and the grand vizier, and it is interesting that what appears to have been the first draft of

as many messages to flow out to the ambassador as were sent home by him, while the latter were themselves limited by the discretion that he was permitted.

The second step designed in part to relieve the secretary of state of the need for good communications with ambassadors, as well as to spare him a burden when they were efficient, was to remind them to keep up a regular correspondence with British diplomats posted at other major capitals;⁴⁰ and, in the particular case of ambassadors at Constantinople, to keep one up especially with those British representatives accredited to countries sharing any task of mediation with Britain at the Porte.⁴¹ It is also striking to what extent this advice was followed. Among the more regular correspondents of Sir Thomas Roe, for example, were Sir Dudley Carleton at The Hague and Sir Isaac Wake at Venice. Roe also exchanged letters with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the king's daughter, the Queen of Bohemia. Other ambassadors, for example Lord Kinnoull a century later, found their colleagues at the British Embassy in Vienna particularly valuable correspondents.⁴² Most of these were in easier reach than London. Following his own arrival at Constantinople on 2 October 1776, Ainslie lost little time in announcing the event by means of a circular letter to his colleagues at other posts. This continued:

I shall not fail to give you the earliest Information of whatever may happen during my Residence, of a nature interesting to His Majesty's Service, or that may be agreeable to you to know.

I hope you will not forget me in your circular letters, or in case any matter of moment relating to this distant Residence should come to your knowledge.⁴³

This pooling of political and commercial intelligence had many advantages but not the least of them was that it gave the ambassador

his instructions, dated 28 Jan. 1680, was more explicit in explaining this—"the one of each in a more mild and the other in severe terms"—than the final version, dated 29 Dec. 1680 (see App. 2, para. 11), TNA, 28 January 1680, SP105/145.

⁴⁰ Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State*, p. 65; Thomson, *The Secretaries of State*, p. 95.

⁴¹ TNA, Weymouth to Murray, 6 June 1769, SP97/45.

⁴² Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople*, p. 79.

⁴³ This letter went to Paris, Madrid, The Hague, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Cologne, Turin, Florence, Venice, Lisbon and Warsaw. It was not sent to Naples, Brussels, Berne or St. Petersburg only because these posts were temporarily unoccupied, TNA, FO261/3.

at Constantinople—as elsewhere—further clues and reassurance as to which of his own actions would be likely to gain favour at home should he be wanting in fresh instructions. Aside from the fact that now and again Sir Thomas Roe did receive them, it was this which in the long intervening periods enabled him to avoid the paralysis which he was inclined to stress, probably in order to encourage replies from the secretary of state. In fact it is clear that while he seems occasionally to have been slowed up, he was rarely immobilized; on the contrary, he was generally very active, and comparatively successful in achieving what the king wanted.

Allied to the last mentioned procedure was the usual injunction laid upon British ambassadors to work in close harmony with the ambassadors of friendly and allied states. At one difficult juncture in 1626 when Sir Thomas Roe was told by an extraordinary ambassador from Bethlen Gabor that a conference at The Hague had decided that he must help to procure action by the pasha of Buda against the Emperor and “nourish the Tartars against the king of Poland”, the English ambassador had to rely on an assurance from the Venetian baillo that this was true. This permitted him to advance cautiously on these fronts.⁴⁴ For much of this period and especially after the Glorious Revolution in 1688, it was the Dutch Ambassador at Constantinople whom the British envoys found most useful for additional clues as to their own government’s intentions.⁴⁵

It is also worth adding that poor communications with home had diplomatic advantages. To begin with, it was more expedient for the English Ambassador to blame distance and the poor state of the roads for any long delay in receiving instructions on a new question than to admit to an Ottoman minister that the explanation was more likely to be indolence or—worse still—indifference in London. Slow communications also gave more time for thought. This was to become a common theme of diplomats and Foreign Office officials as they were forced to come to terms with the breathless haste of the telegraphic era.

⁴⁴ Roe to Conway, 30 June 1626, *The Negotiations*.

⁴⁵ See for example TNA, Trumbull to Shrewsbury 31 Oct. 1689, SP97/20; and letter of 16 May.

Searching for Improvements

The fact remained, however, that poor communications were usually regarded as an irritant in normal times and a serious handicap in a crisis or when a major diplomatic development was in prospect or already under way. As a result, more than one British ambassador at Constantinople gave thought to how they could be improved. For example, in 1737, in order to speed up communications during the mediation foreshadowed between Turkey and Russia in which he expected to be involved, Sir Everard Fawkener pressed repeatedly for use of a sloop directly from Portsmouth or Plymouth. "The French court frequently dispatch a barque from Toulon", he pointed out to the powerful Duke of Newcastle, secretary of state for the Foreign Office's Southern Department, and a sloop from England would be fast. "I may very easily have a letter in 30 days, and sooner with good luck", said Fawkener, adding that it would be more secure and no more expensive than any other means of communication.⁴⁶ His pleas fell on deaf ears.

Towards the end of the next century, Sir Robert Ainslie seemed often to be turning his fertile mind to the problem, although with little more success. In 1782 he proposed to the East India Company an elaborate arrangement for avoiding delays to their despatches at the quarantine house at Semlin in the Balkans—an arrangement from which his own despatches may or may not have benefited.⁴⁷ Following the later outbreak of war between the Turks and the Austrians, Ainslie had to abandon the Vienna route and use instead the Spanish post.⁴⁸ Reminiscent of Fawkener earlier, he looked with envy at the French Ambassador, who, he told the foreign secretary, Lord Carmarthen, "is exceedingly favoured by a number of Corvettes, constantly plying between Toulon, or Marseilles, and Smyrna, to which last place his couriers go and return very frequently, and must occasion no inconsiderable expence".⁴⁹ The Spanish post must have been slow, because following the peace made

⁴⁶ TNA, Fawkener to Newcastle, 24 Aug., 26 Sept., and 30 Dec. 1737, SP97/29.

⁴⁷ Two merchants should be stationed at the adjacent river frontier towns of Semlin and Belgrade. They would negotiate the packets through the *lazaretto* at Semlin, thus ensuring they were unopened, while the presence of a courier on both sides of the river Sava would obviate the need for quarantine, TNA, Ainslie to Mitchell (London), 17 June 1782, FO261/4; see also Ainslie to Keith (Vienna), 6 June 1792, FO261/7.

⁴⁸ By this time, the Venetian post had also become unreliable, TNA, Ainslie to Carmarthen, 26 Feb., 1 and 15 Oct. 1788, FO78/9.

⁴⁹ TNA, Ainslie to Carmarthen, 15 Apr. 1788, FO78/9.

between Austria and Turkey at Sistovo in August 1791, Ainslie was soon urging a return to the Vienna route as “undoubtedly the most expeditious”, despite its well known drawbacks in other respects.⁵⁰

In the 1820s a form of the scheme for the Vienna route proposed by Ainslie to the East India Company was put into practice for the embassy’s own communications with the Foreign Office, with the use of relays of messengers at the border of the Ottoman Empire to prevent delays caused by the need to perform quarantine. The effects of this were appreciated by Stratford Canning shortly after the start of his second tour in Constantinople, this time as ambassador. Writing to thank his cousin, George Canning, the foreign secretary, for despatches he had recently received, he told him that the messenger had brought these in only 21 days from London.⁵¹

“The telegraph frenzy”

By the second half of the nineteenth century Turkey was of such political importance to Britain that, at least in the decade after 1856, the Foreign Office appears to have had a greater volume of correspondence with the embassy at Constantinople than with any other diplomatic mission.⁵² It is therefore not surprising that the introduction of the electric telegraph in the middle of the century, which dramatically quickened the speed with which messages might be exchanged, was of particular interest to this post. Messages that until recently had taken weeks to reach London could now get there in about 24 hours.

It was the Crimean War that stimulated the British, together with their French allies, to extend the electric telegraph to Constantinople, and thus connect the embassy to London.⁵³ This was finally achieved

⁵⁰ TNA, Ainslie to Grenville, 25 Oct. 1791, FO78/12.

⁵¹ TNA, Canning to Canning, 9 Mar. 1826, FO195/60.

⁵² In the decade 1857–67, the FO bound 339 volumes of Turkey correspondence. The next largest figure was for France (303) and after that the USA (179), HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Appendix, No. 1, p. 419. This is a crude but nevertheless suggestive index.

⁵³ The Paris embassy had been connected since December 1852, and Florence, Berlin and Vienna since 1853. Until the beginning of the 1860s, embassy telegrams went to the London offices of either the Electric Telegraph Co. or the Submarine Telegraph Co. From this point on, however, a branch of the former company was installed in the FO, despite the marked reservations of the permanent under-secretary, Edmund Hammond. In 1870 the GPO took over the Electric Telegraph Co.: Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, pp. 122–5; *From Quills to Computers*, pp. 5–6.

in early 1855 when Varna on the western coast of the Black Sea, the link in the previously laid submarine cable between Constantinople and the Crimean peninsula, was connected via Bucharest to the end of the Austrian line at Jassy in Moldavia.⁵⁴ Another line was also established from Bucharest to Vienna, and later in 1855 the Ottoman government, which from an early date shared “the telegraph frenzy”, announced the opening of another connection with Vienna by means of its own line from Constantinople to Shumnu in Bulgaria via Adrianople.⁵⁵ Government messages—announced by the demand, ‘clear the line, clear the line’—always took priority over private ones.

The improvement brought by the telegraph to the British Embassy’s communications with London did not happen overnight, and even after its main teething problems had been sorted out telegraphic communication continued to have significant disadvantages. For one thing, the messages had to travel through land lines over foreign countries rather than through submarine cables. This meant that apart from being vulnerable to high winds and heavy ice, the lines could be cut or tapped into, while operators at telegraph stations could easily copy the messages. At least until the later years of the nineteenth century, telegrams were also incredibly expensive and prone to garbling in transmission. For these and other reasons, the telegraph did not replace the need for the messenger service to Constantinople, any more than—to the disappointment of innocents in parliament and elsewhere—it replaced the need for diplomatic missions themselves, or even well paid men of high ability in charge of them.⁵⁶

The insecurity of telegrams meant that all messages had to be ciphered but this did not guarantee that they would not be read by friends and foes alike. Ciphered telegrams, being incomprehensible to the telegraph operators who had to transcribe them, were also prone to mis-transcription—and thus to being incomprehensible to anyone.⁵⁷ Furthermore, because the use of ciphers was extremely labour-intensive

⁵⁴ HCPP (C. 1886), 1 Feb. 1855.

⁵⁵ Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923*, pp. 134–6.

⁵⁶ A question repeatedly put to the diplomats appearing before the 1861 Select Committee was whether “diplomatic servants of a high character” were any longer needed in embassies, heads of mission having allegedly been reduced by the telegraph to nothing more than marionettes, HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., for example, para. 1780. The best account of the impact on diplomacy in general of the introduction of the telegraph is Nickles, *Under the Wire*.

⁵⁷ Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923*, p. 148.

(at both ends) and telegrams were so expensive, a premium attached to phrasing them in the sparsest language possible and pruning them of all but absolutely essential information⁵⁸—the language that came to be known as ‘telegraphese’. However, old habits died hard, especially for ambassadors on the verge of retirement when the telegraph was introduced, and this contributed to their high initial cost (see Appendix 5). A case in point was Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. As the following example of one of his telegrams, sent to the Earl of Clarendon on 10 September 1857, reveals, he entered into the spirit of the new method at the start of the message, which, as it happens was about the telegraph, but relapsed into old ways at the end:

Terms approved by the Porte for a telegraph service towards India:—To start it from Constantinople, to carry it to Bagdad; to begin it at once on the Porte’s own account; to take materials, engineers, and workmen from the Company; to extend the telegraph to Bussorah, if the East India Company will bring an Indian line to meet it there; to have two wires—that one connected to Marine under English management; to bind itself by a Convention with Her Majesty’s Government.

Mr. Hawes and Mr. Stanniforth might be employed at once by the Porte, the latter in settling with the Company in England, the former in carrying out the line.

It is possible, but by no means probable, that the Porte might still accept the Company and their original line, if strenuously pressed, under special instructions and urgent demand from Her Majesty’s Government.

Pray communicate this message to the Chairman of the Company, and favour me with an immediate answer.⁵⁹

Stratford notwithstanding, telegrams fairly soon came to be shorn of nuance, context, and good syntax, and so usually had to be reserved for urgent messages. In order to give the full picture, they were routinely followed by longer despatches sent by messenger or regular post; these were known as ‘extenders’.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ HCPP (C. 2483), 1859: Circular to Her Majesty’s Ministers abroad, FO, 25 Sept. 1858; Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 123.

⁵⁹ This telegram, which was sent from the summer embassy at Therapia, was 161 words long; its ‘extender’, dated the same day, was itself only 309 words long, HCPP (2406), 4 May 1858.

⁶⁰ Duplicates of the telegrams, which were sent in plain language by the same means and known as ‘recorders’, were also used to begin with as a check on the deciphering. But they presented the obvious risk that the cipher would be compromised if the recorder fell into the wrong hands. So in 1890 they were replaced by paraphrased versions of the telegrams, Roper, *The Records of the Foreign Office, 1782–1968*, p. 18.

The abbreviated nature of telegrams was a serious drawback, especially in the early days when they could be badly garbled in transmission. Not surprisingly, fresh instructions and other messages sent by this means were sometimes difficult to understand,⁶¹ and in such cases rather increased than decreased the need for the assumption of responsibility by an ambassador when it came to taking action on them. This was the consensus view of the diplomats questioned on the implications of the telegraph by the Select Committee on the Diplomatic Service in 1861, including Stratford, who had only recently retired as ambassador at Constantinople,⁶² and Henry Elliot, who would become ambassador there in six years time. The “very scanty telegraphic information” now received by missions, said Elliot, made it more difficult than before to understand what was going on:

You receive telegraphic news that first appears to give information, but which often turns out to be totally at variance with the facts as they come out afterwards when you receive the post.⁶³

By the time that the Select Committee of 1870 discussed the question, the telegraph service had improved and was somewhat less expensive. According to Edmund Hammond, expenditure on telegrams had been reduced by three-quarters since 1860.⁶⁴ The same trend was seen in the traffic from the Constantinople embassy, where spending on telegrams had been as high as £2,492 in 1858 but by 1869 had dropped to only £572, and in the previous three years had been even lower (see Appendix 5). (It was a mark of the remoteness of Constantinople as well as of its importance that this remained 26 per cent of the total expenditure of all missions on telegrams.) But to some members of parliament the increased efficiency and diminishing costs of the telegraph simply made it a better stick with which to beat the Foreign Office into giving up its most highly paid diplomats. In the course of a tetchy exchange with the independent, radical member of parliament, Peter Rylands, the ageing and conservative Hammond was forced to fight a rearguard in defence of the traditional line. He did this very ably:

⁶¹ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1304–5.

⁶² HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1779–82.

⁶³ HCPP (459), 23 July 1861: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1551–2.

⁶⁴ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 616. In fact, from £8,283 to £2,197, Appendix 4, p. 435.

We have now the electric telegraph, which for all purposes of business is a very unsatisfactory means of communication; you may send a word, or a sentence, but an explanatory despatch, or an argument to be enforced, you cannot send by a telegraph.⁶⁵

On being pressed further, Hammond conceded that a telegram was useful in emergencies, provided it was expanded upon in a proper despatch sent afterwards, and also that it was a useful means of giving guidance to a diplomat on a specific point in a negotiation. However, he rightly insisted that the modern diplomat still needed to exercise his own judgement in carrying out his instructions; the question of the extent to which a diplomat could be relieved of responsibility for a decision by a Foreign Office telegram depended on the circumstances. Besides, he insisted, “You may act upon an instruction or opinion clumsily, or you may act upon it cleverly”.⁶⁶

A week later, Sir Henry Elliot, by now ambassador at Constantinople but at the moment at home on leave, was also questioned by the Select Committee on the issue of the telegraph. His view was exactly the same as Hammond’s and just as forthrightly expressed. He freely admitted to finding telegrams useful when he thought the Foreign Office should learn of something quickly. Nevertheless, in general he thought that they made business much more difficult than before because it was so hard to understand them completely, not least—he added somewhat disarmingly—because the foreign secretary’s telegrams to the embassy were themselves based on “imperfect telegraphic evidence that you may have sent yourself or that somebody else may have sent”.⁶⁷ The labour they entailed was also great: “I have seen telegrams arrive that took many hours to decipher, and sometimes could not be deciphered at all”, he added.⁶⁸ And later: “It has happened to me to have to act on a telegram which said exactly the contrary of what I felt sure it meant to say. [‘Declare war at once?’] Fortunately the mistake was so

⁶⁵ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 526.

⁶⁶ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 527–33; see also Lord Malmesbury, paras. 749–53.

⁶⁷ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 908–10; see also 945–9. Without, one suspects, even a hint of a blush, another witness, Robert Morier, secretary of legation at Darmstadt and a descendant of the first consul-general at Constantinople, emphasised the conclusion to be drawn from this: a good telegram was an “intellectual *tour de force*” and required “an exceedingly superior kind of agent” rather than the lowly paid mediocrity with whom some MPs hoped missions would now be able to make do, HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 4371.

⁶⁸ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 981.

palpable, that I had no doubt on the matter.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, suggestive of modernity and exciting events, telegrams already had much prestige attached to them. What was their effect on the messenger service?

In the middle of the nineteenth century the embassy in Constantinople was receiving a Queen’s Messenger from London once a week.⁷⁰ However, with the introduction of the telegraph there was pressure to economise on them. The Foreign Office was also less inclined to be sympathetic because the other great invention of this century—steam power—had reduced the hardships which the messengers had previously been forced to endure while travelling on horseback or bumping along in carriages. This applied as much to the Constantinople run as to the others, they were reminded by the foreign secretary, Lord Malmesbury, at the end of 1858.⁷¹ It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that one of the consequences of the review of the Queen’s Messengers in 1858 was a drastic cutback in the Constantinople service: henceforward, it was to be provided only once a month.⁷²

The service was still being conducted on the skeletal monthly basis in 1870 but it was probably only a few years later, when the ‘Eastern Question’ flared up again, that it was increased to twice a month.⁷³ The journey time was also being reduced. By the early 1870s improvements in rail and steamship services had usually made it possible for a messenger to do the trip in two weeks or less—typically via train to Marseilles and steamship to Constantinople on the outward journey, and steamer only as far as Brindisi on the homeward one.⁷⁴ A few years later the time was reduced further by use of a rail service all the way via Vienna and Bucharest to Varna on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast,

⁶⁹ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., para. 1039.

⁷⁰ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815–1914*, p. 118.

⁷¹ HCPP (C. 2483), 1859: Memorandum [conveying the views of Lord Malmesbury to the Messengers], FO, 10 Dec. 1858.

⁷² HCPP (C. 2483), 1859: Circular to H.M.’s Ministers abroad, FO, 25 Sept. 1858.

⁷³ HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Mins. of Ev., paras. 1441, 1444. In 1876–7 an extra £650 compared with the previous year was estimated for Foreign Service Messengers that was wholly attributed to the ‘Constantinople Messenger’, HCPP (C. 47), 17 Feb. 1876, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Sir Henry Elliot impressed on messengers the unreliability of the Brindisi route on the outward journey, although they probably preferred this, especially in winter, because it meant a greater proportion of the journey spent on the train. On the evidence of their claims for expenses, they eventually appear to have got the message: TNA, Elliot to Hammond, 3 Jan. 1872, FO391/22; Messenger Journeys: Memoranda of Service, Constantinople, 1869–81, FO366/264–5.

whence it was just a short trip by steamer to Constantinople.⁷⁵ This route was perfected in the following decade when in 1888 the ‘Orient Express’, which had been inaugurated five years earlier, was able to run directly through the Balkans to Constantinople. At this point it became possible for the ‘gentlemen’ from whom the Queen’s Messengers were recruited, such as Captain Philip Wynter, late of the Bengal Army, to complete his journey from London to the Ottoman capital in three to four days.⁷⁶ The fortnightly run, which went by way of Paris, Stuttgart, Munich, Vienna, Belgrade and Sofia, was one of only three fortnightly ‘fixed journeys’ that the messengers performed, the others being to Berlin and, in the following week, to St. Petersburg via Berlin.⁷⁷ What documents did they bear with them to Constantinople?

Pressed by the Select Committee in 1870 to explain what the messengers actually carried, Hammond had mentioned instructions from the foreign secretary that were too sensitive to be sent by other means.⁷⁸ However, he had also laid particular emphasis on what came to be known as the ‘confidential print’, that is, copies of all the “secret and most confidential” correspondence received in the Foreign Office and forwarded for their edification to the British ambassadors at “the great courts”, among which he numbered Constantinople. The confidential print had its origins in 1829 but had only really started to grow in size after 1850.⁷⁹ What Hammond omitted to mention but was stressed when the same subject came up at the Ridley Commission in 1890, was that by this time the confidential print had become so voluminous—and so “horribly dangerous” if intercepted that it should really be abolished,

⁷⁵ See, for example, TNA, Memorandum of Service of Major St. Aubyn Player, London to Constantinople and back, 31 July–19 August 1879, FO366/265.

⁷⁶ Cookridge, *Orient Express*, pp. 86–7; Wynter, *On the Queen’s Errands*, pp. 220, 234; Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople, Brusa, and the Troad*, pp. 2–3. The first through express train from Paris to Constantinople arrived on the evening of 10 November 1888, *The Times*, 12 Nov. 1888. Under then current regulations, messengers were permitted to travel first class for journeys of over 150 miles.

⁷⁷ HCPP (C. 6172–I), 1890: Appendix, p. 175. A “local service” had been established from Calais to Paris.

⁷⁸ In 1890 the FO’s chief clerk told the royal commission that letters from the foreign secretary also went more quickly by messenger than by ordinary post, first because no time had to be wasted on ciphering and deciphering them, and secondly because in any case the “messenger beats the post”, HCPP (C. 6172–I), 1890: Mins. of Ev., paras. 26653–5.

⁷⁹ Roper, *The Records of the Foreign Office, 1782–1968*, p. 54.

said Sir Charles Dilke⁸⁰—that there was no alternative but to send it by messenger. To have sent it by ordinary post, said the permanent under-secretary, then Sir Philip Currie, would have required it all to be ciphered, which would have been “an endless labour”.⁸¹ For his own part, Sir Francis Alston, the long-serving chief clerk in the Foreign Office, came close to saying that carrying the confidential print was by this time the only reason for retaining messengers.⁸² Needless to say, with the Ottoman Empire the pivot on which turned so much of Europe’s international relations in the late nineteenth century, the ambassador at Constantinople relied very much on the confidential print, and so on the messengers who delivered it every fortnight.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the communications of the embassy with London were in very good condition. The telegraph connection was working well and had come down in price. The messenger service had been restored to its earlier frequency and benefited from faster, more comfortable, and more secure forms of transport. For the same reasons, the ordinary post was also much improved: in 1909 the approximate time taken for a letter to be carried from London to Constantinople was only 3 days and 18 hours.⁸³ Moreover communication by telephone seemed to be at hand.

Following a request in October 1912 from the ambassador, then Sir Gerard Lowther, the Foreign Office quickly authorised expenditure on the installation of telephones at the embassy houses in Pera and Therapia.⁸⁴ The work was to be done by the Constantinople Telephone Company, a British-owned concern recently granted a long-term monopoly by the Turkish government to provide a service for the city and its suburbs.⁸⁵ However, the company’s progress was slowed by the outbreak of war with Italy and then with the Balkan League, and it was February 1914 before the exchanges could be opened.⁸⁶ It was May before Lowther’s successor, Sir Louis Mallet, was able to sign a contract for a connection to the embassy buildings. After this the work

⁸⁰ HCPP (C. 6172–I), 1890: Mins. of Ev., para. 29133. Dilke was a radical Liberal member of the House of Commons and had been a junior FO minister in the early 1880s.

⁸¹ HCPP (C. 6172–I), 1890: Mins. of Ev., paras. 26316–17.

⁸² HCPP (C. 6172–I), 1890: Mins. of Ev., para. 26652.

⁸³ *Lloyd’s Calendar 1910*, p. 248.

⁸⁴ TNA, Lowther to Grey, 29 Oct. and FO to Lowther, 13 Nov. 1912, FO371/1520.

⁸⁵ *The Times*, 5 Mar. 1925; Southard, *American Industry in Europe*, pp. 52–3.

⁸⁶ *The Times*, 24 Apr. 1913, 8 May 1914.

was quickly completed but the installation was expensive and the cost of calls high. Telephones were placed only in the ambassador's study, the chancery, and the dragomanate.⁸⁷

The Foreign Office had acquired its own telephone system a little under a decade earlier⁸⁸ but it was to be many years before it could speak directly by this means to the ambassador at Constantinople. Meanwhile, with the outbreak of war between Britain and Turkey, the Constantinople Telephone Company's operation was taken over by the Turkish government in March 1915 and not returned to it until April 1919.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ TNA, Mallet to Grey, 15 May 1914, FO371/2134.

⁸⁸ *From Quills to Computers*, p. 10.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 23 Sept. 1919.

PART B

TWENTIETH CENTURY ROLE

INTRODUCTION TO PART B

At the beginning of the twentieth century the British Embassy in Turkey enjoyed a massive, handsome, and by now relatively fire-resistant building in Pera which added to British prestige. Communications with London were in good condition. On the other hand, the embassy's summer retreat at Therapia had burned down shortly before the outbreak of war in 1914 and its fleet was in a neglected state.

The occupants of the embassy were numerous, not least because of the workload imposed by the capitulations. But the diplomats among them had only a slight knowledge of the Turkish language, found too many distractions on the Bosphorus, and relied heavily on the dragomanate. This vital section had been substantially anglicized following the establishment of the Levant Consular Service in 1877 but it was now smaller, handicapped by the loss of most of its native dragomans, and dispirited by poor promotion prospects together with the monotony of the work. The consulate-general in Galata had also taken some hard knocks recently, although it remained a substantial support to the embassy. In the Ottoman provinces the embassy was represented by over 40 consular posts, many still occupied by Levantines.

What traditional reflexes did the embassy bring with it into the twentieth century? First, it brought an interest in active support for British companies seeking business in the Ottoman Empire. This was inherited from the days of Levant Company control, not so long removed, and was institutionally entrenched in the commercial department of the consulate-general, although the embassy dragomanate also did much commercial work. Secondly, the embassy was the bearer of the tradition, reinforced by centuries in which the Ottomans had declined to establish permanent missions abroad, that important Anglo-Turkish negotiations should be conducted in Constantinople rather than London. Thirdly, it still believed that the discreet distribution of presents and, when this failed, the menace of a warship, were essential accompaniments of an active diplomacy in Turkey. Last but not least, it brought with it a reforming reflex: a constant itch to improve the Ottoman Empire, whether this was in the treatment of its Christian subjects or the way it ran its custom houses.

In short, the embassy entered the twentieth century with a deeply entrenched institutional pattern (even if it was creaking at points) and some equally entrenched attitudes towards its proper role. But the question of how, if at all, this pattern and these attitudes would need to adjust was put on hold in November 1914.

CHAPTER SIX

FOREIGNERS AND SAILORS, 1914–24

In the first week of August 1914 two developments occurred which sealed the fate of the British Embassy at Constantinople for the next ten years: Britain declared war on Germany, and Turkey signed a secret treaty of alliance with the German Empire. Relations between Britain and Turkey thereafter deteriorated markedly, and following the incursion into Egypt of Bedouin levies and the surprise Turkish naval attack on the Black Sea ports of Britain's Russian ally, both of which occurred on 29 October, the British Embassy hurriedly made its final preparations to shut up shop. Some of its papers were burned, some were placed in a locked room on the top floor, and some were transferred to the American Embassy, which had agreed to take over protection of British interests.¹ On 1 November, the Russian mission having left on the previous day, the British Ambassador, Sir Louis Mallet, who had been in his post for only a year, closed the embassy and, together with most of his staff, left Constantinople. Four days later the Asquith government in London announced that a state of war existed between Britain and Turkey.

The British Section, 1914–18

British interests in the Ottoman Empire had been placed in the charge of Henry Morgenthau, ambassador in Turkey of the neutral United States, whose mission in the Palazzo Corpi was very close to the British Embassy.² This was a good move because the Turks had no desire to offend the US government, of which they had hopes for future loans and upon which they depended for the protection of their own interests

¹ TNA, Mallet to Grey, 17 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146; Morgenthau, *Secrets of the Bosphorus*, p. 83.

² The Americans asked the Italian Ambassador to look after British interests (as well as those of France, Belgium, Serbia, and the USA itself) in districts where there were no American officials, TNA, Page (London) to Grey, 14 Nov. and Spring-Rice (Washington) to FO, 18 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146.

in Britain and elsewhere.³ Furthermore, the American Ambassador and his wife had gone out of their way to cultivate friendly relations with the Turks.⁴

The Turkish government had initially “professed great readiness to allow anyone to stay on who cared to do so”.⁵ It had therefore been arranged that four British consular officials should be attached to the American Embassy, so creating one among a number of early examples of what half a century later came to be known as an ‘interests section’. The officials concerned were the consul and legal dragoman, Telford Waugh; the chief clerk of the consulate-general, Cyril Cumberbatch; the registrar of the consular court, Reginald Scudamore; and the second clerk in the court, Morton William Dawson. They were assisted by the unacknowledged British Embassy dragoman, George Tchamitch, who had replaced Onik Efendi in 1907, and a correspondence clerk, C. Arnold. The first task of the new ‘British Section’ was to help with the identification of British subjects resident in the city but it also became increasingly involved in providing for their welfare, and later for that of British prisoners of war.⁶

Waugh reported to Morgenthau on 31 October and on the following day moved documents and cash to the American Embassy.⁷ He was soon full of praise for the energy and thoughtfulness with which his new chief was protecting British interests⁸ and remained with the Americans until the end of January 1915, communicating with the Foreign Office via the Italian bag and the British Embassy at Rome.⁹ Cumberbatch stayed until 25 June.¹⁰ While in relative terms, therefore, these two officials may not have remained in Constantinople for long, the fact is, as Ryan says, that they were there during a critical period.¹¹ During these first months of the conflict some members of the large British community in the city were desperate for help to leave and all

³ Page (London) to Secretary of State, 5 Nov. 1914, *FRUS*, 1914 Supplement.

⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, vol. 2, p. 198.

⁵ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 108.

⁶ TNA, Willebois to Dutch Foreign Minister, 4 July 1917, FO383/343; Waugh, *Turkey*, pp. 152–4; Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*, p. 361. One British consular officer, A. C. Routh, stayed in Smyrna throughout the war, and there may have been others, TNA, Routh to High Commissioner (Constantinople), 20 Feb. 1919, FO369/1252.

⁷ Waugh, *Turkey*, p. 154.

⁸ TNA, Waugh (American Embassy) to Mallet, 3 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146.

⁹ TNA, Waugh (American Embassy) to Clerk (FO), 29 Nov. 1914, FO371/2147.

¹⁰ *FO List*.

¹¹ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 108.

were anxious for guarantees of their safety if they had no alternative but to stay where they were; for as ‘enemy aliens’ they were periodically threatened with being used as human shields should Muslims be killed by the guns of the allied navies. The American mission, which did not have a large staff and in any case had agreed to protect French, Belgian, and Serbian interests as well, was on numerous occasions besieged by supplicants. It needed all the help it could get.¹²

The move to leave behind the British officials was also potentially significant for another reason: it provided at least a slender opportunity to disseminate the British view of the rupture of relations with Turkey, where only German news was being officially permitted to enter from the outside world. Unfortunately, the Foreign Office seems to have been slow to exploit this. As early as 3 November, Waugh had proposed that it might “telegraph occasionally plain statements of facts, for no one knows here what is happening”,¹³ and subsequently two white papers were produced, one containing selected pre-war telegrams exchanged with the embassy and the other Mallet’s own summary of events.¹⁴ However, these were targeted chiefly at British colonies with a Muslim population,¹⁵ and, although at the end of November Waugh asked for several copies, it was two weeks before his request was received in London and Christmas Eve before instructions were issued to send him six of each via the Rome bag.¹⁶ What use he was able to make of them is not clear.

More promising was the potential of the British Section for intelligence gathering, for this could be undertaken on its own initiative. In both letters Waugh had been able to get out in November he reported on conditions in the city, and in the last asked if there was any “special news” that he could supply. But even before he made this request, the Turkish government had shown its suspicions of what he and his

¹² Morgenthau, *Secrets of the Bosphorus*, chs. 12 and 19; Waugh, *Turkey*, pp. 152–62. Morgenthau had the assistance of dragomans from the other three embassies but soon lost the Serbian dragoman, whom the Turks insisted on expelling, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 28 Nov., *FRUS*, 1914 Supplement.

¹³ TNA, Waugh (American Embassy) to Mallet, 3 Nov., repeating the suggestion in a letter to George Clerk in the FO’s War Department on 16 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146.

¹⁴ HCPP (Cd. 7628), Nov. 1914 and HCPP (Cd. 7716), Dec. 1914. These papers were ‘white’ in two senses: white papers representing ‘white propaganda’.

¹⁵ TNA, Colonial Office mins. and draft despatch to colonies, 11–16 Nov. 1914, folios 42–4, CO323/644.

¹⁶ TNA, Waugh (American Embassy) to Clerk (FO), 29 Nov., and accompanying FO mins. of 17 and 24 Dec. 1914, FO371/2147.

allied colleagues were up to, and Morgenthau was soon under pressure to cramp their style.

Initially the Turks were particularly exercised—“absolutely wild”, said Morgenthau—by knowledge that the Russians were getting information about the movements of their warships into the Black Sea from a clandestine wireless in the city, and a death penalty was announced for any person found to be concealing one. Only days after the Americans took charge of the British Embassy Morgenthau turned over to the police an old aerial found there in order to persuade the Turks not to insist on a search. (The embassy still contained moveable property that could be stolen, including part of its archives, horses, carriages, and so on.) But on 11 November, and without even notifying the American Ambassador, they entered it anyway. No wireless was discovered but what they did find in a locked room was a small arsenal: 80 rifles, 90 pistols and 9,000 rounds of ammunition. Fearing that this created “a very bad impression”, on 19 November Morgenthau turned it over to the Ministry of War before re-sealing the building.¹⁷

Very soon neutral embassies, including the American one, also came under pressure not to assist the representatives of belligerent governments by forwarding their despatches.¹⁸ For the first time officially alleging that Telford Waugh was sending home sensitive information and “spreading false news”, at the end of the year the Turkish government went so far as to ask for his removal. They dropped this request in the absence of evidence to support the charge but on 22 January 1915 made a demand for his removal that could not safely be ignored. He had, said the Turkish government, sent to London information about the movement of the Turkish fleet obtained in the course of a meeting with Turkish officers at his house.¹⁹ Sir Arthur Nicolson was confident that Waugh would be able to rebut this charge and was anxious for him to remain but Morgenthau reluctantly advised him to depart. If he did not, “he will disappear”, Mehmet Talaat, the powerful minister of the interior, told the American Ambassador.²⁰ Although formally denying the charge against him, Waugh took the hint.²¹ He left Constantinople

¹⁷ Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 7, 12 and 28 Nov. 1914, *FRUS*, 1914 Supplement.

¹⁸ TNA, Waugh (American Embassy) to Clerk (FO), 29 Nov. 1914, FO371/2147.

¹⁹ TNA, Waugh to FO, 2 Jan. 1915, FO371/2481; US Embassy London to Grey, 22 Jan. 1915, and min. of Sir A. Nicolson, 23 Jan. 1915, FO383/91.

²⁰ Waugh, *Turkey*, pp. 154, 160–1.

²¹ TNA, Waugh to Morgenthau, 22 Jan. 1914, FO383/91.

on 27 January and the next that was heard of him by the Foreign Office, which was slightly peeved at his “sudden departure” and anxious to hear what arrangements he had made for the protection of its property, was a telegram from the British Consul at Dedeagach. Sent on 28 January, this said that he had just arrived safely in neutral Bulgaria.²²

Waugh’s letters from the US Embassy had been short, infrequent, and unavoidably slow in arriving, and seem to have contained hardly any documents other than a few Turkish newspapers and an official proclamation. Their news was also on the whole of a rather mundane, general and speculative kind—the mood in the city, possible German plans, and so on—and they certainly generated no excitement in the Foreign Office. Waugh was no Fitzmaurice when it came to ferreting out information, and in any case he had his hands full with other matters. Cumberbatch, however, seems to have been a different matter and, as we have seen, he was allowed to remain with the Americans until nearly the end of June 1915, that is, until long after the start of the Gallipoli enterprise. Unfortunately, only one of his letters seems to have survived but it is sufficient to reveal his role. Written to Waugh after the latter’s return to England, and showing that it was not the first of the letters they had exchanged, it was dated 6 March, just two weeks after the opening bombardments by the British fleet of the Dardanelles forts. It was packed with valuable political and military intelligence and was printed for the use of the War Council on 31 March (see Appendix 6). Included in its information was the detail that “both Mizzi and the ‘Stamboul’ people are making arrangements to start work at a moment’s notice”. This clear hint of preparations for a *coup d’état* against the government, which would allow the Straits to be opened to the Allied fleet, was just the sort of thing the War Council wanted to hear.²³

With the departure of Cumberbatch in late June the British Section of the US Embassy was significantly weakened; at about the same time it suffered further blows when Scudamore was imprisoned and Arnold deported.²⁴ Another one followed when, under strong German pressure, on 20 April 1917 Turkey was forced to break diplomatic relations with

²² TNA, Heathcote-Smith to FO, 28 January 1915, with mins. of 1 and 2 Feb., FO383/91.

²³ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, p. 216. Dr Mizzi was a Maltese barrister, proprietor of the *Levant Herald*, and legendary enemy of the Young Turks’ CUP.

²⁴ Scudamore was imprisoned for two and a half months, then in the spring of 1916 deported to Broussa, where he lingered in internment until his death on 6 August 1918: see papers in TNA, FO383/102; *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1918. A similar fate was met by

the United States.²⁵ The Netherlands Legation was willing to assume the protection of British interests but found that Tchamitch was the only official left in the British Section. To make matters worse, as an Ottoman subject the dragoman lived in daily peril of military call up. The section's work had also been steadily increasing in both its quantity and complexity, as the Dutch Minister, M. de Willebois, who now had responsibility for Russian and French interests as well, had frequent cause to complain.²⁶ This situation disturbed the Foreign Office as well.²⁷ However, the threat of conscription hanging over Tchamitch was lifted (probably as a result of the intercession on his behalf by Willebois, who was liked by the Turks),²⁸ and the section was stiffened by the addition of Dutch staff. Willebois also appointed as head of the British Section Richard Marinitch, the son of the former second dragoman of the British Embassy.²⁹ And so it survived for the rest of the war, chiefly doing valuable work with prisoners of war. All in all, foreigners had served British interests in Turkey well; so, too, had the socially inferior consular staff and the despised dragomans.

The British High Commission, 1918–24

On 30 October 1918, an armistice was signed between Britain and Turkey at Mudros Bay. A fortnight later the flagship of Admiral Sir Arthur Calthorpe, the British commander of the allied fleets in the Mediterranean who had headed the British side in the negotiations, led the Allied fleet through the Dardanelles to Constantinople. However, achieving an armistice was one thing; restoring peace was quite another.

The armistice period lasted for an extraordinary five years. During this time Turkey remained technically an enemy state, so the forms of ordinary diplomatic relations could not be re-established: the British mission established in Constantinople during the 'transition to peace'

many native dragomans and cavasses at British consulates in the Ottoman Empire, TNA, FO to Cheetham, 19 Mar. 1919, FO369/1252.

²⁵ Elkus, *The Memoirs of Abram Elkus*, pp. 89–90.

²⁶ Notably in TNA, Willebois to Dutch Foreign Minister, 4 July 1917, FO383/343 and 19 Nov. 1917, FO383/452.

²⁷ TNA, FO to Townley (The Hague), 23 Aug. 1917, FO383/343.

²⁸ The Turks agreed that his work would be regarded as tantamount to military service, TNA, Townley (The Hague) to FO, 15 Sept. 1917, FO383/343.

²⁹ TNA, Willebois to Dutch Foreign Minister, 4 July 1917, FO383/343.

was given the anodyne title of ‘high commission’ rather than ‘embassy’;³⁰ and until well into the armistice years those of its civilian staff made temporary officers continued to wear their service uniforms.³¹ This was not, however, an embassy by another name. In fact, it resembled more a military than a diplomatic mission, with a strong colouring of naval staff.³² This reflected not only its military priorities but also the extreme difficulty of obtaining suitable staff from the diplomatic and consular services, which had been depleted by both the war and post-war disaffection with the prospects held out by these careers.

Admiral Calthorpe, who was fluent in French and had some diplomatic experience,³³ was appointed high commissioner but retained his duties as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet and spent most of his time on his flagship. In August 1919 he was succeeded in both of his posts by Admiral Sir John de Robeck. Rear-Admiral Richard Webb was appointed assistant high commissioner and established himself permanently in the old embassy building in Pera, along with most of the other staff of the high commission. (With the Therapia buildings still unrepaired, the former Austrian residence at Yeni Keui was temporarily rented for a summer embassy. But, with the acquisition of the *Makook III*, a Nile boat built for the Khedive in 1914, the new embassy yacht often came in effect to serve this purpose for many years afterwards.)³⁴ Webb was in charge when the high commissioner was at sea, which was often. Andrew Ryan, the Levant Service officer and former second dragoman of the embassy, says of this establishment that:

For quite a long time it resembled nothing so much as a battleship on shore, so greatly did the naval element preponderate... The Chancery was staffed with officers of the Paymaster branch. Naval ratings abounded in the corridors.³⁵

³⁰ On this circumstance and others in which high commissions have been employed in diplomacy, see Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference*, App. 5.

³¹ Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East*, p. 332.

³² It was actually classed by the FO as a ‘special mission’.

³³ He had been a naval attaché, and required to negotiate with his French and Italian counterparts in the latter years of the war, Halpern, ‘Calthorpe’.

³⁴ The secretaries’ house at Therapia, which had escaped the flames in 1913, was also reoccupied, but in the winter of 1921–2 it succumbed to fire as well, TNA, De Robeck to Curzon, 14 Sept. 1919, FO608/102; K-H to Halifax, 16 Dec. 1939, FO366/1053; K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp. 183–4; Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, p. 254; Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*, p. 104.

³⁵ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 121; see also Waugh, *Turkey*, p. 172.

It also had its amusing side: “The motor car is alongside, sir”, an orderly would announce to the waiting officer when a vehicle pulled up outside the building’s entrance.³⁶

There was acute apprehension in the Admiralty as well as the Foreign Office that the sailors would find themselves blundering through a political minefield in Constantinople, and a particular fear that the French—who, together with the Italians, were also establishing a high commission—would run rings round them.³⁷ An urgent and partially successful effort was therefore made to give the high commission a civilian element composed of old Turkey hands.³⁸ This was headed by the diplomat, Thomas Hohler, as ‘chief political officer’, with Andrew Ryan as his number two. Other familiar names included Robert Graves, financial adviser; Telford Waugh, head of the consular section; Cyril Cumberbatch, back in his position of chief clerk; and George Tchamitch, now styled ‘native assistant’, whose application for naturalization as a British subject after 23 years service under the crown was warmly endorsed by the Foreign Office at the end of 1920.³⁹ Sir Adam Block, who remained representative of the British bondholders, was also available before long as a financial expert, although Calthorpe was warned by the foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, that his views on Turkish politics did not necessarily coincide with those of the British government, and he was never given an official position in the mission.⁴⁰ Perhaps this was one last triumph for Gerald Fitzmaurice over his oldest and most bitter rival.

Despite the effort put in to recruiting old Turkey hands, it was well into 1919 before the civilian element in the high commission was anywhere near serviceable. There was also a rapid turnover of staff, and early in the following year Admiral Webb complained repeatedly that the post was overstretched.⁴¹ The dragomanate, in particular, had

³⁶ Waugh, *Turkey*, p. 172.

³⁷ TNA, mins. of Kidston, Cecil and Tilley on Webb (Constantinople) to Balfour, 5 Dec. 1918, FO371/3415; Hohler, *Diplomatic Petrel*, p. 240.

³⁸ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 121–2, 128; Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East*, pp. 322–3; TNA, Instructions to Admiral Sir S. Calthorpe, and Balfour to Calthorpe, 9 Nov. 1918, FO371/3415. When de Robeck became high commissioner he appointed Harry Luke, a colonial service officer, as political officer on his personal naval staff, Luke, *Cities and Men*, vol. 2, p. 49.

³⁹ TNA, HO144/1691/409701.

⁴⁰ TNA, Balfour to Calthorpe, 9 Nov. 1918, FO371/3415; min. of W. S. Edmonds, 11 Apr. 1922, FO371/7860.

⁴¹ TNA, Webb to FO, 6 May, 1920.

never been restored to its pre-war dimensions.⁴² In the second half of 1920, however, things began to improve for the civilian element. It gained another second secretary, Geoffrey Knox, formerly of the Levant Service, and a first secretary in Nevile Henderson whose initial task, in his own unforgiving words, was to “clean up the mess” left by the Navy.⁴³ The consular section also acquired two more staff, including a consul and legal dragoman, and on 1 October Waugh was promoted to consul-general. Most importantly, in a last minute change of plan, the politically blimpish but experienced and thoroughly professional diplomat, Sir Horace Rumbold, was in November imposed on the Turks in place of de Robeck.⁴⁴ (No *agrément* for his appointment was sought from them, and no credentials for their inspection provided.)⁴⁵ It is true that the dragomanate was not put on a proper footing until the following year;⁴⁶ nor apparently had the position of the ‘native assistant’ been regularized, as Ryan had wished.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, by November 1920 the metamorphosis from a naval high commission to a full-blown diplomatic mission was all but complete and the Admiralty was gratefully able to surrender its charge to the Foreign Office. For the first time since the armistice the British representation in Constantinople was actually noticed in the *Foreign Office List*, although it was to be more than four years before its formal status was changed to that of an embassy. What were the responsibilities of the high commission during its unexpectedly long life?

The five years following the armistice were a period of considerable confusion and renewed bitterness in Anglo-Turkish relations. This was chiefly because the British premier, Lloyd George, supported the

⁴² Memorandum by Andrew Ryan, 22 July, in de Robeck to Curzon, 5 Aug. 1920, FO371/5059.

⁴³ Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*, pp. 101–2; Goldstein, ‘Knox’.

⁴⁴ William Max-Müller had already been told that he was to replace de Robeck. On the likely reasons why he was jettisoned in favour of Rumbold, see Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*, pp. 98–9; Otte, ‘Alien Diplomatist’, p. 234; Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, p. 22.

⁴⁵ TNA, Akers-Douglas to Tilley and Hardinge, 9 October 1920, and Rumbold to Akers-Douglas, 22 Nov. 1920, FO371/5279. Shortly after this, the FO accepted Reşid Pasha as Turkey’s ‘unofficial representative’ in London, TNA, min. of Tilley, 1 Dec.; and Curzon to Rumbold, 3 Dec. 1920, FO371/5279.

⁴⁶ The positions of second and third dragoman were not filled until January and October 1921, respectively; it was also 1 January 1921 before Ryan was formally promoted to chief dragoman on the retirement of Fitzmaurice.

⁴⁷ TNA, min. of Scott (Consular Dept.), 2 Dec. 1920, FO369/1441; Treasury to FO, 7 Dec. 1920, FO371/5060.

territorial ambitions of Greece in eastern Thrace and western Anatolia, and in May 1919—most galling of all to the Turks—permitted it to occupy Smyrna. This staggering blunder upset even the accommodating government of Damad Ferid Pasha, the grand vizier so hostile to the previous Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government who had been appointed by Sultan Vahiduddin in March. And it clashed head-on with the new mood of Turkish national resistance—resistance to the Allies and the sultan’s government as well as to the Greeks—led by the brilliant and charismatic general, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, whose rapidly growing political movement was centred on Ankara. In March 1920, in a provocative show of strength in the name of law and order, Constantinople was formally occupied by Allied troops, thereby ensuring that the political centre of gravity of Turkey should come to rest even more firmly with the nationalists in central Anatolia.

In August, following months of casual and intermittent negotiations in Paris, a peace treaty humiliating to the Turks was finally signed between the Allies and the weak government in Constantinople. But the instant rejection of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Kemalists was sufficient to render it a dead letter.⁴⁸ In 1922 the Turks eventually drove the Greeks out of Anatolia in a war which nearly led to the resumption of fighting between British and Turkish forces at Chanak (Çanakkale) in September. In consequence of these events, in November—with anti-war sentiment strong in Britain and even stronger in France and Italy—another peace conference was convened between the Allied governments and Turkey. This time the Turks were represented by delegates of Kemal, who was determined to concede not another inch of territory, remove the capitulations, and free his country’s economy from all the shackles of foreign control. It was 24 July 1923, with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, before peace was finally established between Britain and Turkey, and early autumn of the same year before the occupation forces actually left the country. In these events the high commission played a limited but significant role.

Showing the continuing influence of past diplomatic practice, Admiral Calthorpe had been provided with two sets of instructions by the Foreign Office. One was relatively brief and formal and contained parts

⁴⁸ MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, ch. 29; Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 144.

suitable for quoting to the Turkish government;⁴⁹ the other consisted of a private letter from Balfour and was longer and more revealing.⁵⁰ It was from these two documents that the high commissioner was given clearly to understand that his mission's remit was severely limited, not only in nature but also in geographical extent.

Apart from political reporting, the high commission was to confine itself to ensuring the execution of the terms of the armistice⁵¹ and the essentially consular function of protecting British interests in "Constantinople and Turkey proper". It was particularly emphasised that all questions pending between the Allies and the Ottoman government must be left for decision to the multilateral peace conference, which was soon to gather in Paris, and that Calthorpe should be careful to say nothing that might seem to commit the British government to some position on any of these matters. He was also enjoined to cooperate closely on matters of common concern with any French, Italian, and American representatives who might join him in Constantinople.

In his private letter to the high commissioner Balfour had said, among other things, that he should confine his attention to Constantinople and Anatolia. This would underline that it was a "fixed" part of Britain's policy that the Arab lands it had seized from the Ottomans were lost to them for good. He should also make clear for the benefit of Britain's Muslim subjects in Egypt and India, with a view to dealing a fatal blow to pan-Islamism and pan-Turanianism, that Turkey had been roundly defeated: any friendly overtures from the sultan and his officials should therefore be met with "polite reserve". Finally, having explained that the present Ottoman government was merely a facade behind which lurked the CUP, Balfour nevertheless urged Calthorpe to remain aloof from any manoeuvres by its opponents to oust it. Since they were now weakly led this could only lead to internal disintegration; besides, the existence of a pro-Allied government would make it morally more difficult for Britain to impose severe terms on Turkey.

Some of the high commission's instructions were soon academic, although this was of little moment since fresh instructions could so

⁴⁹ TNA, Instructions to Admiral Sir S. Calthorpe, 9 Nov., and Balfour to Calthorpe, 11 Nov. 1918, FO371/3415.

⁵⁰ TNA, Balfour to Calthorpe, 9 Nov. 1918, FO371/3415.

⁵¹ This included obtaining the release of all "Armenian interned persons and prisoners" as well as Allied prisoners of war, Armistice Convention with Turkey concluded on behalf of Great Britain and Allied Powers.—Port Mudros, Lemnos, October 30, 1918, *British and Foreign State Papers, 1917–1918*, vol. CXI, pp. 611–13.

easily be requested by telegram, despite the suspicion of this mode of communication—and even more the telephone—still harboured in the Foreign Office and missions abroad.⁵² The injunction to avoid encouraging a pro-Allied coup, for example, had become redundant by early 1919 because the *Entente Libérale* had come to power anyway. It was then difficult for the high commission to avoid “much more intimate” relations with the Turkish government, difficult although this proved for the “unbending” Admiral Webb.⁵³ With Constantinople virtually bankrupt and heaving with White Russians fleeing from the Bolsheviks, public services on the verge of collapse, and security an acute problem, any other policy would have been absurd. As time wore on and the power of the rival government in Ankara grew, Andrew Ryan also found himself having to see a good deal of its unofficial representative in Constantinople; this was Hamid Bey, the head of the Red Crescent and a man long respected by the British.⁵⁴ In the end, the high commission even had to help many of the members of the recognized government—including the sultan himself—escape the country when the Kemalists arrived in 1922.

Most of the high commission’s instructions remained far from academic, however, and one was to see that the terms of the armistice were enforced. These were chiefly of a military nature, and here its task was mainly to provide political advice to the soldiers and sailors on operational duty, which was relatively straightforward.⁵⁵ The same could not be said of the accomplishment of the high commission’s other tasks, notably in the areas of relief and redress of the wrongs suffered by the Christian minorities during the war. Here the drift of high policy, the chaos and insecurity in the country, the growth of Turkish hostility, the rapid drying up of relief funds, and inter-Allied tensions, all presented immense difficulties.

An ‘Armenian-Greek Section’ was created within the high commission. This was added to the responsibilities of Robert Graves and had

⁵² The last of the ‘counsels to diplomatists’ provided by Sir Ernest Satow was that the telegraph and telephone “leave no time for reflection or consultation, and demand an immediate and often a hasty decision on matters of vital importance”. Nevertheless, the same manual codified the method of obtaining fresh instructions by telegraph, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, pp. 155, 157.

⁵³ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 126, 128, 135, 149.

⁵⁴ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 164; TNA, Webb to Curzon, 3 Sept. 1919, FO371/4158.

⁵⁵ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 124, 142.

frequent meetings, including many with representatives of the Armenian and Greek patriarchates. Unfortunately, in the prevailing circumstances the task of restoring the rights of their flocks was virtually impossible, as Calthorpe soon made clear to Lord Curzon, who was in the painful process of edging Balfour out of the Foreign Office.⁵⁶ Its achievements were inevitably meagre and it is surprising that it survived until late in 1921.⁵⁷ Other special sections in the high commission had similar experiences. It was not long either before it was dragged into the business of actually administering the city, an onerous responsibility since the British had care of Pera and Galata, which contained “all the centres of dissipation”.⁵⁸

Members of the high commission were also required to serve on inter-allied bodies: Waugh on a juridical commission and Graves on a financial one, while Ryan supervised the British section of the one dealing with press censorship. The high commissioner himself soon found that he had to have weekly meetings with his French and Italian colleagues to decide on common action.

The difficulties of political reporting were compounded by the fact that in the provinces it was the late 1920s before the consular posts (Smyrna excepted) could be re-established. Great reliance had to be placed instead on information obtained from relief officers, American missionaries, and voluntary organizations; and for information on Nationalist thinking, from the press.⁵⁹ It was also a harbinger of things to come, especially during the Second World War, that the embassy was now faced with a rival in intelligence gathering to which Curzon attached particular value. This was the interception and reading of encrypted Turkish diplomatic telegrams by a combined operation involving British intelligence officers in Constantinople, the headquarters in the city of the British-owned Eastern Telegraph Company (subsequently Cable & Wireless), and the Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS) in England, established in 1919.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ TNA, Calthorpe to Curzon, 30 July 1919, FO371/4158.

⁵⁷ Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East*, ch. 21 *passim*.

⁵⁸ Waugh, *Turkey*, pp. 177–8; see also Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, p. 223ff.

⁵⁹ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 165.

⁶⁰ Jeffery and Sharp, ‘Lord Curzon and secret intelligence’, pp. 106, 108; Denniston, *Churchill’s Secret War*, esp. pp. 30, 56. Denniston states that the British government had continuous access to Turkish diplomatic intercepts from 1922 onwards (p. 56) but this could only have been achieved with the greatest difficulty, if at all, since following a dispute between the Eastern Telegraph and the Turkish government, all the

Although it struggled on all these fronts, the high commission contained men with good political judgement and great knowledge of Turkey, and Britain's soldiers and sailors, as well as the Foreign Office, respected their advice. Indeed, it was in providing advice that it probably made its most significant impact on events in the long five year armistice period, particularly during the Chanak crisis and at the Lausanne Conference in 1922–3.

Following the rout of the Greek army in the summer of 1922 and the burning of Smyrna in September, Britain's important defensive position at Chanak on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles appeared to be in danger of being overrun by Mustafa Kemal's exultant forces. The reaction to this of Lloyd George and his bellicose allies in the cabinet was to order reinforcements, and on 29 September—although facing public hostility at home, little prospect of foreign or dominion support, and a foreign secretary pleading for patience—to instruct General Sir Charles Harington, who commanded the Allied occupation forces, to give the Nationalists an ultimatum. They must withdraw at once from the neutral zone around Chanak or be fired upon by all the forces at Britain's disposal. However, only a week earlier the Allies had invited Kemal to a general peace conference, tempting terms had been suggested, and—as a preliminary—direct armistice talks had been proposed with Harington at either Ismid or Mudanya, a small port on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmora. This offer had not yet been spurned. As a result, Harington, who was one of the most brilliant staff officers in the British Army and at the time strongly tipped to be Chief of the Imperial General Staff, refused to deliver Lloyd George's ultimatum. Instead, he sought to arrange the kind of negotiations with Kemal at Mudanya that had only recently been proposed. On 1 October this was accepted by Kemal and on 11 October the Mudanya Convention, under which the Turks agreed to withdraw from the neutral zone and delay their occupation of Eastern Thrace, was signed. Harington's disobedience to his own orders had prevented the outbreak of war between Britain and Turkey and prepared the ground for a definitive peace settlement—but he had not acted alone. What was the high commission's role in all this?

company's offices were closed and its staff withdrawn from the middle of 1924 until 1927: *The Times*, 20 June 1924 etc. and papers in FO286/929.

Throughout the Chanak crisis Sir Horace Rumbold, supported by Nevile Henderson, now his counsellor, worked very closely with General Harington and supported his attitude.⁶¹ As a result, they strengthened his conciliatory reflexes and emboldened him to take what was clearly a career-threatening step.⁶² The information, arguments, and compromise proposal on Eastern Thrace that Rumbold telegraphed to the Foreign Office also stiffened the position of Lord Curzon, who was the only vocal opponent of the war party in the cabinet but exhausted and unwell. Key points in these communications came from discussions with the Kemalist representative in Constantinople, Hamid Bey, with whom the high commission's dragomans were the main link. Although Rumbold remained in Constantinople while Harington took the lead in the successful subsequent negotiations between the Allied generals and the Nationalists at Mudanya, his telegraphic communications with Harington as well as with Curzon—struggling to maintain unity with the French—were of very great importance. The high commission also advised Harington over final details when he returned briefly to Constantinople during a temporary breakdown in the talks. Altogether, then, although the cabinet in London had for the first time been able to enjoy the benefits of Turkish diplomatic intercepts provided by GCCS,⁶³ this was a classic example not only of the superior insight of the man on the spot—Rumbold as well as Harington—but also of his ability to shape high policy by the manipulation of local events.⁶⁴ Not for nothing did Harold Nicolson dedicate the first edition of his *Diplomacy* to Rumbold—'An Ideal Diplomatist'.⁶⁵

The high commission was also much more involved in the determination of peace terms with Turkey, now represented by Mustafa Kemal's government in Ankara, than had been foreshadowed in the

⁶¹ Ryan says that Henderson was actually more sympathetic to the Turks than Rumbold and that Harington leaned more to him than the high commissioner, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 166, 168.

⁶² Harington, *Tim Harington Looks Back*, p. 150.

⁶³ Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, p. 24.

⁶⁴ On the Chanak crisis and the details of Rumbold's contribution to its resolution, see especially Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, pp. 260–79; *DBFP1*, vol. 18; Otte, 'Rumbold'. See also Gilmour, *Curzon*, pp. 543–8; Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*, pp. 106–13; Kinross, *Atatürk*, pp. 334–8; and Nicolson, *Curzon*, p. 275. In his otherwise excellent essay, Davison not merely omits mention of Rumbold in his account of the Chanak diplomacy but mistakenly describes Harington as the British High Commissioner, 'Turkish diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne', p. 192.

⁶⁵ As pointed out by Otte in his 'Rumbold'.

instructions given to it back in 1918. These terms were concluded at the conference which assembled at Lausanne on 20 November 1922. The high commission's role at Lausanne was important in spite of the fact that decrypts of telegrams, especially those exchanged between the Turkish delegation and its masters in Ankara, also made a significant contribution to British negotiating tactics.⁶⁶ This was because Lord Curzon, the leader of the British delegation and president of the conference, chose Rumbold as his deputy; and Rumbold, in his turn, chose as his own assistant the man who was now officially his chief dragoman, Andrew Ryan.

On 4 February 1923 the Lausanne conference temporarily foundered following Curzon's rash announcement of a short deadline for it to complete its work, and did not resume again until 23 April. When it did so the British foreign secretary remained in London and entrusted the leadership of the British delegation to Rumbold and Ryan, now regarded by the Kemalists as their most resolute opponents.⁶⁷ This was the longest, most difficult and decisive phase of the conference, as is made clear by Andrew Ryan, who played a larger role in the second round and was the last man to exaggerate his own importance. The political situation in Turkey remained extremely unsettled and resumption of the talks had by no means been a foregone conclusion. There was also a whole raft of contentious issues with which to deal, including those found too difficult to resolve in the first round, among them the judicial rights of foreigners in Turkey, guarantees for the treatment of non-Muslim minorities, and the Turkish demand for a Greek war indemnity. It was for precisely this reason that the second round lasted much longer than the first, despite the fact that it enjoyed more informal procedures.⁶⁸

It was not until 24 July that the conference, during the decisive stage of which the high commission had effectively controlled the British delegation, was successfully concluded, Rumbold signing the Treaty of Lausanne as British plenipotentiary. It is true that the treaty registered many British defeats on questions concerning Turkey proper. However,

⁶⁶ Jeffery and Sharp, 'Lord Curzon and secret intelligence', pp. 114–20. On the importance generally of secret intelligence to diplomatic tactics, see also Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, pp. 153–4.

⁶⁷ The remainder of the British delegation on this occasion consisted of two men from the FO (an assistant legal adviser and a first secretary in the Eastern Department), one from the Treasury and another from the Board of Trade.

⁶⁸ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 184–98; see also Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, pp. 289–98; compare Gilmour, *Curzon*, p. 566.

this was hardly the fault of the high commission but a reflection of the changed realities of power and public mood on both sides. Tying up the conference's loose ends in London in August, Ryan also helped to coach the junior minister at the Foreign Office who had the task of defending the treaty in the House of Commons.⁶⁹

Foreigners had played their part in support of British interests in Turkey during the war (initially with the assistance of British consular officers) and sailors had done the same during the first two years of the armistice. After this the diplomats had reasserted their influence, and to good effect.

⁶⁹ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 199.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELUCTANTLY TO ANKARA, 1924–38

On 2 October 1923 the Allied occupation of Constantinople had come to an end. However, ratifying the Treaty of Lausanne proved an extremely slow process and it was 6 August 1924 before all instruments of ratification were deposited and the state of war with Turkey was formally terminated. This delay had not only annoyed the Turks and made the task of the British High Commission in dealing with them more difficult but also led to the postponement of decisions on three questions that could now be postponed no longer. First, what was to become of the dragomanate of the embassy? This was closely identified with the Old Turkey but local expertise remained as important as ever. Secondly, what was to be the status of Britain's regular diplomatic mission in Turkey? Some thought it should resume its status as an embassy but others thought it should now be a mere legation. Thirdly, should the British mission—whatever its status—remain in Constantinople or follow the Nationalists to Ankara? There were good arguments on this question on both sides.

A Dragomanate By Any Other Name...

The dragomanate of the embassy at Constantinople had often been thought of as the flagship of the Levant Service but by the end of 1924 it seemed to have disappeared. The capitulations, the judicial provisions of which had given it so much of its work with the British colony, had been abolished by the Treaty of Lausanne, and three weeks after this entered into force in early August, the chief dragoman, Andrew Ryan, left the city for good. He had, he said later, wound up the “moribund Dragomanate”, which was “an office full of old documents, mostly useless in the new conditions”.¹ Shortly after this, knowing only too well that the title ‘dragoman’ was associated by the Turks with the humiliating regime of the capitulations, the Foreign Office decided

¹ Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, pp. 225–7.

that it should be abolished altogether.² So it was that Ryan claimed to be ‘the last of the dragomans’.

In practice, while many of their old chores had gone, the former dragomans could not be so easily got rid of; nor was it desired that they should be. Instead, these men, all Levant Service officers, were simply given local diplomatic rank and titles,³ and left to use their specialist skills and knowledge to get on with those essential tasks of the former dragomanate that remained: translating, interpreting, gathering intelligence, and so on.⁴ Until 1931 this *de facto* dragomanate saw only one change in personnel, and thereafter very few more until the outbreak of the next war. While its strength dropped from three to two in 1937, there was also great stability at the top because it had the same head throughout the 1930s: James Morgan, who had entered the Levant Service well before the First World War and was given the local rank of counsellor in 1930. As always, it was the dragomans in the embassy, whatever they were called, who provided the continuity and local expertise.

Changes which were to have a damaging impact on the ‘dragomanate’ were, however, soon to occur. To begin with, the pre-war system under which new entrants to the Levant Service were sent to Cambridge for two years of initial training, although it was resumed in truncated form immediately on the cessation of hostilities, did not survive for long. By the end of the 1920s it seems that those selected to study Turkish were sent more or less directly to the embassy in Ankara, which itself had to organize courses for them.⁵ There was also little incentive to engage in preparatory study of Turkish since—unlike Persian and Arabic—it

² See papers in TNA, FO366/813.

³ It had at first been thought that the dragomanate might be re-named the ‘oriental secretariat’, and its members ‘oriental secretary’, ‘second oriental secretary’, and so on. But it was soon realized that this would not do either: the Turks now regarded themselves as “very up to date”, and so hated being thought of as ‘orientals’, TNA, Lindsay to Oliphant, 1 Oct. 1924, FO366/813.

⁴ W. S. Edmonds, the former second dragoman, was brought back from his post as consul-general in Smyrna in order to replace Ryan as *de facto* first dragoman; William Matthews, who was ‘Acting First Dragoman’ for three months until he arrived—thereby giving him rather than Ryan a case for being ‘the last of the [so-called] dragomans’—was made *de facto* second dragoman; while Knox Helm simply became *de facto* rather than nominal third dragoman. Not until 1946 did the *FO List* cease to describe these men and their successors as performing “the duties formerly undertaken by the Dragomans”.

⁵ TNA, Tyrrell to Sec. to the Treasury, 18 Dec. 1918, T1/12301, and papers generally in T162/257; Scarbrough Report, pp. 47, 53, 83–4; Grafftey-Smith, *Bright Levant*, p. 14.

could not be offered as an optional subject in the entrance examination.⁶ The next blow came in 1934 when the Levant Service, which had long suffered from a block on promotions that had sapped morale and reduced the quality of its recruits, was merged with the General Consular Service, although existing members were allowed to retain their identity with the former specialized branch. This development was probably inevitable, and had been encouraged by the man who was soon to be the new ambassador in Turkey, Sir Percy Loraine. But it was also inevitable that, in the absence of countervailing steps, it would reduce the level of local expertise in the embassy, and it was on these grounds that it had been opposed by the conservative Morgan.⁷

An 'Embassy' in Spite of Everything

In 1924 Britain still had embassies (that is, resident missions of the highest category, which were headed by an ambassador) at only Madrid, Tokyo, Washington, Berlin, Brussels, Rio de Janeiro, Rome and Paris. It had also long been assumed by some in London that the lower-ranking legation, headed by a mere minister, would be the proper vehicle for British representation in the shrunken and hostile Turkey which had emerged from the war. After the signing of the peace treaty this view began to lose ground. This was partly because other states, including France and Italy, were resolved to open embassies and partly because it was thought that they were right to do so. Drawing on the authority of the late Lord Sanderson, Lancelot Oliphant, the head of the Eastern Department who was so trusted by Curzon,⁸ thought that only embassies would give the Allied powers sufficient prestige in the eyes of the Turks to carry out the important role that remained to them in their country.⁹ Henderson elaborated the same view, stressing the geographical position of Turkey and the huge political, economic and religious importance of Constantinople.¹⁰ This view eventually carried the day, and on

⁶ Scarbrough Report, pp. 53–4.

⁷ The Japan and Siam branches were also merged with the General Consular Service, Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 168–79; TNA, Loraine to Montgomery, 8 July 1932, FO141/544.

⁸ Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 49.

⁹ TNA, min. of Oliphant, 26 June, 1923, FO371/9026; min. of Oliphant 10 Aug. 1923, explicitly endorsed by Ronald Lindsay and not dissented from by Curzon, FO371/9163.

¹⁰ TNA, Henderson to Curzon, 14 Aug. 1923, FO371/9163.

1 March 1925 Britain, in concert with its allies, finally announced that it was restoring its diplomatic mission at embassy level. At this juncture, therefore, Ronald Lindsay—who had a year earlier replaced Rumbold as ‘British Representative’—was promoted to ambassador.¹¹ However, to the anger of the Turkish government in Ankara, this announcement was coupled with a formal restatement of the position that the embassies of the Allied powers would remain in Constantinople.¹²

Ankara in Spite of Everything

In the middle of October 1923 it had been confirmed that Ankara was to be the new capital of the Turkish Republic. This was followed by a request that the diplomatic missions should be moved there as soon as possible, an offer of free land on which to build being made as an inducement.¹³

Ankara was a town of about only 30,000 inhabitants that was stuck on a rock in the wilds of the Anatolian plateau 300 miles away from Constantinople. It had only one half-decent road, hardly any other amenities, no properties suitable for embassies, and provided the Nationalist foreign ministry itself with accommodation that was hardly salubrious;¹⁴ parts of the town were malarial. Ten years prior to the outbreak of the war Britain had even closed its consulate there. It is therefore hardly surprising that the prospect of its diplomatic mission now having to set up in such a place and abandon Constantinople and the summer delights of the Bosphorus, had at first been greeted in the Foreign Office with disbelief, then with derision, and finally—when it was realised that the Turks were serious—with horror. Henderson told the Foreign Ministry delegate in Constantinople, Adnan Bey, that the whole idea was “inconceivable”.¹⁵ Curzon—who thought Ankara a place of “almost savage barbarity”¹⁶—minuted that “So long as I am at the FO I will not

¹¹ The Turks associated the title ‘High Commissioner’ with the occupation period. In mid-October 1923, therefore, it had been agreed that its holder could be called ‘representative of His Majesty’s Government’ instead, TNA, FO to Henderson, 17 Oct. 1923, FO371/9163.

¹² TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 24 Feb. and 2 Mar. 1925, FO424/262.

¹³ TNA, Henderson to Curzon, 6 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164.

¹⁴ Kunalalp, ‘Turkey’, p. 505.

¹⁵ TNA, Henderson to Curzon, 6 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164.

¹⁶ TNA, Curzon to Crewe (Paris), 3 Oct. 1923, FO371/9163.

build at Ankara or send an Ambassador there".¹⁷ Sir William Tyrrell, his permanent under-secretary, was apoplectic: "I hope", he wrote, "we shall be able to maintain an Allied front against this impudent pretension of forcing civilized countries to go to Ankara".¹⁸

Nevertheless, the full hostility of the Kemalists to Constantinople as the capital—too strategically 'exposed' as well as too redolent of Old Turkey—was quickly appreciated by Henderson. As Mustafa Kemal consolidated his position, the fear that the Anatolian capital would be no short-lived experiment also began to deepen. While the French, Italians, Japanese and Americans seemed to share the British view, other states—notably the Soviet Union—had already agreed to go. If Britain's mission remained at Constantinople while the centre of power was in Ankara, argued Henderson, the political drawbacks would soon become all too obvious.¹⁹ In the following year he ramméd this point home by reporting the opinion of M. Radeff, the Bulgarian Minister, who had just returned from talks in Ankara and for whose judgement he held a high regard, that "an hour's conversation" with Mustafa Kemal "would dispose of questions which it would take months to arrange by less direct methods".²⁰ Faced with this logic, the British policy of passive resistance to decamping to Ankara began slowly to crumble, although it was by no means a smooth process.

Rumbold and Ryan had both recommended immediately after signature of the Treaty of Lausanne that the high commission would require an out-station in Ankara, and Curzon had accepted this.²¹ So it was not a major step for the foreign secretary to agree to Henderson's suggestion that the Turkish offer of free land at Ankara should be considered for the building of a small residence for a 'diplomatic liaison officer'.²² Soon after his arrival in Constantinople in February 1924, Lindsay, like other heads of mission, also found himself under more pressure to go along with this sort of thinking because the Turkish government was now threatening to replace its representative in Constantinople with

¹⁷ TNA, min. of Curzon, 13 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164; see also his min. of 21 Aug. 1923 and Curzon to de Montille, 24 Aug. 1923, FO371/9163.

¹⁸ TNA, min. of Tyrrell, 26 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164.

¹⁹ TNA, Henderson to Curzon, 20 Nov., and min. of Osborne, 27 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164.

²⁰ TNA, Henderson to MacDonald, 19 Aug. 1924, FO424/261.

²¹ TNA, mins. of Oliphant and Curzon, 30 July 1923, FO371/9163.

²² TNA, Henderson to Curzon, 20 Nov.; mins. of Tyrrell and Curzon, 27 Nov.; and Curzon to Crewe, etc., 30 Nov. 1923, FO371/9164.

someone who would be even more of a postman than Adnan Bey. While reassuring the Foreign Office that he was prompted only by “a stern sense of duty”, therefore, Lindsay proposed that he should at least be allowed to make short, periodic visits to the new capital. At this stage he did not envisage building, saying instead that he would “rough it in a hotel or railway carriage”.²³

But if the British Ambassador visited Ankara, would he be received by Mustafa Kemal?²⁴ While Lindsay was pondering this question, stories about the new capital’s primitive conditions multiplied with the increase in the number of trips being made to it by more intrepid diplomats.²⁵ He also thought that before long the government would have to return to the old capital.²⁶ It was to be another year, therefore, before a formal undertaking was made to the Turkish government that some kind of permanent presence at Ankara would be established, and another one before building was taken seriously. Meanwhile, Turkish pressure for the move increased,²⁷ and Lindsay reported that this “tiresome and dangerous affair” was injuring Mustafa Kemal’s personal pride and making him suspect that it was being used by Britain and its allies to undermine his regime.²⁸ What was really beginning to propel Britain to Ankara, however, was not concern for Kemal’s feelings but its need to engage his government in a major negotiation. This was provided by the Mosul question, in which the embassy played the pivotal role.

Mosul 1926—“disposing of the Turk”

The Ottoman province of Mosul had been incorporated into the embryonic state of Iraq (formerly Mesopotamia), for which Britain had been made the mandatory power by the League of Nations. However, the Turks wanted it back. At Lausanne, Curzon had resisted this and it had been agreed to defer the question for direct negotiations between

²³ TNA, Lindsay to MacDonald, 11 and 19 Mar. 1924, FO424/260.

²⁴ TNA, Lindsay to MacDonald, 17 Apr. 1924, FO424/260.

²⁵ For example, Lindsay reported that the Americans had installed a liaison officer at Ankara but felt that conditions were so bad that for every 30 days he spent there he had to be allowed 10 days back in Constantinople for “recuperation”, TNA, Lindsay to MacDonald, 29 Apr. 1924, FO424/260.

²⁶ TNA, Lindsay to MacDonald, 19 Mar. 1924, FO424/260.

²⁷ TNA, Crewe to Chamberlain, 24 Mar. 1925, FO424/262.

²⁸ TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 24 Mar., and Lindsay to Oliphant (private), 25 Mar. 1925, FO424/262.

the parties; in the event of their failure, it was to be referred for settlement to the League.

It had initially been Curzon's view that Rumbold should return to lead the Mosul negotiations. However, he had become unpopular in Turkey, the Colonial Office wanted Iraqi representation in the talks, and the upshot was that the job was given to the former high commissioner in Mesopotamia, Sir Percy Cox, who had been an important figure in Middle Eastern affairs for many years.

The negotiations commenced on 19 May 1924 in Constantinople, a venue which was a compromise between the Turkish preference for Ankara and the British wish that they should be held in London.²⁹ Cox had the support of a five-man delegation but depended on the high commission for clerical assistance, translating, interpreting, and secure cipher communications with London and Baghdad. It had already provided him with advice and intelligence on the attitude that the Turks were likely to adopt in the talks.³⁰ This appears to have been supplemented by information from at least one Secret Service informant in Ankara (probably a journalist) who had the trust of the leader of the Turkish delegation.³¹

As the British expected, despite Cox's legendary wisdom and experience no progress was made in the talks and on 5 June they broke up. The Mosul question was duly referred to the League of Nations, which in December 1925 awarded the territory to Iraq, although only on condition that Britain accepted the mandate for 25 years. This upset the Turks and there was angry talk of war against Britain in the Grand National Assembly.³² But the League's judgement had severely weakened their position, and they were simultaneously trying to introduce radical policies at home and worrying about their international security. As for Britain, the League's decision was not an unmixed blessing, for the potential cost of such a long mandate—the greater in the face of Turkish hostility—was considerable. Accordingly, the Foreign Office, which wished to propel Iraq into the League as soon as possible, was

²⁹ A London venue would have made coordination easier between the FO and the Colonial Office, which had responsibility for Iraq.

³⁰ TNA, Lindsay to MacDonald, 27 Feb. 1924, FO371/10075; Secret Memo of Turkish intentions and policy to be pursued at negotiations, 29 Apr. 1924, FO371/10077.

³¹ Secret Intelligence Summary No. 1301, The Turks and Mosul, 6 May 1924, FO371/10077.

³² TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 2 Dec. 1925, with a Report on a Visit to Angora by R. A. Leeper enclosed, FO424/263.

privately keen to offer major political concessions to Turkey in order to expedite the process.³³ The ripe moment for a serious negotiation was clearly emerging.

It was against this background that at the end of the year the ambassador, Sir Ronald Lindsay, proposed that direct negotiations over Mosul—the one major issue over which Britain and Turkey remained at odds—should once more be considered. This was accepted and this time the British gave sole responsibility for their own side to the man on the spot.³⁴ Fortunately, Lindsay was one of the greatest talents in the diplomatic service and also had wide experience of Turkish questions before arriving in Constantinople, having been assistant under-secretary responsible for Near Eastern affairs in the Foreign Office since 1921 and intimately concerned with the Lausanne negotiations. Ryan regarded him as the most impressive British career diplomatist he had ever come across.³⁵

It had long been apparent that the ambassador himself would need to make frequent pilgrimages to the new capital if the embassy was to conduct any serious negotiations with the Turkish government. If there had been any lingering doubt about this it dissolved at once when Austen Chamberlain, by that time foreign secretary, learned that his powerful counterpart at the Colonial Office, Leo Amery, wanted his own man—the high commissioner in Baghdad—to go to Ankara to take charge of any talks on Mosul.³⁶ “There is no difficulty about arranging for Lindsay to spend whatever time is necessary at Angora”, the foreign secretary hurried to assure him.³⁷ As it happened, Lindsay had been to Ankara to present his ambassadorial credentials to Mustafa Kemal in March 1925. It was therefore his second visit when he arrived again in late January 1926, his objective being to scout the outlook for a Mosul settlement.³⁸

³³ TNA, Tyrrell to Lindsay (private and personal), 30 Dec. 1925; and Memo by Sir W. Tyrrell, 30 Jan. 1926, with min. by Chamberlain, 31 Jan. 1926, FO371/11459.

³⁴ TNA, Tyrrell to Lindsay (private and personal), 30 Dec. 1925, FO371/11459.

³⁵ *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 224; see also McKercher, ‘Lindsay’.

³⁶ TNA, Amery to Chamberlain, 17 Feb. 1926, FO371/11459.

³⁷ TNA, Chamberlain to Amery, 18 Feb. 1926, FO371/11459. It was not until the middle of March that the FO was informed that Amery had been persuaded to drop his demand, Wilson to Tyrrell, 12 Mar. 1926, FO371/11460.

³⁸ TNA, min. of Spring Rice, 7 Jan., and Tyrrell to Salisbury, 9 Jan. 1926, FO371/11458.

For their earlier visit to Ankara, Lindsay and his party had hired a railway sleeping car, together with a small saloon coach that served as both the ambassador's 'study' and the 'chancery'. These coaches remained in a siding at Ankara station for the duration of the stay. This was less than a week, and it was felt that a building of some sort would be essential for the longer periods that it was now expected would have to be endured in the capital; in any case, a railway carriage would be intolerable in the heat of the Ankara summer. Knox Helm, a Levant Service officer from the embassy who had made two earlier visits and been in the frame for permanent residence in Ankara for some time,³⁹ was sent on ten days ahead to choose a site for a British "*pied-à-terre*". It had to have road access, a house of sorts on it already, and—because there was no piped water at that time—its own water supply.⁴⁰

Shivering in the intense January cold and with no base other than a "so-called room in the outhouse of a so-called hotel", Knox Helm and his colleague from the Office of Works were relieved to find a suitable site quickly.⁴¹ Located in the Chankaya district and still occupied by the embassy today, this had the added advantage that Mustafa Kemal lived there himself; it was also only 150 yards from the private house of the minister of foreign affairs.⁴² Within a week it had been leased and arrangements made for its later purchase.⁴³

Arriving in Ankara in late January, just as these arrangements were being concluded, Lindsay learned that it would be possible to make a deal with Turkey which would not involve surrendering much of Mosul. Active consideration was then given in London to exactly what kind of concessions could be offered. Meanwhile, thought was also being given to the appointment of a senior member of the embassy staff to serve as liaison officer in the new capital.⁴⁴ Following an even more encouraging report about the prospects for a favourable settlement from Lindsay at the end of February, Tyrrell, the permanent under-secretary, thought the time had come to send him back to start serious negotiations. First,

³⁹ TNA, min. of Oliphant, 10 Dec. 1923, FO371/9164; Lindsay to Chamberlain, 23 Sept. 1925, with 'General Notes on a Visit to Angora, Sept. 16–17, 1925', by Alex K. Helm, 18 Sept. 1925, FO424/263.

⁴⁰ Helm, 'The Beginnings', p. 2; TNA, Lindsay (Cnople) to FO, 11 Jan. 1926, FO371/11459.

⁴¹ Helm, 'The Beginnings', p. 3.

⁴² TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 22 May 1926, FO371/11463.

⁴³ Helm, 'The Beginnings', p. 3; see also TNA, Angora Site and House. Mr Helm's Report on Angora visit, 17 Jan. 1926, FO366/834.

⁴⁴ TNA, min. of Tyrrell, 1 Feb. 1926, FO371/11459.

however, he was wanted in London for discussion with the cabinet's Iraq committee on the instructions under which he was to act.⁴⁵

In a speech at Carnarvon at the end of February the Labour Party leader, Ramsay MacDonald, who had earlier alleged that the League of Nations would never have insisted on a 25 year mandate if Amery had not stimulated the idea himself, described Mosul as "one of the most foolish adventures this country has taken upon itself".⁴⁶ This apprehension about the potential costs of the mandate reflected and helped to colour the mood in London, where there was now great anxiety to press for a quick settlement. Oliphant thought it "essential to reach an agreement with Angora",⁴⁷ and Tyrrell confessed privately to sympathizing with Lindsay's desire "to add a little more 'beef' to the dish which it is proposed to set before the Turk".⁴⁸

By the end of March, by which time Lindsay had been in London for a fortnight, not only had the ambassador's instructions for the negotiations been prepared but so also had a draft treaty; in the process he had been closely consulted over both.⁴⁹ He was also granted considerable discretion over details in the conduct of the negotiations; only if matters of "decisive importance" came up that were not covered by his instructions was he required to seek more.⁵⁰ It was additionally arranged—although not without some difficulty—that Lindsay should also bear a full power to negotiate on behalf of King Feisal of Iraq, whom it had been decided should be a party to any new treaty. The ambassador left for Constantinople on 2 April and by the middle of the month, armed with his ciphers and supported by a small delegation, had commenced the negotiations in Ankara.⁵¹ This time he was able to install himself in a British-owned house in Mustafa Kemal's capital.⁵²

⁴⁵ TNA, min. of Tyrrell, 1 Mar. 1926, FO371/11459; FO to Lindsay, 3 Mar. 1926, FO371/11460.

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 1 Mar. 1926.

⁴⁷ TNA, min. of Oliphant, 17 Mar. 1926, FO371/11460.

⁴⁸ TNA, mins. of Oliphant and Tyrrell, 17 Mar. 1926, FO371/11460.

⁴⁹ TNA, Oliphant to Tyrrell, 26 Mar. 1926, FO371/11460. For the instructions as formally approved by the cabinet, see TNA, Chamberlain to Lindsay, 5 Apr. 1926, FO371/11460.

⁵⁰ TNA, Cabinet Conclusions 14 (26), 31 Mar., and FO to Lindsay, 7 Apr. 1926, FO371/11460.

⁵¹ TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 18 Apr. 1926, FO371/11461. His delegation included Rex Leeper, Geoffrey Knox, William Edmonds and Ivo Mallet from the embassy (although they were probably not there all the time) and R. F. Jardine, the administrative inspector in the Mosul division of Iraq.

⁵² Helm, 'The Beginnings', p. 4.

Lindsay remained in Ankara until early June, with only a short respite in Constantinople in the second week in May. The Turks were strapped for cash and anxious about Italian threats, and seemed even more eager than the British (now grappling with a general strike at home) for a settlement. The ambassador was amazed to discover his chief interlocutor, the minister for foreign affairs, Tewfik Rushdi Bey, willing to make an “absolute surrender” as far as territorial demands on Mosul were concerned. What the Turks wanted instead was help on the security front and especially a share of Iraq’s potential oil wealth, preferably, it transpired before long, in the form of an immediate cash payment.⁵³

The discovery that Britain could buy peace with Turkey for what seemed to Oliphant the “ridiculously small” sum of between £300,000 and £500,000 that Lindsay thought possible caused a delight in London that extended even to the Treasury, and the ambassador was authorised to close on this basis as soon as possible.⁵⁴ After some haggling, in which the British were privately prepared to go up to £1million, the Turks settled for £500,000.⁵⁵ However, to save Turkish *amour-propre*, on Lindsay’s suggestion this was not put into the treaty. Instead, provision was inserted in this document that Turkey would receive 10 per cent of all the oil royalties coming to the Iraq government for 25 years, while in a more discreet exchange of notes made on the same day but formally accepted as “an integral part of the Treaty”, it was agreed that if Turkey wished to cash in these rights within a year then the Iraq government would pay it £500,000 sterling for them.⁵⁶ Within days the Turks had accepted this sum.⁵⁷

The deal was now effectively done. In return only for this small sum (which was in any case paid by Iraq), some minor frontier rectifications, and commitments to good neighbourly behaviour on the Turkey-Iraq

⁵³ TNA, Lindsay to FO, 21 Apr., FO371/11461, and 7 May 1926, FO371/11462.

⁵⁴ TNA, Oliphant to Chamberlain, 26 May; min. of Chamberlain, 10 May; Shuckburgh (CO) to Barstow (Treasury), 11 May; Barstow to Shuckburgh, 12 May; FO to Lindsay, 17 May 1926, FO371/11462.

⁵⁵ TNA, Lindsay to FO, 30 May 1926, FO371/11462. Interestingly, Lindsay himself was kept in the dark about the £1m. maximum, probably for fear of a leak. He was informed instead that he could go only as high as the figure for which he had asked, £775,000, Tyrrell to Chamberlain, 26 May 1926, FO371/11462.

⁵⁶ HCPP (Cmd. 2912), 5 June, 1926; TNA, Lindsay to FO, 7 May, FO371/11462 and Lindsay to Chamberlain, 6 June 1926, FO371/11463.

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 17 June 1926.

frontier (understood to mean discouragement of Kurdish separatists), Turkey had accepted the definitive loss of the Mosul province to Iraq and the establishment of a boundary commission to delimit the frontier.⁵⁸ On 2 June Lindsay reported that the disappointment of the Turks at these “hard terms” verged on resentment. It was important, therefore, that there should be no exultation in the British press.⁵⁹

On 5 June the treaty was signed and the ambassador returned almost at once to Constantinople. Messages of congratulation arrived from London and in an editorial *The Times*, not altogether following the script recommended by Lindsay, described the agreement as a “very marked success” for Stanley Baldwin’s Conservative government and a “personal triumph” for Sir Ronald.⁶⁰ It was; and it is a pity, therefore, that, flushed with his success, the ambassador should have concluded a private letter to Oliphant by saying that “we can all feel proud to be the humblest agents of that Great Empire, which in the midst of a general strike can waggle the tip of its little finger and dispose of the Turk”.⁶¹ To Austen Chamberlain he confided his worry that he had perhaps given Angora “too sound a beating” and urged speedy ratification: “We are not giving Turkey very much, and you will double it by giving it quickly”.⁶² The foreign secretary obliged and Lindsay was able to return briefly to Angora for the exchange of ratifications in the middle of July, whereupon the treaty immediately entered into force.⁶³ In October, Lindsay became ambassador in Berlin.

Two-Centre Embassy

The success of the Mosul negotiations had demonstrated the great value of using an able and experienced resident ambassador in an important negotiation. Telegraph cables made it easy to keep in touch with him, while railways made it easy to bring him home to consult on his instructions. On the local level it had also underlined the value of negotiating face to face in Ankara, and the practical value for Britain of having its

⁵⁸ HCPP (Cmd. 2912), 5 June, 1926.

⁵⁹ TNA, Lindsay to FO, 2 June 1926, FO371/11463.

⁶⁰ 7 June, 1926.

⁶¹ TNA, Lindsay to Oliphant, 9 June 1926, FO371/11464.

⁶² TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 9 June 1926, FO371/11464.

⁶³ TNA, Lindsay to Chamberlain, 26 July 1926, FO371/11464.

own building in the new capital. It was now decided that this should be regularly staffed, although ten days break in Constantinople in order “to maintain contact” was to be allowed every six weeks; and in high summer—when Ankara was believed to be uninhabitable—the town was to be abandoned altogether.⁶⁴

Geoffrey Knox, who had returned to the high commission in early 1926, was accordingly installed in the Chankaya house in October. In the following January he was given two staff to assist him: Knox Helm, the third ‘dragoman’ at Constantinople;⁶⁵ and, shortly afterwards, Ivo Mallet, the young third secretary. In June 1927 Knox reported that any doubts he had had a year earlier about the durability of Ankara as the capital had “yielded to the accomplished fact”.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, his own durability was not of the same order, and in 1928 he was forced to depart, having gone down with tuberculosis. His living conditions were held partly to blame for this, which belief probably increased the urgency of the Foreign Office campaign, already under way at the end of 1926, to secure not only the enlargement of the wooden embassy house but also the erection of a decent new building.⁶⁷

The “inevitability of Angora” was widely recognized by 1927. For both practical and political reasons, Sir George Clerk, the new ambassador, was also anxious to make “some show of a start” of building work before the end of the year: the original building was both a “cramped and inconvenient cottage” and “a standing challenge to the prestige of the British Empire.”⁶⁸ But a combination of embassy uncertainty over future requirements at Ankara, arguments between the Office of Works and the architect over plans for the new house, and Treasury parsimony, led to a delay which made Clerk desperate.⁶⁹ In the event,

⁶⁴ Helm, ‘The Beginnings’, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁵ On 27 January 1927 Helm was promoted to second secretary (local rank) and acting consul while at Angora.

⁶⁶ TNA, Memorandum by Mr. Knox encl. in Clerk to Chamberlain, 9 June 1927, FO424/266.

⁶⁷ Helm, ‘The Beginnings’, p. 6; TNA, FO to O of W, 11 Dec. 1926, FO366/834; Leitch (O of W) to Treasury, 21 Jan. 1927, and accompanying mins., FO366/841; Leitch (O of W) to Waterfield (Treasury), 16 Nov. 1936, FO195/2515.

⁶⁸ TNA, Clerk to Chamberlain, 29 June 1927; see also Clerk to Earle (O of W), 2 June 1927, FO366/841. Eastern Department fully agreed with this point.

⁶⁹ TNA, Clerk to Montgomery, 12 June 1928, FO366/852.

building work did not begin until late 1929 and was not finished until the end of the following year.⁷⁰

The completion of the first new permanent building in Ankara did not mean that the embassy at once shifted its centre of gravity from Constantinople to Ankara. This was partly because the new ambassador, who had served in Turkey before the war,⁷¹ had already acquired a taste for life in the old capital. It was true, he admitted, in a letter at the beginning of 1930, that basic public utilities in Ankara were now if anything even better than those in Constantinople, and that it could now be taken as the definite home of the missions accredited to the Turkish government. The fact remained, however, that “the facilities for the ordinary amenities and distractions of life” were still “woefully lacking”, while prices were much higher and the food poorer.⁷² He spent as much time as possible in the old embassy building in Pera, and this appears to have been the chief reason why the request of the consul-general in 1931 to move his own establishment from its miserable quarters in Galata into one of its wings was denied.⁷³

Even after the departure of Clerk at the end of 1933 the omens for Ankara did not seem auspicious, for his replacement, Sir Percy Loraine, arrived in a foul mood. He felt that he had been prematurely and unjustly removed from his previous post as high commissioner in Egypt (where he had been treated almost like royalty), and had been “completely shattered” to learn of his appointment to the wilds of Anatolia. His temper was frayed further by the delay that he was forced to endure in presenting his credentials to the ‘Gazi’, Mustafa Kemal, which precipitated an unplanned return to Istanbul, as it had finally been accepted that the old capital must be called.⁷⁴ “I should recommend”, he wrote bitterly to Oliphant, “your watching the matter whenever my eventual successor is appointed, whether on account of my dismissal, voluntary retirement, suicide, or other form of promotion”.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ TNA, Clerk to FO, 5 Feb. 1929, FO424/270; see also Leitch (O of W) to Waterfield (Treasury), 16 Nov. 1936, FO195/2515; Helm, ‘The Beginnings’, p. 6; Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 67.

⁷¹ Goldstein, ‘Clerk’.

⁷² TNA, Clerk to Arthur Henderson, 22 Jan. 1930, FO424/272.

⁷³ TNA, Hough to Henderson, 11 Apr. 1931, with attached minutes and correspondence, FO369/2200.

⁷⁴ In November 1929 the Turkish Post Office informed all foreign post offices that henceforward all telegrams should be addressed to ‘Istanbul’ rather than ‘Constantinople’, *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1929.

⁷⁵ TNA, 16 Feb. 1934, FO1011/35; Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat*, p. 195.

The Foreign Office had now laid it down firmly that the British Embassy in Turkey should employ Ankara as its 'headquarters' for the greater part of the year, so Loraine had to be consoled with the qualification that in summer it would be permitted to return to Istanbul. To no-one's surprise, he would not hear of the proposal to sell off of either the old embassy building in Pera or the Therapia site, which surfaced in 1935 for the first but certainly not the last time.⁷⁶ Britain now formally had a two-centre embassy in Turkey. The travelling was a nuisance, telegrams frequently went to the wrong place, a duplicate system of archives had had to be introduced in 1929,⁷⁷ both residences had to be kept habitable at short notice all year round, and Loraine himself subsequently came to experience the guilty feeling that when he was in one place he ought to be in the other. On the other hand, he found the Turks indulgent towards his frequent out-of-season forays to Istanbul, where duty as well as pleasure often called.⁷⁸ His temper improved.

Loraine, who always took his wife with him to Ankara and had a fine sense of the requirements of ambassadorial dignity, took over almost entirely the first, multipurpose building that had been completed in 1930. Since the staff had also grown somewhat, it was now bursting at the seams, while by 1936 the original wooden building was in such a deplorable condition that he urged its demolition. The time had come, maintained Loraine, to erect a proper ambassador's house, so enabling the 1930 building to be devoted entirely to offices as originally planned.⁷⁹

In the Foreign Office Loraine had a powerful ally in Sir Lancelot Oliphant, who was now the senior assistant under secretary of state. Oliphant was Loraine's cousin, had been best man at his wedding, and was his most regular private correspondent. Easily convinced of the ambassador's case, he took up the cudgels on his behalf with the Office of Works,⁸⁰ which fell into line without too much difficulty. The Treasury presented more of a problem. There was even an alarming suggestion

⁷⁶ TNA, min. of Smith, 24 June 1935, FO366/944.

⁷⁷ At the same time, because of the fire risk at Ankara, it had been decided to keep the archives from 1900 until 1928 in Istanbul for the foreseeable future, TNA, Helm to Montgomery, 5 Aug. 1930, FO366/877.

⁷⁸ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 23 Apr., FO1011/41, 15 Dec. 1937, FO1011/43; Dixon, *Double Diploma*, p. 28.

⁷⁹ TNA, Loraine to Duff (O of W), 22 Apr. 1936, FO195/2515.

⁸⁰ TNA, min. of Loraine, 15 July 1936, FO195/2515.

that if a great deal of money was to be spent on a new ambassador's house in Ankara which would be used for only part of the year, then the grand house in Pera should be sold. Alternatively, if it was to be retained and its magnificent rooms remain available for entertaining in the summer, the new building in Ankara might have the more modest facilities of a legation rather than an embassy house.⁸¹ The Office of Works itself had sympathy for the last suggestion.⁸²

There was horror in the Foreign Office at the proposal that the Italianate palace in Pera might be sold. This would be "more than folly": in present conditions, the price would be "wretched"; it might well insult the Turks, from whom the site had been a gift; above all, it provided an essential retreat from Ankara in the summer. As for the idea that a legation-style house would be adequate in Ankara because the embassy could pack its entertaining into the Istanbul summer, this overlooked the obvious fact that the winter was the time for entertaining in Turkey; in the summer months "the Turks are on holiday".⁸³ By December 1936 it had been accepted that the Pera house was to be retained, and the Treasury had agreed in principle to the building of a new ambassador's house at Ankara.

Money was a problem and it was 1938 before it was practical to prepare plans, whereupon Loraine's interest in proceedings quickened. He objected to the absence of a grand staircase and an underground gas- and bomb-proof shelter, and was particularly appalled by the "grisly" idea that the wine cellar should go alongside the laundry. As to the tendering process, he successfully resisted the broadminded if politically naive suggestion of the Office of Works' representative in Istanbul that the German builder, Holzmann—"a good builder", he insisted, who had been hired (surprise, surprise) to put up a new German Embassy building⁸⁴—should be invited to tender.⁸⁵ Building at Ankara actually

⁸¹ The typical legation house had smaller rooms, fewer bedrooms and bathrooms, and no ballroom or morning room, TNA, Muir (O of W) to Howard Smith (FO), 11 Dec. 1936, FO195/2515.

⁸² TNA, Leitch (O of W) to Waterfield (Treasury), 16 Nov.; Muir (O of W) to Howard Smith (FO), 11 Dec. 1936, FO195/2515.

⁸³ TNA, Howard Smith (FO) to Loraine, 22 Dec. 1936, FO195/2515; see also Oliphant to Loraine, 22 Dec. 1936, FO1011/38.

⁸⁴ TNA, Parr to Loraine, 2 and 4 Aug. 1938, FO195/2526.

⁸⁵ TNA, Chancery (Angora) to FO, 5 Nov.; Loraine to Duff (O of W), 1 Aug. and 17 Dec.; Loraine to Halifax, 11 Aug.; min. of Loraine, 20 Aug. 1938, FO195/2526.

began at the end of 1938 but was not completed until 1941, by which time Loraine had been long gone.

Making Bricks Without Straw

The settlement of the Mosul dispute had made it easier for Britain to pursue its interests in Turkey while supporting the Kemalist regime as a barrier against Bolshevism, which had always been Curzon's objective. These interests, the protection of which required the usual lobbying by the embassy, included those of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the Shell Group, which were threatened when Turkey declared its intention in 1937 to establish an oil monopoly in the country.⁸⁶ The Mosul settlement had also made it easier for Turkey to improve its relations with Britain, which was important for it because it had no intention of becoming over-reliant on its marriage of convenience contracted with the Soviet government in 1921, and was increasingly anxious to obtain loans from Europe's money markets and transform itself into a non-Communist, Western-style state.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the Mosul settlement could not in itself transform the Anglo-Turkish relationship from animosity into friendship. On both sides this had to be cultivated, and on the British side a shortage of the material means with which to help Turkey was a serious handicap. Unfortunately, too, the Kemalist republic still owed huge sums to British bondholders and so did not have the credit rating to raise new loans on Lombard Street.⁸⁸ It is true that both British ambassadors who served in Turkey between the autumn of 1926 and the spring of 1939, Clerk and Loraine, were extremely able, but as late as 1938 the Foreign Office was still having to assure the latter how well it understood that even he could not "make bricks without straw, or hold the fort without ammunition".⁸⁹

Materially handicapped as it was, the British Embassy found it expedient to place much of the burden of restoring friendly relations with Turkey on the style with which it conducted its business with Turkish ministers, especially its president, Mustafa Kemal. Great reliance, in

⁸⁶ TNA, Halifax to Loraine, 4 Aug.; Loraine to Halifax, 17 and 23 Aug. 1937, FO424/281.

⁸⁷ Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, p. 130.

⁸⁸ TNA, Knox to Chamberlain, 8 Apr. 1928, FO424/268; Clerk to Chamberlain, 14 Feb. 1929, FO424/270.

⁸⁹ TNA, Oliphant to Loraine, 13 Apr. 1938, FO1011/42.

other words, had to be placed on the tact and warmth with which it conducted personal relations with them, the sympathy for their aims that it was able to demonstrate, and the more formal gestures of friendship and flattery that it was able to contrive. To some degree the success of this campaign turned on recognizing that the Gazi's personal prestige was wrapped up with the fate of his new capital city and openly acknowledging that its establishment was irrevocable.

In June 1929 Sir George Clerk went out of his way to hold his reception for the King's birthday at Ankara instead of Istanbul; this also enabled him to accept an invitation from Kemal to a social event planned for only two days' later.⁹⁰ In the following month the embassy sent a donation to the Red Crescent following a serious fire in the old quarter of the Gazi's capital.⁹¹ Clerk also orchestrated highly successful goodwill visits to Ankara by the Commander-in-Chief of the British Mediterranean fleet and the Earl and Countess of Athlone.⁹² And at a private interview in 1932 he presented the Turkish leader with a specially bound copy of the British official history of the Dardanelles campaign. He was regarded by his government, the ambassador informed him on this occasion, as "a great general, a noble adversary, and a generous friend".⁹³ This, claimed Clerk, had a remarkably good effect.⁹⁴ It is also not difficult to believe his claim because Mustafa Kemal was in a mood to be receptive to the idea of "chivalrous enemies renewing the bond of friendship". He respected the power and skills of the British, while the fact that he had got the better of them in the fighting at Gallipoli and in the diplomacy which culminated at Lausanne in 1923, "made it easier to love the old enemy".⁹⁵

When Sir Percy Loraine took over from Clerk in January 1934 he was soon confronted by the question of how to respond to unambiguous signs that Turkey now wished to develop a real friendship with Britain.⁹⁶ The new ambassador, who became a great admirer of Mustafa Kemal, did not find this too difficult. He flattered the Gazi by spending more time in Ankara than his predecessor and, being able to hold his drink,

⁹⁰ TNA, Clerk to Chamberlain, 4 June 1929, FO424/271.

⁹¹ TNA, Clerk to Henderson, 24 July 1929, FO424/271.

⁹² TNA, Clerk to Henderson, 23 Oct. 1929, FO424/271 and 29 Apr. 1931, FO424/274; *The Times*, 26 Apr. 1931.

⁹³ TNA, Clerk to Simon, 21 May 1932, FO424/276.

⁹⁴ TNA, Clerk to Simon, 31 May 1932, FO424/276.

⁹⁵ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 505.

⁹⁶ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 22 Mar. and 29 June 1934, FO1011/35.

gratified him by spending many nights carousing and playing cards with him until well into the early hours. These sessions are legendary,⁹⁷ and could well have helped to inspire the unimpeachable observation of a later report into the diplomatic service that the personality of an ambassador was of vital importance, especially in a country where power was concentrated at the top.⁹⁸

Loraine also orchestrated a successful informal and ostensibly incognito visit to Istanbul by King Edward VIII in September 1936, which became “an important ingredient of the Atatürk legend: the British monarch had come in person to bury the hatchet, disown the legacy of Gladstone and Lloyd George, and pay homage to the new Turkey”.⁹⁹ The ambassador was so impressed by the good effects of this visit that in 1938, following the Austrian *Anschluss*, he tried to persuade London to send another high-level visitor, although for practical reasons his efforts this time came to nothing.¹⁰⁰ In his annual report for 1937, submitted in April 1938, Loraine waxed so lyrical about the “peculiarly intimate” character of Anglo-Turkish relations and how Turkey now so closely followed British advice in foreign affairs that one would have thought that he had persuaded Atatürk, as the Turkish president had come to be known, to join the British Empire.¹⁰¹ The great leader’s funeral on 21 November 1938 provided Loraine with his last major opportunity to demonstrate the strength of British friendship for Turkey. The King was represented by Field Marshall Lord Birdwood, while Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, also attended, together with a party of over 200 sailors, marines and bandsmen from the Admiral’s ship, *Malaya*. It was the largest foreign detachment in the procession.¹⁰²

It was at this time that a young honorary attaché at the British Embassy in Italy, Charles Mott-Radclyffe, had an idea to relieve the chancery’s frustration at having to spend so long de-ciphering Loraine’s

⁹⁷ Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat*, ch. 20; Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 85; Monroe, ‘Loraine’.

⁹⁸ HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964, paras. 168–9.

⁹⁹ *Mango*, Atatürk, p. 505.

¹⁰⁰ Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat*, pp. 212–15; TNA, Loraine to Halifax, 9 Apr. and 3 June 1938, FO424/282; Oliphant to Loraine, 21 May 1938, FO1011/42; Loraine to Oliphant, 2 June 1938, FO1011/43.

¹⁰¹ TNA, AR 1937, 2 Apr. 1938, FO371/21935.

¹⁰² Packer, *Deep as the Sea*, pp. 100–1; *The Times*, 22 Nov. 1938; TNA, Loraine to Halifax, 24 Nov. 1938, FO424/282.

long and rather pompous despatches, which were repeated to Rome. He composed a clever, spoof telegram in the ambassador's name. This claimed that in the course of a deathbed interview with Sir Percy, Atatürk had offered to nominate him as the next president of Turkey. The point is that it was testimony to the closeness with Atatürk believed to have been achieved by 'Pompous Percy' (as the ambassador was known behind his back), that for a short time after the spoof surfaced in London 30 years later both the telegram and the offer it contained were thought to be genuine.¹⁰³

Political Reporting and Intelligence Gathering

Political reporting by the embassy in the post-Mosul era continued much as usual, with advice on policy added more or less forcefully—the former when it was expressly requested, as it often was. Loraine had only been in Turkey for six months when he was advising one foreign secretary on the fresh instructions that he might be sent. Four years into his posting, he was within a whisker of expressing open contempt on the particularly woolly proposal of another: that alleged Turkish doubts about British support might be removed by a statement “short of an assurance” that such support would be forthcoming.¹⁰⁴

As usual, telegrams were used to provide brief accounts of developments over the last few days, more leisurely letters followed with the detail, and the highlights were summarised in the embassy's lengthy and carefully prepared annual reports. Much attention in all of these was naturally given to the Turkish president's notorious foibles, his likely staying power, and the prospects for his People's Party. In the annual reports there was always great focus on developments in the armed forces. As ever, there were also assessments of leading Turkish personalities, although what seems to have been a new feature of this period was the separate annual report on the personalities and attitudes of the individuals heading the other foreign missions in Turkey, together with notes on their wives and houses. Whereas lengthy sections of the

¹⁰³ In 1968 the 'telegram' was reproduced as genuine in Dixon, *Double Diploma*, pp. 42–4, and led to a minor flap in Anglo-Turkish relations; for the full story, see Mott-Radclyffe, *Foreign Body in the Eye*, pp. 28–31, 287–9. Mango believes that Loraine's relationship with Atatürk was not so special after all, *Atatürk*, p. 505.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, Loraine to Simon, 22 June 1934, FO424/279; Loraine to Halifax, 16 Feb. 1938, FO424/282.

main report were always delegated to other members of the embassy, ambassadors seem to have enjoyed writing about the diplomatic corps themselves, perhaps because it provided the opportunity for a little private score-settling: the Dutchman was “a lascivious fellow; a light weight”, while the Belgian was stupefyingly boring—“the most difficult man to separate from that I have ever met”, and so on.¹⁰⁵

The information needed for these reports, especially on political subjects, was relatively easy to obtain. It was picked up from conversations with ministers and deputies, some held when the ambassador or members of his staff happened to fall in with them on the train between Istanbul and Ankara. Journalists and members of the diplomatic corps were the other usual sources. However, another traditional one proved something of a difficulty in the 1920s and 1930s. This was the network of consular posts, which was looked to with particular interest for information on the provincial reaction to Atatürk’s radical social and educational policies.

The consular outposts were no longer so numerous. Indeed, it was 1927 before the consular network reached its inter-war peak of five posts (including Ankara), which was barely half its pre-war size in the same region, that is, “Turkey proper”.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the environment in which they had to operate was hostile. In 1927 the consul at the remote and xenophobic outpost of Trabzon (formerly Trebizond) complained that all foreign consulates remained subject to an “elaborate system of espionage” and “virtual boycott” by the Turkish authorities. In 1930 the exequatur issued to his successor still maintained that six entire *vilayets* within the district were “forbidden zones” and that certain unnamed areas within three others were “military zones” from which he was also excluded.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the consuls did their best and valuable reports came in. They had much on the new position of women, education, language reform, and so on, but also a great deal on purely political developments. Reports from the consul at Trabzon were for a time of particular value because they also contained information

¹⁰⁵ TNA, AR 1928, 5 Feb. 1929, FO424/270; Loraine to Eden, AR 1935, 1 Jan. 1936, FO424/280.

¹⁰⁶ The four consular posts were re-opened as follows: Smyrna, 1920; Adrianople and Trabzon, 1925; and Mersin, 1927.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, Knight to Clerk, 30 June 1927, FO424/267; Clerk to Henderson, 14 Oct. 1930, FO424/273.

on the exceptionally high level of Soviet espionage and propaganda activity in this district.¹⁰⁸

Useful reports from the service attachés were rarer. When the Turkish-speaking military attaché, Major Harenc, left this post in the spring of 1928 he was still complaining of the exceptional secretiveness of the Turkish General Staff; this applied to all military attachés but perhaps especially those of Britain. The generals refused to provide him with any information at all on the army and denied him the opportunity to attend manoeuvres or exercises; travel was not easy and, without permission, impossible. Since he was not allowed to employ secret agents himself, he was condemned to relying for his information on friendly colleagues in other embassies and surreptitious conversations with Turkish soldiers in garrison towns. Harenc attributed his difficulties until late 1926 chiefly to the fear of the Turks that they may have to fight Britain in Iraq, and thereafter to their apprehension that any information supplied to Britain would find its way to the Greeks and Italians.¹⁰⁹

Matters remained much the same until 1933, when the Turks began to realize the advantages of boasting about their military strength and the General Staff was obliged to be marginally less secretive.¹¹⁰ In July 1934, when the Turkish government was contemplating the need to remilitarize the Straits, Major Sampson, then the British military attaché, was able to report with reasonable confidence on a shift in the military centre of gravity to the west, although he carefully omitted mention of his sources. Shortly afterwards, with the full cooperation of the Turkish military authorities, he was allowed to tour the Dardanelles area.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ TNA, Edmonds to Arthur Henderson, 4 Dec. 1929, FO424/271. By 1930, however, the value of Trabzon from this point of view must have diminished, as it had from that of its transit trade, for between this year and early 1941 it was covered by the consul at the more bustling port of Mersin. He resided at Trabzon only during the summer months, for the rest of the time leaving the vice-consulate in the charge of a Maltese clerk, Wright, 'Trabzon and the British connection', p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, Harenc to Knox, 30 Mar., encl. in Knox to Chamberlain, 8 Apr. 1928, FO424/268; see also Harenc to Clerk, 20 July 1927, encl. in Clerk to Chamberlain, 27 July 1927, FO424/267.

¹¹⁰ TNA, Morgan to Sir John Simon, 31 Mar. 1933, FO424/278; and 20 Nov. 1933, covering Major O'Leary to Morgan, 17 Nov. 1933, FO424/279; and Clerk to Simon, 5 Aug. 1933, covering O'Leary to Clerk, 29 July 1933, FO424/279.

¹¹¹ TNA, Sampson to Loraine, 14 July, and Morgan to Simon, 15 Sept. 1934, FO424/279.

Despite this minor breakthrough, military attachés remained unable to attend the major manoeuvres held in eastern Thrace in 1935, and in late 1937 Turkish officers were still forbidden to have social relations with service attachés of any kind.¹¹² The slowness of the thaw had prompted Loraine to suggest to all three of his service attachés (there was by this time a naval and air attaché as well) that they might get more information out of the General Staff if they spent more time in Ankara and associated less with service attachés from other embassies. But this merely drew the reply that others had done this without any obvious gain, while it was precisely their foreign colleagues from whom they got most of their information.¹¹³ Shortly afterwards the embassy was informed that the policy of secrecy came from Atatürk himself.¹¹⁴ It was the growing interest of the General Staff in organizing the Turkish air force on British lines and with British help that, in December 1937, finally decided it to let at least the air attaché see “everything”—provided he did not share his information with the service attachés of other countries.¹¹⁵

Commercial intelligence gathering by the embassy was now being conducted against a background of unprecedented attention at home to the kind of contribution that could be made in this area by diplomats and consuls.¹¹⁶ For the British Embassy in Turkey, however, with its special history, this just meant more of the same, except that the commercial secretary, now Colonel Harold Woods, reported directly to the new Department of Overseas Trade (DOT) rather than to the Foreign Office.¹¹⁷ In Woods it also had an immense asset. The son of the British naval officer, ‘Woods Pasha’,¹¹⁸ he was commercial secretary from 1923 until his retirement in 1938, having previously served the

¹¹² TNA, Sampson to Morgan, 12 Sept. 1935, FO424/279; Lee, *Special Duties*, p. 9.

¹¹³ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 12 Mar. 1937, FO1011/41.

¹¹⁴ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 14 May and 24 Dec. 1937, FO1011/41.

¹¹⁵ TNA, Loraine to Eden, 17 Dec. 1937, FO424/281; AR 1937, FO371/21935, paras. 125–6; Lee, *Special Duties*, chs. 1–4.

¹¹⁶ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 103–13.

¹¹⁷ The DOT had been created at the end of the war to take over the foreign commercial work of both the Board of Trade and the FO, Maisel, E., ‘The formation of the Department of Overseas Trade, 1919–26’; Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 91–2, 104–13, 120.

¹¹⁸ His father, Sir Henry Woods, had arrived in Constantinople as second-in-command of the embassy *stationnaire* in 1867, aged only 24. Three years later he transferred to the Imperial Ottoman Navy, in the service of which he spent the next 40 years of his career, rising to be naval A.D.C. to the sultan and obtaining the ranks of admiral and pasha. He was knighted in 1902 when he represented Abdul Hamid II at the coronation

British High Commission as delegate or adviser on a variety of inter-allied and Ottoman economic bodies after the war. Fluent in Turkish and completely familiar with the Turkish world, Colonel Woods was valued for work beyond his strict responsibilities, including the task of looking after important British visitors to Istanbul when the embassy was headquartered in Ankara.¹¹⁹

The fact that Woods had to report to the DOT did not mean that the embassy remained ignorant of or uninterested in his reports, or that from time to time it did not send to the Foreign Office its own financial and commercial reports, especially on Turkish railway developments, together with copies of those sent by Woods to the DOT. A particularly long and interesting one compiled in August 1927 by the second secretary, Robert Hadow, examined the growing economic position of Germany in Turkey but advised a cautious approach to the country as a field for British loans, investment, and trade.¹²⁰ When in early 1936 the Turks were pressing for financial assistance from Britain but there was still a reluctance to oblige them, it was also thought expedient to gather financial intelligence in Turkey via the embassy rather than by means of an expert sent out from the Treasury, a course of action which might be misinterpreted.¹²¹

Losing the Monopoly of Bilateral Agreements

The Mosul Treaty of 1926 was the paradigm case of a bilateral agreement negotiated by the embassy, and for the following decade its responsibility for this sort of thing was unimpaired: it followed up existing agreements, and negotiated new ones. Under the first head, this meant mainly keeping the Turkish government up to the mark in regard to the promises made in the Treaty of Lausanne that bore on the rights of British nationals (including Maltese) to live and work in Turkey without discrimination. In the anti-British atmosphere of the 1920s and the legally fluid conditions that followed the termination of

of King Edward VII. He married into the Whittall family of Izmir: Woods, *Spunyarn; The Times*, 22 Feb. 1929; *Who's Who 1905*.

¹¹⁹ TNA, Oliphant to Hill (DOT), 27 July 1938, FO1011/42; *The Times*, 4 Nov. 1952.

¹²⁰ TNA, Clerk to Chamberlain, with Memorandum by R. H. Hadow, 10 Aug. 1927, FO424/267.

¹²¹ TNA, Oliphant to Loraine, 19 Feb. 1936, FO1011/38.

the capitulations, this was not easy.¹²² It is true that from 1926 until 1932 the embassy was assisted in a certain category of cases by the Anglo-Turkish Mixed Arbitral Tribunal, although the diplomats provided essential support for the British representative serving on it and were also indispensable in getting its judgements executed as opposed to delivered.¹²³ Via its relationship to the Straits Commission, the embassy also had to keep an eye on Turkey's undertakings in the same treaty concerning the passage of warships and military aircraft through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.¹²⁴

Until 1936 the embassy also had responsibility for negotiating all such further agreements as the slowly improving relationship between Britain and Turkey required, and following up these as well. The four new agreements it negotiated, which were signed in Ankara, all dealt with commercial matters, including the rights of British individuals, institutions and companies in Turkey.¹²⁵ Naturally enough, the ambassador left the detailed discussions largely to Colonel Woods and his assistant, supported by the permanent staff at Ankara, especially the *de facto* chief dragoman, James Morgan. Only if his own negotiators got "into a jam", Loraine told Oliphant near the end of the difficult, complex and lengthy discussions which preceded signing of the new Anglo-Turkish Trade and Payments Agreement in 1935, would he bring his own "artillery" to bear on them.¹²⁶ It is interesting to note, too, that as Lindsay had been recalled to London for consultation prior to the decisive stage of the Mosul negotiations, so Woods and Morgan were

¹²² Waugh, *Turkey*, p. 270.

¹²³ Chaired by a neutral, the tribunal was established in Constantinople under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne in order to determine claims arising from unpaid debts, unfulfilled contracts for which advance payments had been made, seizure of real property during the war, and so on. As the British Agent on the Tribunal said in his valedictory report, its existence also made it possible "to avoid direct and embarrassing discussions with the Turkish Government on difficult and complicated disputes likely to cause friction at a time when the ill feeling caused by the war was still acute, and thus to facilitate the gradual improvement in relations between the two countries", TNA, Clerk to Sir John Simon, 28 Apr., covering Owen-Wells to Clerk, 21 Apr. 1932, FO424/276.

¹²⁴ TNA, Clerk to Chamberlain, 2 May 1929, FO424/270.

¹²⁵ They dealt with the establishment of a commercial "modus vivendi" (2 July 1929), commerce and navigation (1 Mar. 1930), legal proceedings in civil and commercial matters (28 Nov. 1931), and trade and payments (4 June 1935).

¹²⁶ TNA, 10 May 1935, FO1011/37.

both brought back for the same purpose (the former twice) during the 1934–5 commercial negotiations.¹²⁷

In implementing its policy of cautious courtship of Turkey, the Foreign Office had initially placed great reliance on the embassy. By the middle of the 1930s, however, there is no doubt that London had begun to encroach on its territory, especially in the realm of formal negotiations. The fact that, thanks in part to the work of the embassy, Turkish visitors were now guaranteed a warm welcome in the British capital was only one of the reasons for this.

The Foreign Office had always talked directly to the Turkish Embassy in London, but had begun to do so with more serious intent after Ali Fethi Bey (subsequently Fethi Okyar), who was close to Atatürk and both liked and respected by the British, became ambassador in early 1934.¹²⁸ In these years it also held important discussions in London with the Turkish foreign minister, Dr Tewfik Rushdi Aras (subsequently Dr Tevfik Rüştü Aras), and his secretary-general, the efficient and highly intelligent Numan Menemencioğlu, with whom George Rendel, the recently appointed head of the Eastern Department, had struck up a good relationship during his familiarization visit to Ankara in 1932.¹²⁹ Following Turkey's admission to the League of Nations in the same year, there were also periodic meetings between the British and Turkish foreign ministers in Geneva. And in 1934 the Board of Trade began to feel the need for a direct role in the negotiation of commercial agreements with Turkey for fear that, for political reasons, the embassy would make concessions to the Kemalist republic that would compromise its position in similar negotiations with other countries.¹³⁰ It was in 1936 that these opportunities and these worries came together to mark a pronounced shift towards London in responsibility for the important function of negotiating agreements between Britain and Turkey.

In 1936 the embassy played little part at all in the negotiations which permitted Turkish remilitarization of the Straits and introduced a more restricted regime for the passage of vessels through them. These negotiations, which were prompted by Turkey and so important to

¹²⁷ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 4 July 1934, FO1011/35; Simon to Loraine, 2 May and Loraine to Simon, 4 June 1935, FO424/279.

¹²⁸ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 22 Mar. 1934, FO1011/35; Okyar, 'Turco-British relations in the inter-war period'.

¹²⁹ Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp. 67, 85–6.

¹³⁰ TNA, Oliphant to Loraine, 28 June 1934, FO1011/34.

Britain, were held in a multilateral conference at Montreux in Switzerland.¹³¹ The Straits regime had been negotiated in the multilateral format of Lausanne, so it was always likely that a similar procedure would be employed for its revision. But the focus on this occasion was far narrower, and before the war issues regarding Turkey that were of concern to many states, such as Armenian reform, had been negotiated chiefly by the embassies in Constantinople. While the embassy made some contribution in the early prenegotiations for the Montreux Conference, the key role even at this stage was played for the British by the Foreign Office, culminating in the last week in May in a pre-conference meeting in George Rendel's room with a Turkish delegation led by Menemencioğlu.¹³² Nor, despite the best efforts of his cousin, was Loraine always kept informed of what was going on in London.¹³³ Indeed, the frustration caused by delayed and overlapping telegrams in July, he told Oliphant, "provoked the despatch by me of the first telegram ever sent by telephone from this post to the Foreign Office"—itself another portent of things to come.¹³⁴ In contrast to the Lausanne negotiations, the large delegation sent from London to Montreux a month later also contained—with the arguable exception of Captain Macdonald—no representative from the embassy.¹³⁵

The same pattern was soon established in the context of bilateral commercial diplomacy. A straw in the wind had been the despatch to Turkey in 1935 of a Board of Trade official to assist the embassy in the final month of the talks leading to the new Anglo-Turkish Trade and Payments Agreement of that year.¹³⁶ Loraine was very glad to have had his assistance, and consoled himself with the further thought that the Board of Trade had thereby gained first-hand knowledge of the difficulties of

¹³¹ On this conference, see *DBFP2*, ch. 6; Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 419–21; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000*, pp. 63–4; Rendel, *The Sword and the Olive*, ch. 9; Towle, 'The Montreux Convention'.

¹³² The records of these discussions at the FO are located in TNA, FO371/20074.

¹³³ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 2 Apr. 1936, FO1011/39.

¹³⁴ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 29 July 1936, FO1011/39.

¹³⁵ Macdonald had been naval adviser to the British High Commissioner in Constantinople in the early 1920s and from 1924 the British representative on the Straits Commission, during which period he remained a *de facto* naval attaché in the embassy, TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 31 Aug. 1936, FO1011/39; see also min. of Rendel, 1 June 1936, FO371/20074.

¹³⁶ TNA, Simon to Loraine, 2 May 1935, FO424/279.

negotiating with “the modern Turk... no blinking sinecure”.¹³⁷ In 1936 this development was taken to its logical conclusion: the embassy was removed altogether from the formal stage of commercial negotiations with Turkey. The Agreement on Trade and Clearing of 2 September 1936 was formally negotiated entirely by means of the visit of a Turkish delegation to London. So too were the three further commercial agreements signed between Britain and Turkey on 27 May 1938, which followed an exploratory visit to Ankara in the previous November by Treasury and Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) experts and finally gave the Turks some real material assistance.¹³⁸

It is true that in all these negotiations the embassy had a key role in the initial soundings, as well as in the follow-up, and a supporting role in between. For example, apart from taking soundings himself, Loraine arranged and orchestrated the visit of the Treasury and ECGD officials to Ankara in 1937.¹³⁹ He was also asked to help reassure the Turks that the low key public presentation in Britain of the 1938 agreements (especially the one dealing with arms credits), which was designed to keep the international temperature low, did not mean that Britain was unenthusiastic about them.¹⁴⁰ The fact remains, however, that for some years after this time the embassy had very much a back seat when it came to the point of formal negotiations with the Turkish government, despite the high regard in which the ambassador was held in London. In other respects, though, the embassy remained all-important, and there is no doubt that it had been a major factor in preparing the ground for the Anglo-Turkish alliance which was soon to be such a preoccupation of both countries as the threat of a European war came closer.

¹³⁷ TNA, Loraine to Oliphant, 10 May 1935, FO1011/35; Loraine to Simon, 4 June 1935, FO424/279.

¹³⁸ TNA, Halifax to Loraine, 27 May 1938, FO424/282; Loraine to Oliphant, 2 June 1938, FO1011/43.

¹³⁹ TNA, Loraine to Eden, 25 Oct., 27 and 30 Nov. 1937; Memorandum respecting Turkey by S. D. Waley, Treasury, 27 Nov. 1937, FO424/281; Waley to Oliphant, 1 Dec. 1937, FO1011/40.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, Halifax to Loraine, 27 May 1938, FO424/282.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMBASSY AT WAR, 1939–44

It was perhaps unfortunate that in early 1939 Sir Percy Loraine left Turkey. The diplomatic staff had suffered another serious loss in the previous summer when Colonel Woods retired. It also remained no larger than it had been when at the beginning of 1937 Loraine complained that he was so short-handed he could not be expected to produce the embassy's annual report on time.¹ The mission contained seven diplomats: a chancery of five, which included two Levant Service officers with local diplomatic rank; and a commercial section of two. This put it on the same level as the embassy in Tehran and significantly beneath the one to which Loraine had been moved at Rome.² The air attaché, the laconic Wing Commander Thomas Elmhirst, was alone among his service colleagues in not having side accreditations. Contact between the Ankara and Istanbul posts was impeded by the fact that the telephone connection was bad and in any case tapped.³ Building work on the new ambassadorial residence at Ankara had only just been started. Beyond Istanbul and Ankara there were now consular posts at only Trabzon, Mersin and Izmir.

However, the embassy's position on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War was not altogether a weak one. Alarmed by the international situation, the Foreign Office lost no time in appointing a new ambassador, so ensuring that he arrived before Loraine departed and enabling him to "pick his brains".⁴ The new chief of mission, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, may not have had a commanding presence but—like all his recent predecessors—he was highly intelligent, witty, well-schooled in his craft, and a diplomat of considerable experience. Like them he had seen service in Turkey earlier in his career, if

¹ TNA, Oliphant to Loraine, 21 Jan. 1937, FO1011/40.

² It also had a chaplain, an archivist, another clerical officer, and a press attaché.

³ Telephone tapping became "standard international practice" in the decade before the Second World War: Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, p. 23; TNA, Saffery (Telecommunications Dept., GPO) to Dunlop (Head of Communications, FO), 30 June 1944, FO850/128.

⁴ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 11 and 24 Feb. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

only very briefly. ‘Snatch’, as he was universally known in the service,⁵ brought with him the reputation of being a safe pair of hands.⁶ He was also well liked by his colleagues and staff, and enjoyed much sympathy, having been severely wounded in August 1937 when, during his last posting as ambassador at Peking, his car was strafed by a Japanese fighter.⁷ It was just a pity that, on the old argument from social class that was rapidly losing ground, he was opposed to the amalgamation of the diplomatic and consular services. Potentially worse, while convalescing in 1938 he was made one of the three diplomatic service members of the Foreign Office committee then considering this question, and just a month before going to Turkey had been deputed to express their opposition privately for fear that its inclusion in their minority report might cause embarrassment.⁸

Perhaps Knatchbull-Hugessen continued to conceal his role in this sensitive affair on arriving at the embassy, which would have been just as well. After all, James Morgan—whose continued presence was another thing that the embassy had going for it—remained formally a humble consular officer despite the fact that he had been chargé d’affaires in each year from 1931 until 1938 and was to stand in for Knatchbull-Hugessen himself in 1940. “His long experience and close knowledge of Turkey were of immense value,” the ambassador wrote later, “and his unruffled, soothing way of looking at things in general stood me in good stead in many anxious days”.⁹ It was also no doubt a relief to him that the new commercial secretary, Stanley Jordan, an Australian and himself a former Levant Service officer, brought with him an impressive curriculum vitae;¹⁰ in any case, though ‘retired’, Colonel Woods

⁵ In *The Churchill War Papers*, vol. III, p. 419 (n.1), Gilbert says that K-H acquired this nickname only after discovery in 1944 of the ‘snatching’ of some of his secret papers by ‘Cicero’ (see p. 201 below). This is neat but untrue; see its use in TNA, Oliphant to Loraine, 1 Feb. 1939, FO1011/44, and Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, p. 509 (30 Jan. 1943).

⁶ Gladwyn, *The Memoirs*, p. 17; Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*, p. 81; *The Times*, 23 Mar. 1971.

⁷ Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 533–4.

⁸ Platt treats this episode with the contempt it deserves and reprints K-H’s private letter to the permanent under-secretary in an appendix, *The Cinderella Service*, pp. 115–16, 240–2. There is no mention of this business in K-H’s memoirs.

⁹ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 182.

¹⁰ This included over four years service in Constantinople during the armistice period. In 1930 he transferred to the Trade Commissioner Service (DOT) and thereafter worked exclusively in commercial diplomacy.

still made his services available in Istanbul.¹¹ In April 1939 the embassy acquired for the first time a press attaché, Roy Tristram, an Izmirli who spoke good Turkish and Greek.¹² And when Captain Herbert Packer, the naval attaché, was replaced in June 1939 the post was relieved of its former responsibilities for Athens and Belgrade. The military and air attachés had also been replaced by higher ranking officers, although it was symptomatic of the continuing deep distrust for foreign defence personnel of the Turkish General Staff that the British air attaché was denied the right to fly his own plane.¹³ For the duration of the war, the embassy was also able to console itself with the thought that it would be spared the end-of-year chore of producing an annual report.¹⁴

The embassy's communications with London were threatened by the conflict, although British sea power and dominance of the telegraph sector were reassuring. The parcels bag and the confidential bag still usually managed to get through, and the frequency of the bag service was in principle increased from the old fortnightly routine. However, the exigencies of the war and shortages of aircraft caused delays, and it was usually easier to get bags back to London than to get them out to Turkey, for planes heading for the Middle East naturally had to give priority to urgent military supplies. In fact, all bags for Ankara and Istanbul—like all others for the Middle East and beyond (including Moscow)—had to be routed via Cairo, and some travelling by air often had to reach this point via Lagos rather than North Africa. Urgent bags were flown in the care of the pilot from Cairo to Adana and then taken forward to the embassy by a King's Messenger, with a security officer for protection, travelling by train. Less urgent bags travelled by train all the way from Cairo to Ankara. Telegram traffic, by contrast, was more reliable but the consequence was that it had to bear a heavier burden, as did those doing the ciphering and deciphering of them.¹⁵ Continuing fears about the telephone's security and other dangers associated with it heavily restricted the use of this means of communication.

¹¹ TNA, min. of O'Donnel (Naval Attaché), 6 Mar. 1941, FO198/102.

¹² Mango, *Levantine Heritage*.

¹³ TNA, Morgan, 24 Jan. to Roberts (FO), FO371/23299.

¹⁴ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 27 Dec. 1939, KNAT 1/13. Although K-H still wrote what the FO regarded as a long-winded annual despatch on Turkey's foreign relations.

¹⁵ See papers in TNA, FO850/15 and 16 (1943).

Negotiating the Anglo-Turkish Alliance

When Knatchbull-Hugessen and his party alighted from the Orient Express in Istanbul in late February 1939, it was with some relief:

It is a disgusting and antiquated train [the new ambassador confided to his diary], with inadequate room for luggage, dirty windows which are never cleaned, and between Calais and Istanbul the supply of hot water non-existent: a real scandal. I shall complain.¹⁶

Housekeeping matters concerning the nineteenth century embassy building largely preoccupied the new ambassador during his short stop-over in the old capital. Its size and grandeur were certainly inspiring, he later admitted, although in its condition he found it of a piece with the once-luxurious train: “in many respects rather dilapidated”.¹⁷ Since it was also hot in summer and unattractive to Turkish ministers because their appearance in its salons might imply a slight to the new capital, he subsequently made little use of it, preferring when in Istanbul to cruise and entertain on the *de facto* summer embassy, the *Makook III*, which still limped along in the care of its Maltese crew.¹⁸ On arriving in Ankara Knatchbull-Hugessen discovered the residence to be not as bad as he had feared.¹⁹ Another consolation was that while it was a regret that Atatürk had died before he was able to meet him, at least this relieved the ambassador of the all-night drinking sessions that had fallen to the lot of his predecessor.²⁰

The less colourful General İsmet İnönü, who was now president, was as shrewd as his predecessor, extremely cautious, unsentimental, and in total control of foreign policy.²¹ The ambassador also found him as determined as Atatürk to reduce Turkey’s economic dependence on Germany and consolidate the political friendship with Britain that had been proceeding apace over the last few years, especially after the invasion of Albania by the state that for some time the Turkish government

¹⁶ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 24 Feb. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

¹⁷ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 24 Feb. and 4 Mar. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

¹⁸ K-H Diary, 19 Nov. 1939, KNAT 1/13; 9 Aug. 1943 and 24 Apr. 1944, KNAT 1/14; TNA, K-H to Halifax, 16 Dec. 1939, FO366/1053; K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp. 183–4. In spring 1941 *Makook III* was overhauled in case it might be required in an evacuation; see papers in TNA, FO198/102.

¹⁹ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 4 Mar. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

²⁰ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 144.

²¹ Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 48–9.

had most feared, Italy.²² In mid-March the Nazis entered Czechoslovakia and London hoped that Turkey would agree to join the 'peace front' against Axis aggression that it was trying to build in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. At the end of April, Franz von Papen, who had briefly been a prominent political figure in Germany and latterly ambassador at Vienna, arrived as the Reich's ambassador at Ankara with instructions to keep Turkey economically close and out of the grip of a British alliance.²³ Knatchbull-Hugessen thought him superficial and slippery, and reported him to be disliked and distrusted by the Turks because of his inglorious record in fighting alongside them in the First World War. (His more serious handicap was his notorious feud with the Nazi foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop.) In many ways, though, the British Ambassador could not help liking his German rival.²⁴ The stage was set and the chief actors had their scripts.

The broad lines of a treaty of mutual assistance between Britain and Turkey had begun to emerge in the course of discussions in late March and early April 1939. These were conducted in London by the foreign secretary, Lord Halifax, and the Turkish Ambassador, and in Ankara by Knatchbull-Hugessen and the Turkish foreign minister, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, whom like all Turks the new ambassador found "brave, honourable and straightforward to deal with".²⁵ However, the Turks were nervous of the implications of throwing in their lot with the British in the absence of assured Soviet support. They also wished to extract from London as much financial and economic assistance as possible, especially in the form of war material; and to this end exploit Britain's eagerness to show early evidence of the strengthening of the 'peace front' and forestall any German and Italian intrigues in Ankara. Accordingly, the Turks were in no great hurry to make a definitive, long-term agreement, particularly as Britain was not in a position to pay a high price for it.²⁶ The response to this of Halifax was to press for a short,

²² Except where otherwise indicated, the following account is based on the telegrams and despatches reproduced in the Confidential Print in TNA, FO424/283. Many of the key documents up to mid-August can also be found in *DBFP3*, vol. VI.

²³ Rolfs, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, ch. 14.

²⁴ TNA, K-H to Halifax, 16 July 1940, FO424/285; see also K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 144.

²⁵ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 9 May 1939, KNAT 1/13; see also 6 Mar., 14 April 1939 and 18 May 1940.

²⁶ On Britain's difficulties in replacing Germany as a market for Turkey's (largely agricultural) exports as well as source of its vital supplies, see Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 23–30.

early public declaration of the principles of Anglo-Turkish solidarity; the negotiation of a detailed agreement could wait until later.

The Turks agreed to this procedure and a joint declaration was made on 12 May 1939. Indicating a halt to the trend that had begun to develop in regard to bilateral agreements since 1936 (see Chapter 7), the negotiations for this had taken place in Ankara, even though the British Ambassador had been not much more than a postman between the two foreign secretaries. He had recommended to Saraçoğlu the content of Halifax's detailed telegrams and telegraphed back Saraçoğlu's detailed replies. On at least four occasions, when a British parliamentary deadline for announcement of the declaration rendered speed of the essence on 11 and 12 May, he had also found himself at the end of the telephone line to the Foreign Office. Subsequently, however, as Knatchbull-Hugessen settled into his post and Halifax's anxiety for a Turkish alliance mounted, the ambassador and his staff were allowed more latitude in negotiating the definitive agreement. They were permitted even more in negotiation of the linked agreements on financial and economic assistance, although the detailed implications of the latter would be settled with Turkish missions sent to London.²⁷ Discreet contact between Knatchbull-Hugessen and the Turkish foreign minister was facilitated by the proximity of their residences, which were only 300 yards apart and had no houses in between.²⁸

The Southern Department of the Foreign Office, which had taken over responsibility for Turkey from the Eastern Department at the beginning of the war, continued to have full access to Turkish diplomatic intercepts and was, as a result, not as dependent on the embassy for its tactics towards Turkey as Knatchbull-Hugessen was inclined to claim. Nevertheless, and no doubt with the alliance negotiations very much in mind, it was with some justice that he later wrote that:

It is a fallacy to suppose that an Ambassador is merely a marionette at the end of the telegraph or telephone. He alone can judge of the prospects of putting successfully across any suggestion or expression of view which he may receive from home. He must choose the best moment. If he thinks any approach or communication likely to fail of its purpose he must advise his government to abandon it or to await a more favourable moment. He is the judge as to how far the foreign Government are

²⁷ War trade matters were not K-H's strong suit, CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 4 Mar. 1940, KNAT 1/13; see also 15 Apr. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

²⁸ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 148.

likely to go in meeting the views of his own Government and at what point there is risk of disagreement. His local knowledge is of the greatest importance in everything and, in the light of it, he has much to contribute to constructive policy.²⁹

On 3 September 1939 Britain declared war on Germany and in the following days concern in the Foreign Office mounted that the Turks might have changed their minds about an alliance. Halifax needed the reassurance that they remained firm that only his man on-the-spot could provide—and the pressure of this man for a quick signing and immediate entry into force. The draft of the alliance was produced in London, and the British foreign secretary continued to shower his ambassador with telegrams containing fresh instructions in response to counter-proposals by Turkey, as well as in regard to the assistance in gold, trade, and war materials that it was demanding. On numerous occasions Halifax, who was influenced, thought Knatchbull-Hugessen, by the short-sightedness of the financial authorities at home, also had to reject his advice.³⁰ In the end, though, there is little doubt that the ambassador—who also had to carry with him his old friend the French Ambassador, René Massigli, after it had been decided in June to make the negotiations tripartite—played a minor architectural as well as brick-laying role in the Anglo-French-Turkish Treaty of Mutual Assistance that emerged.³¹ This included his pregnant suggestion, in a telegram of 20 September, that Turkey should not be obliged to go to war until it had received war material sufficient for the defence of its Thracian frontier. The ‘suspense clause’ embodying this idea was included in the text of one of the three secret agreements which, together with the treaty itself, were signed and immediately entered into force on 19 October 1939.³²

There is therefore no reason to believe that Halifax was being insincere when, on the following day, he telegraphed Knatchbull-Hugessen

²⁹ *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 31.

³⁰ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 19 Nov. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

³¹ The text of this is reproduced in Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, Appendix.

³² The secret agreements are to be found in TNA, FO93/110/112B. In January 1940 the suspense clause (art. 4 of the ‘*Accord Special*’ among these agreements) was cancelled by Turkey in return for delivery of the £15m gold loan promised by Britain and France in art. 4 of the ‘*Accord Special*’. See also TNA, Halifax to K-H, 29 Nov. 1939, FO424/283; Halifax to K-H, 13 Jan. 1940, FO424/284; Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 82–4, 88–9.

his thanks and warm congratulations on the “skill and patience” with which he and his staff had conducted “these long and at times difficult negotiations to their present successful conclusion”. *The Times* hailed it as a “diplomatic act of far-reaching importance”,³³ while Halifax’s first biographer described it as the “only major diplomatic victory for the Allies in the early phases of the war”.³⁴

Following up the Treaty

With Britain and Germany now at war (albeit still in the ‘phoney’ stage), the conclusion of the treaty with Turkey in October 1939 did not mean that there was less for the embassy to do; rather the reverse, as with the missions in other neutral countries of strategic and political importance.³⁵ It had a major responsibility to encourage the Turks at most to be full-blooded allies and at least to be benevolent neutrals. It also had the less popular responsibility of continually reminding London of what the Turks had been led to expect from Britain.³⁶

But it was difficult for the embassy to achieve even its minimum goal in the early years of the war because the tide was then running strongly in Germany’s favour. This undermined the credibility of Britain’s promises of effective military support for Turkey; it also made it seem unlikely that it would be able to supply it with war materials or replace Germany as a market for its exports. The pressure on Ankara to reinsure with Berlin was accordingly increased.

In the immediate aftermath of the treaty’s signature there was a great deal of negotiation on the details of UK-Turkey trade in which the embassy’s commercial secretariat was soon to be assisted by the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation (UKCC). This was a government-private sector hybrid created to secure vital supplies in Turkey and elsewhere, both for their own sake and to prevent them reaching Germany. UKCC obtained offices in Ankara on the road between the embassy and the town and was headed by Lord Carlisle. From Britain, the supply—or, too often, failure of supply—of war materials was of particular concern to Turkey, and from Turkey the supply of chrome,

³³ 20 Oct. 1939.

³⁴ Johnson, *Viscount Halifax*, p. 552.

³⁵ Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, p. 213.

³⁶ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 32.

which was vital in war production, was of special interest to Britain. In January 1940 a deal was negotiated by UKCC whereby Britain would henceforth purchase all Turkey's chrome ore production but, because the price was steep, only for a limited period. With hindsight, this was a mistake, and between late 1941 and early 1944 the embassy had to expend a great deal of energy in limiting the supply of Turkish chrome to Germany.³⁷ Before long the embassy and its rapidly expanding defence section also had to smooth the way for staff talks and then help them along. These were all matters of great importance but what was thought at home to be more so—and caught the unfavourable attention of politicians and officials, and some British diplomats elsewhere—was the embassy's role in following up Turkey's promises of co-belligerency when circumstances arose in which, to a lawyer's mind, they should have been made good.

The first of these circumstances occurred when Italy entered the war on 10 June 1940. Knatchbull-Hugessen—together with Massigli—was at once instructed to call on the Turkish foreign minister and “ask him to act according to the provisions of the Treaty”.³⁸ Taking his stand on the second protocol of the Anglo-French-Turkish Treaty, which absolved Turkey from “any action which might lead to war with the Soviet Union”, Saraçoğlu declined, and shortly afterwards his prime minister declared Turkey's intention of preserving its existing posture of neutrality.³⁹

This was a decision with which the embassy could not help sympathizing, as equally with Turkey's subsequent decision to provide no direct assistance to Greece when this country was attacked by Italy at the end of October. One of Turkey's allies, France, had disappeared; its other ally, Britain, was fighting for its life; Turkey's armed forces were still inadequately supplied and trained; its defences against German air retaliation were virtually non-existent; and the prospects of creating a strong and comprehensive bloc of Balkan states that would obstruct German expansion south-eastwards were evaporating. In such circumstances Turkish belligerency would put strains on British support that

³⁷ In April 1944 the Turkish government announced the suspension of all chrome deliveries to Germany, Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 26–8, 128–9, 168–9; Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, pp. 63, 97, 100–1; K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 172.

³⁸ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 166.

³⁹ Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, p. 103.

could not be met and might tempt the Soviet Union to make a bid for the Straits; in short, it would be more of a liability to Britain than an asset.⁴⁰ The point was, advised Knatchbull-Hugessen, not to encourage Turkey to go off half-cocked but to engage it in staff talks, continue building it up with supplies and instructors, and then be in a position to use it as a “trump-card” in the spring of 1941.⁴¹

As Knatchbull-Hugessen had feared, this analysis did not immediately find favour in Britain. Here it seemed obvious that the importance of Turkey joining the fray—not least as an example to Egypt, Iraq and Iran—was growing in proportion as other friends were falling to the Axis. Winston Churchill, who had been prime minister since May, never accepted it, and at the end of 1940 sent out Lieutenant-General James Marshall-Cornwall, the only senior officer in the army who spoke Turkish, at the head of a fruitless military mission to persuade the Turks to join the war and hold staff talks.⁴² In Athens the British Ambassador railed bitterly against the ‘supine’ Turks.⁴³ At the Foreign Office, however, Halifax was slowly beginning to see the force of the ambassador’s argument.⁴⁴ There was in any case little alternative to grudging acceptance.

Militarization of the Embassy

Whether Turkey was to be pressed to enter the war on Britain’s side or accepted as a benevolent neutral, the strength of Germany’s hand in the early years of the conflict meant that the implications for the embassy were the same. First, it had to be greatly reinforced, and it was. Already

⁴⁰ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 4 Aug. 1940, KNAT 1/13; K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp. 157–8, 166; TNA, K-H to Halifax, 21 Aug. 1940, FO424/285; Lee, *Special Duties*, ch. 3; Ranfurly, *To War with Whitaker*, pp. 180–1; Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 102–9.

⁴¹ TNA, K-H to Halifax, 30 Oct. and 28 Nov. 1940, FO424/285.

⁴² Marshall-Cornwall was a brilliant linguist and had been head of British military intelligence in Turkey from 1920 until 1923. As the senior British Army member of the Allied Military Committee he had also negotiated with the Turkish military mission which visited London in October 1939. Like the military commanders he met in Cairo en route to Ankara, he shared the embassy view that a Turkish declaration of war on Germany would not be in Britain’s interests; see his *Wars and Rumours of Wars*, pp. 56–65, 130–1, 172–81; Cooper, ‘Cornwall’.

⁴³ TNA, Palairret to Halifax, 4 Nov. 1940, FO424/285.

⁴⁴ TNA, Halifax to HM’s Representatives at Moscow, Angora... [etc.], 5 July; Halifax to K-H, 23 Aug. 1940, FO424/285.

in November 1939 Knatchbull-Hugessen was recording in his diary that “The staff increases continually, soldiers, sailors, cypher officers, press officers and registry clerks”.⁴⁵ Secondly, its palace in Istanbul—with only a skeleton staff before the outbreak of war and found by one British visitor to resemble nothing so much as “a cross between a fortress and a mortuary”⁴⁶—had now to be kept open on a permanent basis and put to uses of a novel kind. It was, after all, so conveniently placed adjacent to the developing theatre of fighting in the Balkans.

In September 1939 the embassy acquired a new third secretary, so the establishment of diplomats had by then risen to eight. Thereafter it continued to creep slowly upwards so that by 1941 there were usually ten in post at any one time. The commercial secretariat remained stable with a staff of two but in August 1940 a second archivist was acquired. The really dramatic change, however, as might have been expected, was in the number and weight of service personnel.

By the end of 1939 the naval attaché, Captain George O’Donnell, had already been provided with an assistant, and the military attaché, Major-General Alan Arnold, with two, thereby more than doubling the size of the defence section within a few months of the outbreak of war. Early in the following year the air attaché, Group Captain Bobby George, was also given an assistant, and Arnold yet another. When Geoffrey Thompson arrived in Ankara in May 1941 for a short spell as acting counsellor, what struck him most was the embassy’s “really formidable team” of service attachés.⁴⁷ It was to grow further. In August a second assistant naval attaché was acquired and in December O’Donnell was replaced as naval attaché by a rear-admiral, William Lindsay Jackson, who remained at the embassy until August 1946. At some point in 1940 a retired admiral was added informally. This was the white-haired Sir Howard Kelly, “a huge man with a brusque manner and a main-top voice”.⁴⁸ Kelly’s role in the embassy was to outsiders somewhat vague but was in reality to keep Churchill informed of Turkish military thinking and serve as the key link with the Mediterranean Fleet should Turkey enter the war against Germany. Kelly had great personal authority and said what he liked, and with his direct line to Churchill was regarded

⁴⁵ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 19 Nov. 1939, KNAT 1/13.

⁴⁶ Lee, *Special Duties*, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Thompson shared K-H’s view that it was inadvisable to press the Turks to join the war, *Front Line Diplomat*, pp. 166–8.

⁴⁸ Bridge, *Facts and Fictions*, p. 145.

as an asset by the ambassador.⁴⁹ However, the defence section thought him an interfering busybody.⁵⁰ With further arrivals, by the end of 1941 this section was already larger than the established diplomatic staff. It was to retain this dominant position throughout the war, by the end of which, 14-strong, it was exactly twice the size of the diplomatic staff. Apart from its usual functions, the defence section had the responsibility for drawing up plans, under the direction of the Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East, for the demolition and destruction of vital targets in Turkey in the event of a German invasion;⁵¹ as also for trying to persuade the Turkish General Staff to collaborate in this endeavour.⁵²

The military atmosphere of the embassy was also thickened by the great increase since late 1937 in the number of British instructors to the Turkish armed forces. They attended embassy social occasions and, as useful propagandists and information-gatherers, it is not surprising that Knatchbull-Hugessen seems to have thought of them as members of his staff. “As the war progressed our numbers increased by leaps and bounds”, he recorded in his memoirs. “For Christmas dinner in 1939 we entertained the staff at a sit-down dinner and we were nineteen: for Christmas 1944 [he meant 1943] we had two stand-up buffets of about one hundred and eighty each.”⁵³ In early 1944, when the embassy did a head count of all those requiring MFA identity cards, it was found that in November 1943 there had been 104 men and women nominally attached to the defence section compared with only 27 to the chancery, and in April 1944 160 compared with only 25.⁵⁴ Despite—or perhaps because of—this staggering numerical dominance of the military, in his daily morning conferences the ambassador maintained a numerical balance between his diplomatic and military staff.⁵⁵

Fortunately, in 1941 the new building in Ankara was completed; fortunately, too, Knatchbull-Hugessen preferred to stay in the smaller ‘first building’. What should have been the residence was thus fairly soon converted into offices to house both the chancery and the defence

⁴⁹ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 182; Thompson, *Front Line Diplomat*, p. 167; Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, pp. 6, 101, 123.

⁵⁰ Marshall-Cornwall, *Wars and Rumours of Wars*, pp. 175–6.

⁵¹ TNA, D/H111 to D/HV, 24 Aug. 1942, HS3/222.

⁵² TNA, K-H to FO, 1 Aug. 1941, FO371/30095.

⁵³ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 183; compare CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 25 Dec. 1939, KNAT 1/13, and 26 Dec. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

⁵⁴ TNA, untitled table, ca. May 1944, FO195/2593.

⁵⁵ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 182.

section, especially the army element, which occupied the entire bedroom floor. As the service attachés multiplied, Nissen huts had to be erected in the grounds to accommodate them. The poor information section remained in the small wooden house, while the commercial secretariat had to operate alongside UKCC in a building on Atatürk Boulevard.⁵⁶

When in April 1942 Thompson departed Ankara for the embassy at Baghdad, where he found no service attachés at all, he experienced “a tremendous relief”.⁵⁷ This suggests that there were tensions between the service attachés and the diplomats at the wartime Ankara embassy similar to those hinted at by Nevile Henderson during the Navy’s handover of control of the high commission in the 1920s. Apart from obvious differences in professional habits of thought and office practices, probably the main source of tension was a difference of view as to what activities were proper for an embassy to conduct (or condone) and what were not. This was most apparent at the consulate-general in Istanbul.

Following the outbreak of war the old embassy building in Istanbul found itself being devoted to many new purposes, some of them exotic. One of these was the housing in the former stables of the British Information Bureau, headed until his death in September 1940 by the well known Persian scholar and founding director of London University’s School of Oriental Studies, Sir Denison Ross. Another tenant, at first squeezed into four rooms on the top floor of the main building, was the large and increasingly busy Balkan Press Reading Bureau of the Ministry of Information (MOI). In April 1942 this acquired a wireless unit to monitor the medium wave broadcasts of Balkan radio stations that were inaudible in London or Cairo. The Bureau produced information for both propaganda and intelligence purposes for a great variety of consumers, principally the overseas general division of the MOI, of which it was one of the four major ‘press recording centres’, but among others the Americans.⁵⁸ Under the charming and knowledgeable but eccentric Dr Malcolm Burr, it was inefficient but not overhauled until

⁵⁶ Helm, ‘The Beginnings’, pp. 8–9.

⁵⁷ *Front Line Diplomat*, p. 173.

⁵⁸ The other main centres were Stockholm, Lisbon and Berne, Marett, *Through the Back Door*, p. 87.

late in 1943.⁵⁹ Serving in the Bureau as a translator from Croatian was the young Andrew Mango, who was much later to be Head of South European and French Language Services at the BBC and well known as the author of numerous books on Turkey.⁶⁰ During the war the Istanbul branch of the embassy also housed personnel working for at least three 'secret' agencies and from time to time for five or possibly even more.⁶¹

One of the secret agencies based in Istanbul was MI9, which specialised in assisting members of the armed forces to escape captivity or, better, evade it in the first place. Commander V. Wolfson, who was also head of Naval Intelligence in Istanbul with the cover of 'Assistant Naval Attaché', was MI9's key man in Istanbul and had an outstation at Izmir.⁶² MI9 played a vital role in operating the 'evasion line' running along the west coast of Turkey, as well as in expediting the passage through the country of many Jews fleeing from Germany.⁶³ Together with the military attaché in Ankara, the versatile Wolfson also assisted the activities of GHQ Cairo's special deception section, 'A' Force.⁶⁴ MI6, formerly the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and usually known here under the cover title for its Middle East organization, 'Inter-Services Liaison Department (ISLD)', also had a station in Istanbul.⁶⁵ So, too, did Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME), which represented the Security Service (MI5) in the Middle East.⁶⁶ MI8, the radio services branch

⁵⁹ To give the Reading Bureau more space and because the variety of nationalities employed by it were thought a threat to embassy security, in June 1943 it was moved to offices outside the main building. In 1943 the wireless team also moved out, becoming part of a joint Anglo-American unit established at a site five miles from the city centre where there was less electrical interference, TNA, Reorganization of the Balkan Press Reading Bureau, Istanbul [memo. by], Geoffrey Kirk, Istanbul, 22 Oct. 1943; K-H to MOI, 15 Nov. 1942; Ashton to Murray, 14 April 1943, FO898/259.

⁶⁰ He had earlier worked briefly as a clerk in the timber department of UKCC. At the end of 1944 he left the Balkan Press Reading Bureau to join the press office at the Ankara embassy, where he remained until March 1947.

⁶¹ TNA, Morgan to FO, 26 Dec. 1941, FO195/2473; Telephone Installations in Embassy Buildings at Istanbul, ca. Feb. 1944, FO850/128; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, p. 82.

⁶² Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, p. 36; Foot and Langley, *MI9*, p. 89; TNA, Godfrey (Adm.) to Nelson, 12 Nov., 1941, HS3/238.

⁶³ Foot and Langley, *MI9*, pp. 89-91; *The Times* (Wolfson obits.), 13 and 15 Jan. 1954.

⁶⁴ Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, p. 36.

⁶⁵ Dorril, *MI6*, pp. 206-7; BDOHP, Interview with Sir Denis Wright, 26 July 2000, DOHP 67.

⁶⁶ Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945*, p. 22; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, p. 82; TNA, R. J. Maunsell to Head of M.E.I.C., Proposal for

of military intelligence, was not to be left out either.⁶⁷ As Nicholas Elliott, a well connected and increasingly influential MI6 officer who arrived in Istanbul in the late spring of 1942, later wrote, the building was “crammed from top to bottom with intelligence operatives”.⁶⁸ But it was another British secret organization in Istanbul which caused particular concern to the embassy; this was the Special Operations Executive (SOE).

Frustrating SOE

As one of its best historians has noted, SOE was established in July 1940 “as a desperate attempt to plug the gaping hole in British strategy caused by the collapse of France”.⁶⁹ Placed under the Ministry of Economic Warfare, it was created to contribute substance to the British idea that Germany would be defeated only as a result of internal collapse brought about by indirect means: blockade, strategic bombing, and support not only for the resistance movements in Nazi-occupied Europe but also those elements in unoccupied countries that might resist invasion. It was providing this support—collaborating in sabotage, subversion and black propaganda—that was to be the contribution of SOE.

The Balkans, through which ran the Danube supply route for Rumanian oil to Germany, had been a priority for British saboteurs (then run by Section D of MI6) since the outbreak of war, and they had maintained a small supporting office in Istanbul since May 1940.⁷⁰ When SOE’s agents and leading collaborators began to be squeezed out of the Balkans by Axis pressure in the second half of 1940, and then most decisively by the German invasion in early 1941, they initially regrouped in substantial numbers in Istanbul. This was “the nearest safe post to the scene of their work” and the site of the radio facilities of the MI6 war station, which they were allowed to share; some were given cover in the consulate-general. In the spring of 1941 the Balkan

Re-organisation of S.I.M.E., 6 June 1942, KV4/306. In 1942 there were also SIME officers based at Izmir, Adana and Iskenderun, and cooperation with the Turkish secret police through the ‘Anglo-Turkish Security Bureau’, created in late 1940, was reported to be excellent, Maunsell to Petrie, 18 Sept., 1941 and 24 Jan. 1942; Questionnaire submitted by Head Office to S.I.M.E., 8 June 1942, KV4/306.

⁶⁷ TNA, Burland to Helm, 3 Feb. 1944, FO195/2593.

⁶⁸ Elliott, *Never Judge a Man by His Umbrella*, p. 120.

⁶⁹ Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940–1945*, p. 2.

⁷⁰ TNA, AD/1 [Sweet-Escott] to AD/A, 18 May 1941, HS3/222.

section was moved to Jerusalem but its disadvantages were soon apparent; accordingly, it began to press for a return to Istanbul, despite the problem of cover that this would pose.⁷¹

Tension between the diplomats in the embassy and the high-octane officers of SOE was inevitable. This was because the principal task of the embassy was to preserve good relations with the Turks in order to nudge them to co-belligerency at the right time; while that of SOE was to run operations in Turkey that might well risk those good relations, firm as it was in the belief that the attitude of the Turks would ultimately be shaped not by the odd local annoyance but by their conviction as to who would win the war.⁷² Furthermore, SOE never tired of pointing out that it could not be expected to produce results if it was not permitted to make extensive preparations well in advance of their likely need—even during periods when the Turks were tilting towards the Allies and such preparations seemed to the embassy to be particularly ill-advised.

Knatchbull-Hugessen had already been deceived by SOE in one affair⁷³ and embarrassed by the activities of some of its agents in Istanbul, and he did not like the idea of them returning to the consulate-general in force. “It would be far better”, he told the Foreign Office, “if we could return to the old system by which secret organizations really worked in secret, and provided their own cover”.⁷⁴ Since some of them had cover as members of Wolfson’s department, Naval Intelligence in Istanbul also feared that their own delicate operations might be compromised by their activities.⁷⁵ But Churchill favoured SOE’s Balkan operations and—provided they were discreet—the Turks were willing to turn a

⁷¹ TNA, Memorandum of George Taylor, 13 Aug. and min. of Dixon, 31 July 1941, FO371/30096. See also Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, pp. 43, 51 and ch. 3; Sweet-Escott, ‘S.O.E. in the Balkans’, p. 5.

⁷² This fundamental difference of view is particularly well summed up in an SOE document of 10 May 1942: ‘S.O.E. in Turkey’, HS3/236; see also ‘S.O.E. Activities in Turkey’, 13 Jan. 1942, HS3/238.

⁷³ SOE had contrived cover for the leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian Party as a translator in the consulate-general by falsely claiming that supporting FO instructions to K-H were in the pipeline. This incensed the ambassador, who had the ‘translator’ withdrawn from Turkey altogether, TNA, min. of Bowker, 5 Aug. 1941, FO371/30096. See also K-H to Cadogan, 3 May, and to FO, 30 July 1941, FO371/30095; K-H to Sargent, 1 Oct. 1941, FO371/30097.

⁷⁴ TNA, K-H to FO, 22 Aug. 1941, HS3/222.

⁷⁵ TNA, Godfrey (Adm.) to Nelson, 12 Nov., C to C.D. [Nelson], 13 Nov. and Davidson (War Office) to Nelson, 15 Nov. 1941, HS3/238.

blind eye.⁷⁶ As a result, by July 1941 the saboteurs were already moving back to Istanbul and in the end the ambassador had little option but to accept the situation.⁷⁷ It may have been some consolation to him that, as part of a shake-up of SOE's whole Middle East organization, the Balkan section was to be headed by the wise and somewhat elderly Tom Masterson.⁷⁸

It was bad enough for Knatchbull-Hugessen to have to consent to SOE operating into the Balkans from embassy premises in Istanbul; it was infinitely worse for him to have to contemplate agreeing to it using embassy and consular premises as bases from which to conduct operations inside neutral Turkey itself.⁷⁹ Unfortunately for the ambassador, following the overrunning of the Balkans by Germany and especially its onslaught on the Soviet Union in late June 1941, creating an organization in Turkey *for Turkey* is just what SOE—strongly supported by the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East—wanted to do. For should the southern, right wing of the German offensive against the Soviet Union be successful and reach its target of the Caucasian oilfields, Germany would be in a position to threaten eastern Turkey and thence Britain's position in the Middle East; this was now “the greatest of Whitehall's anxieties”.⁸⁰ Moreover, already in May the head of SOE in London, Sir Frank Nelson, had been told by the head of MI6 that he had “first class information” that a considerable part of the Turkish GHQ was in German pay;⁸¹ and on 18 June a fearful Turkey had signed a Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression with Germany. There was therefore now thought to be a clear possibility that German divisions might actually be granted the right to pass peacefully through eastern Turkey to Syria.⁸²

⁷⁶ TNA, Nichols to Mallaby, 2 May 1941, FO371/30095; min of Bowker, 29 Aug. 1941, FO371/30097.

⁷⁷ TNA, A/D to C.E.O. [Jebb], 13 July 1941, HS3/222.

⁷⁸ Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, p. 52.

⁷⁹ Similar discomfort on the part of the FO, its embassies, and MI6 was experienced over SOE plans for other neutrals: Wylie, ‘SOE and the neutrals’, esp. pp. 162–3; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940–1945*, pp. 76–7. Up to this point, there had only been “certain special exceptions” to the understanding that SOE should not conduct anti-Axis operations inside Turkey, TNA, A/D to C.E.O., 13 July 1941, HS3/222; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, pp. 82–3.

⁸⁰ Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 2, p. 80; see also pp. 83–4 and 278–9.

⁸¹ TNA, CD to AD/A, 21 May 1941, HS3/222.

⁸² Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 121, 125–6.

In short, it was SOE's view that Turkey was now "certainly no longer an ally and possibly a country... on its way towards acceptance of the German new order"—and so a legitimate sphere of operations. A new and separate SOE organization inside Turkey should be established so as not to compromise the Balkan organization if it was discovered. This would engage in 'irregular' political activity, including bribery; subversive and covert propaganda; and sabotage, whether pre- or post-occupational.⁸³ Under the last heading it would give particular attention to preparations to blow up the railway bridges and tunnels through the Taurus Mountains in southern Anatolia in order to block any German advance on the Middle East. To make all this possible, SOE officers should have cover not only in the embassy but also in its consular posts and UKCC, while their equipment and explosives should be hidden in dumps in the consulates (including the one in Istanbul) and on the bare site at Therapia. (By this time the consular network had been expanded to include posts at Adana, Iskenderun, Samsun and Çanakkale, while it was determined that Trabzon should be occupied by a consular officer all year round.)⁸⁴ All this activity, SOE admitted soothingly, would have to come under the general direction of the ambassador but there was no time to lose.⁸⁵

Unlike SOE, Knatchbull-Hugessen did not believe that Turkey was about to throw in its lot with the Germans; indeed, he thought that its sympathies really lay with the Allies and that, if it was attacked by the Germans, it would resist. Certain that it was merely temporizing to keep out of the war, he had avoided "unreasoning opposition" to the Turco-German treaty in order to retain some influence in Ankara.⁸⁶ When on 22 July 1941, therefore, he was invited by the Foreign Office to consider the SOE plan,⁸⁷ which he interpreted to mean even colluding in an attempt to overthrow the present Turkish government, he reacted angrily. In a lengthy telegram marked 'personal' for Anthony Eden, who had been foreign secretary again since the end of 1940 and

⁸³ TNA, A/D to C.E.O., 13 July 1941, HS3/222.

⁸⁴ *FO List 1941 and 1942*; Wright, 'Trabzon and the British connection', pp. 3–5; BDOHP, Interview with Sir Denis Wright, 26 July 2000, DOHP 67.

⁸⁵ TNA, A/D to C.E.O., 13 July 1941, HS3/222.

⁸⁶ K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p. 170.

⁸⁷ TNA, FO to Angora, 22 July 1941, FO371/30095.

whom the ambassador either already or before too long “hated and despised” more than anyone else in London,⁸⁸ he wrote:

I deprecate this proposal with the utmost possible emphasis as one which must inevitably cause the gravest prejudice to our relations with the Turkish Government, and to the standing of this Embassy (and indeed of His Majesty’s Government) in their eyes.

My [? views] on position of His Majesty’s Embassy in relation to S.O.E. activities, affecting other countries but Turkey, in Turkey have already been clearly stated.... I had been encouraged to think that these views had your sympathy... In regard to similar activities within this country my views are the same but infinitely stronger.

Elaborating, he said that bribing Turkish officials was an extremely delicate business and the proposed new organization would be completely lacking in the local knowledge and experience to pull it off, adding that just one mistake would be fatal. As to ‘subversive propaganda’, if this meant working on discontented elements in Turkey he could imagine nothing more damaging to British interests. The idea of SOE preparations for sabotage inside Turkey was also misconceived: “This has already for some time been in the hands of our Military Attaché”, Knatchbull-Hugessen reminded him. “It has proved almost impossible to go beyond a certain point with Turkish cooperation and as all vulnerable points are carefully guarded I doubt if anything could be usefully done without it”, he added. Finally, since the Turkish government would be bound to discover the SOE organization and hold him responsible for it, he stressed the impossible position in which its creation would place him. “I beg you to take these arguments into most earnest consideration”, concluded the ambassador, “and I beg most urgently that the whole scheme which I and all my staff regard as diametrically opposed to our interests here, be dropped.”⁸⁹

Eden agreed with the ambassador, regretted that the original message had given the appearance of coming from him personally, and asked that Knatchbull-Hugessen be assured that nothing would be done in the matter against his wishes.⁹⁰ But he had been mistaken in thinking that SOE wanted to overthrow the İnönü government, he was told by Sir Orme Sargent, the superintending under-secretary of the Southern

⁸⁸ Richard Langhorne to the author, 19 Nov. 2008. (K-H left his papers to RL, who was responsible for transferring them to CAC Cam.).

⁸⁹ TNA, K-H to S of S, 1 Aug. 1941, FO371/30095.

⁹⁰ TNA, K-H to S of S, 1 Aug. 1941, min. of Eden, FO371/30095.

Department. Hastening to explain that it wanted a Turkish organization ready for use "only in case the situation should radically change",⁹¹ Sargent asked him to send another telegram making the case against the SOE plan which would not invite the riposte that it was based on a fundamental misunderstanding of its rationale.⁹² This Knatchbull-Hugessen duly did. If the SOE plan for a Turkish organization went ahead, he said, the embassy might as well be closed down, for it would probably have the opposite effect to what was intended and drive the Turks into the arms of the Germans.⁹³ With the significant reservation that it was no argument against an insurance policy that the eventuality against which it guarded was unlikely to happen, the Foreign Office accepted that the ambassador's case was unanswerable. It asked the Ministry of Economic Warfare to drop the proposal.⁹⁴

The Ministry was forced to bow to this Foreign Office judgement. But steeled by a deep dislike for Knatchbull-Hugessen, whom it regarded as the least cooperative of all British representatives in countries of interest to SOE,⁹⁵ it picked up on the point about an insurance policy, which seemed daily more apposite as fears mounted of a successful German campaign in southern Russia.⁹⁶ It asked, therefore, for a skeletal operation for general purposes in Turkey (a handful of agents with wireless sets), and the Foreign Office felt bound to recommend this to the ambassador.⁹⁷ At the same time, following a recommendation of the Joint Planning Staff in London, a compromise plan involving SOE but under military control was evolving to deal with the special and urgent problem of the Taurus tunnels. A base in northern Syria was to be established from which a few agents with only small quantities of explosives could be discreetly infiltrated across the Turkish frontier in order to make preparations for their demolition in the event of a

⁹¹ TNA, Sargent to K-H, 8 Aug. 1941, FO371/30095.

⁹² TNA, Sargent to K-H, 12 Aug. 1941, FO371/30096.

⁹³ TNA, K-H to FO, 18 Aug. 1941, FO371/30096.

⁹⁴ TNA, Sargent to Jebb, 22 Aug. 1941, FO371/30096.

⁹⁵ TNA, Jebb to Sargent, 14 Aug. 1941, HS3/222.

⁹⁶ On 21 August Hitler had decided to divert forces from his thrust to Moscow in order to support the attack on southern Russia, and at this point Kiev was in the process of being encircled. This was accomplished by late September, after which Field Marshall von Rundstedt overran the Crimea and the Donetz basin, Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, pp. 174-6.

⁹⁷ TNA, George Taylor to Sargent, 24 Aug.; FO to Ankara, 8 Sept. 1941, FO371/30096.

German invasion.⁹⁸ Although the Foreign Office was uncomfortable with the idea, it eventually agreed that Knatchbull-Hugessen should be kept in the dark about this particular scheme.⁹⁹

It was against this background that a small SOE organization for Turkey itself began to evolve out of the Balkan section in Istanbul in the second half of 1941. At this point it was headed by Gardyne de Chastelain, “one of the most experienced, reliable and competent field commanders employed by S.O.E. in any foreign country”.¹⁰⁰ His number two was W. Harris Burland, subversive propaganda was in the hands of G. E. R. Gedye, and office administration was the responsibility of L. A. R. Harrop. E. G. H. Abbot was the remaining member.¹⁰¹

With Foreign Office encouragement, in late August and again in September, Knatchbull-Hugessen received the SOE regional director for the Balkans, the persuasive Colonel Bickham Sweet-Escott,¹⁰² together with de Chastelain, in order to arrive at some understanding. (De Chastelain had already secured the ambassador’s agreement to an anti-Axis whispering campaign and the distribution of leaflets.)¹⁰³ The ambassador was as helpful as possible, even more so, said Sweet-Escott, than some of the junior members of the embassy.¹⁰⁴ To the surprise of the Southern Department, it emerged that Knatchbull-Hugessen had already agreed to the establishment of dumps of explosives in the consulate at Iskenderun and the stables at Therapia.¹⁰⁵ Albeit with the “utmost reluctance”, therefore, for he still thought that in the absence of an emergency SOE’s proposed activities in Turkey were likely to do more harm than good, the ambassador told Sweet-Escott that he would sanction further “purely preparatory measures” designed to support

⁹⁸ TNA, Activities in Turkey, Report by the JPS, 28 Aug. 1941, and subsequent papers, FO371/30097.

⁹⁹ TNA, Eden on min. of Sargent, 11 Sept., Dixon to Mallaby, 13 Sept., and Howard to Mallaby, 24 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, draft letter, SO to Eden, ca. July 1942, HS3/238.

¹⁰¹ TNA, anon. SOE doc., 27 Mar. 1942, HS3/238. Further details on SOE’s organization in Turkey, including the Turkish agents it recruited, may be found in Seydi, ‘The activities of Special Operations Executive in Turkey’.

¹⁰² Cruickshank, ‘Escott, Bickham Aldred Cowan Sweet-’; see also Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, p. 56.

¹⁰³ TNA, anon. SOE doc., 27 Mar. 1942, HS3/238.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, K-H to Sargent, 27 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, pp. 80–1, 87.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, C. in C. Middle East to Chiefs of Staff, 7 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097. Subsequently, he agreed to one at Smyrna as well, D/H.44 to A/D.3, 23 Nov. 1942, HS3/222.

SOE's general plans for Turkey.¹⁰⁶ These included increasing the size of the dump in the consulate-general in Istanbul, establishing a new one in the consulate at Adana or Mersin (where new personnel would also be appointed under cover, subject to the agreement of the military attaché at Ankara), arranging the distribution of "supplies" beyond extra-territorial premises, and the positioning of wireless transmitters at "suitable points".¹⁰⁷

However, in a telegram of 12 September, sent amidst further difficulties in preserving good relations with Turkey caused by the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran on 25 August, the ambassador promptly informed the Southern Department of the "absolutely sine qua non" conditions on which he had granted these concessions. No more SOE personnel were to be posted to Turkey beyond those to whom he had already agreed; no subversive or political activity was to be undertaken in the absence of an emergency; there should be no danger whatever of discovery or even suspicion; and he should have the freedom to insist on the immediate departure of SOE personnel should he be questioned about them by the Turkish government.¹⁰⁸ By the last condition Knatchbull-Hugesen meant the whole organization, and not—as Sweet-Escott claimed afterwards—just particular individuals.¹⁰⁹ (Later, the ambassador also insisted that these exchanges were not carved in stone and that he reserved the right to change his mind if circumstances altered.)¹¹⁰ He could rely on the full support of the Foreign Office, Sargent told him, but SOE "should be given a chance".¹¹¹ This was also the view of the permanent under-secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, who had been instrumental in launching SOE and charged by Churchill with keeping an eye on clandestine warfare developments on his behalf.¹¹²

At the end of November Rundstedt's drive to the Caucasian oilfields expired on the River Don, and with it the immediate German threat to Britain's position in the Middle East via eastern Anatolia which had

¹⁰⁶ TNA, K-H to FO, 12 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, Sweet-Escott to Maxwell, 14 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097. There is a description of the subsequent activity at Mersin—"a hive of wartime activity"—by the consul-in-charge there in 1943–5, Denis Wright, in BDOHP, Interview with Sir Denis Wright, 26 July 2000, DOHP 67.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, K-H to FO, 12 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, K-H to Sargent, 29 Sept. 1941 (tel. no. 2316), FO371/30097.

¹¹⁰ TNA, S.O.E. in Turkey, 10 May 1942, HS3/236.

¹¹¹ TNA, Sargent to K-H, 6 Oct. 1941, FO371/30097; see also Sargent to Jebb, 7 Oct. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹¹² Seaman, "A new instrument of war", pp. 15–16.

made the Taurus tunnels scheme so urgent. Despite this development, the threat from Germany to Turkey was believed to remain a live one, not just externally from the Balkans and southern Russia, where its forces resumed their advance towards the Caucasus—this time with more success—in the spring of 1942, but internally from a *coup d'état* inspired by its agents.¹¹³ Also worrying, the staff talks between Britain and Turkey, on which some hopes had been placed in late 1941, had proved to be of little use.¹¹⁴ As a result, in early 1942 SOE resumed its Whitehall campaign to have its hands in Turkey untied,¹¹⁵ while surreptitiously building up its skeleton organization for post-occupation activity beyond the level approved by Knatchbull-Hugessen, and without either his knowledge or even that of the foreign secretary.¹¹⁶ The strength of feeling in SOE against the ambassador was now enormous: “it is deplorable”, said a minute written by one of its officers which was endorsed at the top, “that the work of our own Ambassador should be so much more valuable to the German cause than all the efforts of von Papen”.¹¹⁷

When the tide began to turn against Germany at the end of 1942, SOE's Turkish scheming was not set back. The changing shape of the war might have reduced the need for its organization in Turkey for pre- and post-occupation work (especially in southern Turkey¹¹⁸) but, by the same token, it argued cleverly, it had been made less risky. After all, discovery of its activities by the ‘realistic’ Turks no longer carried the same possibility that it would drive them into the arms of Berlin. Hence it should be allowed to target Turkish chrome exports to Germany, build up its Balkan organization as a ‘springboard’ back into the Balkans, and—just in case—intensify its post-occupation Turkey preparations.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ TNA, Dalton to Eden, 16 Jan. 1942, HS3/222.

¹¹⁴ TNA, A/D. to A/D.S., 26 Nov. 1941, HS3/222.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, TNA, Dalton to Eden, 16 Jan.; C-in-C Committee, S.O.E. Activities in Turkey: Paper by the S.O.E. Sub-Committee, Mar.; SOE Cairo to A.D., 3 Apr. 1942, HS3/222.

¹¹⁶ TNA, D/H111 to D/HV, 24 Aug.; H/H.44 to A/D.3, 23 Nov.; D/HY to D/HV, 25 Dec. 1942, HS3/222.

¹¹⁷ TNA, A/D.3 to C.D., 17 Feb. 1942, HS3/236. “I agree entirely”, said AD; “I am absolutely in agreement with every word of this minute”, said A/D.W; “So am I”, added C.D., 18 Feb.

¹¹⁸ The scheme for the demolition of the Taurus railway tunnels was abandoned in the winter or early spring of 1943, TNA, A/D3 to C.D., 9 May 1943, HS3/222.

¹¹⁹ TNA, D/HY to D/HV, 25 Dec. 1942, HS3/222.

The Adana conference in January 1943 (see p. 198 below) encouraged the belief that Turkey was now likely to prove a more reliable ally. It was also felt by Burland, who was soon to take over from de Chastelain, that the Balkan section was the most important component of SOE's work in Turkey and that this might be jeopardised by subversive activity within Turkey itself.¹²⁰ This argued for accepting Knatchbull-Hugessen's dictum on its role. On the other hand, the ambassador was found to be "somewhat evasive and to shift his ground" on SOE's proper role inside Turkey, as well as to say that it would be better if he was ignorant of the organization's activities even when information about them was offered, for example on the explosives already placed at the Shell plant in Istanbul, where the manager was an SOE agent. This argued for a more permissive interpretation of its mandate.¹²¹ SOE particularly felt disposed to push to the limits what it might do to reduce the supply of Turkish chrome to Germany, for example by attacking Axis shipping in Turkish waters (its base for this was the garden at Therapia¹²²) and Axis rolling stock inside Turkey.¹²³ At a meeting at the embassy on 9 May the ambassador, who believed that his own, quieter methods were already paying dividends on the chrome question, agreed that SOE action against chrome supplies to Germany was permissible only if no explosives were used.¹²⁴ He also insisted, however, that the German threat to Turkey was now so reduced that the need for other forms of SOE activity inside the country was "probably dead" and that caution was now more important than ever.¹²⁵

The upshot of all this agonising was that the staff of the Turkey section of SOE's headquarters in the consulate-general in Istanbul, which for some time had been operating with the cover of the 'Shipping

¹²⁰ TNA, D/H.44, 'Appreciation of the Military Situation in Turkey and of Future S.O.E. Policy', April, 1943, HS3/222.

¹²¹ TNA, A/D3 to C.D., 9 May 1943, HS3/222. Explosive charges had been laid in both the Shell and Socony oil plants on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus in early 1942, D/H.44 to B9 section, Force 133, 21 Jan. 1944, HS3/222.

¹²² TNA, D/H.44 to Force 133 for AD 1, 29 Apr. 1944, HS3/222.

¹²³ TNA, A/D3 to C.D., 9 May 1943, HS3/222.

¹²⁴ TNA, Minutes [recorded by SOE] of Meeting held on 9th May 1943 at Ankara, covering S.O.E. Activities in Turkey, HS3/222. The history of subsequent chrome deliveries to Germany suggests that K-H's argument for anti-chrome diplomacy rather than anti-chrome violence was not so "specious" as Wylie suggests, 'SOE and the neutrals', p. 173; see also Ranfurly, *To War with Whitaker*, p. 180.

¹²⁵ TNA, Summary of Discussion [recorded by embassy] on S.O.E. Activities in Turkey, May 9th, 1943, HS3/222.

Department, Ministry of War Transport', was reduced.¹²⁶ However, Knatchbull-Hugessen had by no means heard the last of SOE.

In January 1944, having learned that chrome shipments to Germany had of late been increasing, it pressed once more for permission to sabotage them, only this time to be told by the embassy that Churchill had decided at the Cairo conference (see p. 198 below) that these deliveries would hopefully prove to be a 'safety valve' that would reduce the incentive for Germany to attack Turkey before the Allies were ready.¹²⁷ In the next month SOE complained that Knatchbull-Hugessen had asked it to go even more slowly than it had been doing already.¹²⁸ The Balkan section, however, which was now operating from Izmir as well as Istanbul, could not be treated in the same manner, for in 1943 this had been called on to support the great upsurge in SOE operations in the Balkans, prompted and encouraged by Churchill himself.¹²⁹

By early 1944 the embassy had become thoroughly alarmed by the large number of SOE personnel in Turkey, especially since there had been a distinct cooling in Anglo-Turkish relations following the latest refusal of the İnönü government, made at Cairo, to join the war on the Allied side.¹³⁰ In the headcount of staff for whom it had to apply for identity cards to the Turkish foreign ministry, the embassy found that Burland's staff enjoying 'Shipping Department' cover had increased from 25 to 32 in just the three months after November 1943.¹³¹ SOE was not alone in recently increasing its staff, for—with a view to moving into the Balkans—all the secret departments had expanded; and Knox Helm, who was increasingly taking responsibility for dealing with SOE and regarded as even more hostile than the ambassador, thought that if they cooperated more closely they would all need fewer men.¹³² On

¹²⁶ TNA, D/H.44 [Burland] to DSO(A), 'Organisation and Plans in Turkey', 27 Nov. 1943, HS3/222.

¹²⁷ TNA, D/H.44 to B9, Force 133, 19 Jan. 1944, HS3/222.

¹²⁸ TNA, B9 to D.HX, 16 Feb. 1944, HS3/222.

¹²⁹ Wylie, 'SOE and the neutrals', pp. 170–1; Stafford, 'Churchill and SOE', pp. 52–3. In January 1943 the important Greek section within the Balkan organization had been transferred to Izmir, where it became semi-independent. It was headquartered in the consulate-general but acquired a W/T station in a private house at Buga and a secret base at Egrilar, the last two being winked at by the Turkish secret service, TNA, B9 to G.Ops, 2 Mar. 1944, HS3/222; D/H60 to D/H13, Istanbul Office—History, 14 Mar. 1945, HS3/223.

¹³⁰ TNA, D/H.44 to B9 for D/H.113, 21 Feb. 1944, HS3/222.

¹³¹ TNA, untitled table, ca. May 1944, FO195/2593.

¹³² TNA, D/H.44 to B9, Force 133, 19 Jan. 1944, HS3/222. According to Burland, Helm was regarded as "obstructive and generally antagonistic" by all the secret departments, D/H.44 to AD 1, 18 Aug. 1944, HS3/223.

24 January 1944 Knatchbull-Hugessen told his heads of department that:

I am afraid that in spite of my desire to help, this expansion of cover cannot continue. The Turks will certainly take exception to it, and there is a real danger that, owing to the expansion, the position of existing staffs will be prejudiced and the arrival of further essential staff rendered impossible.

There would, therefore, have to be a great deal of tightening up, he insisted.¹³³ SOE could not escape this even though Burland had obtained some credit from Helm because in Istanbul he had almost as many people without cover as with it. The SOE man complained that he was overstretched but his London headquarters supported the embassy.¹³⁴

Fortunately for both SOE and the embassy, in the middle of April the Turkish foreign minister announced that all chrome exports to Germany were to be stopped, so the vexed question of their sabotage more or less fell away. This left the planning and preparation of the move into the Balkans as “the chief work of urgent importance”.¹³⁵ By late May the question had arisen in SOE as to whether there was any longer a need for the rump of its section devoted to work inside Turkey.¹³⁶ It was relieved during the summer by appeals from the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East, who wanted it to assist in the sabotage of Axis shipping moving from the Black Sea through the Straits into the Aegean.¹³⁷ However, by autumn the whole SOE organization was being run down: the key word now was ‘liquidation’.

Struggling to Coordinate Propaganda

The embassy had not had much taste for propaganda—covert or otherwise—since its controversial chief dragoman, Gerald Fitzmaurice, had encouraged a press campaign against the Young Turks not long after their revolution in July 1908.¹³⁸ A certain impatience with this sort of activity also lingered on well into 1941, although this was now

¹³³ TNA, K-H to all Heads of Dept., 24 Jan. 1944, FO195/2593.

¹³⁴ TNA, Burland to Helm, 28 Jan., 3 Feb., and early May [nd.] 1944, FO195/2593.

¹³⁵ TNA, D/H.44 to Force 133 for AD 1, 21 Apr. 1944, HS3/222.

¹³⁶ TNA, D/H.44 to Force 133 for AD 1, 26 May 1944, HS3/222.

¹³⁷ TNA, Mideast to Chiefs of Staff and K-H to FO, 2 June; Cadogan to Ankara, 20 July 1944, HS3/223. For background on this question, see Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, 169–72.

¹³⁸ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939)*, chs. 5–6.

less to do with any principled hostility than with the atmosphere and conditions in Turkey. In the early spring of 1940 a circular letter was sent to all heads of mission asking for suggestions as to how British propaganda in their countries might be improved.¹³⁹ To this Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen replied:

On the general point of political propaganda I don't think there is more to do than to go on as at present. The Turks are so friendly and so wholeheartedly with us that they really do it for themselves. We are preaching to the converted. . . . all we have to do is to keep the pot boiling by sending plenty of material, photographs and so on for the local press, also the greatest possible number of illustrated papers.

The ambassador was also able to add that when Professor Rushbrook Williams, the head of the Middle Eastern section of the MOI, passed through Turkey in April, he "went away fully satisfied with the state of public feeling". Nevertheless, more films would come in handy, as would some British equivalent of the *Comédie Française*, whose recent visit had been a "huge success".¹⁴⁰ A year later he rejected a Foreign Office offer of cash to support "large scale bribery" of journalists in Turkey.¹⁴¹

Even during 1940 the Foreign Office had been restive about Knatchbull-Hugessen's complacency. Criticism had occasionally reached it that compared with German propaganda in Turkey, Britain's lacked vigour and resources, with consequences that might prove serious before long.¹⁴² It was not however until the late summer of 1941 that, prompted by the same nervousness about the loyalty of İnönü's government that was behind the interest in SOE activity, any determined effort was made to galvanise the embassy into action. Further funds were pressed on it for the bribery of journalists, and the ambassador reluctantly began to make use of them.¹⁴³ However, there was exasperation in the Foreign Office at the circumstances in which the British Information Bureau in Istanbul had been allowed to close: following the death of Sir Denison Ross, the embassy had set its face against any replacement who was not of the same stature, and such a person could not be found. The

¹³⁹ TNA, Stevenson (FO) to Heads of Mission, 1 Apr. 1940, FO371/25022.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, K-H to Stevenson (FO), 22 May 1940, FO371/25022.

¹⁴¹ TNA, K-H to Cadogan, 21 May 1941, FO371/30095.

¹⁴² TNA, Nichols (FO) to Kirkpatrick (MOI), 28 May, and Wood (Dawson & Sons, London) to Gaselee (FO), 21 Oct. 1940, FO371/25022.

¹⁴³ TNA, K-H to FO, 18 July 1941, FO371/30097.

embassy's "stone-walling as regards any publicity suggestions" and refusal to give the subject of propaganda "sufficient attention" had got to end, insisted the Southern Department's James Bowker, formerly at Ankara and a future ambassador to Turkey.¹⁴⁴

Following an important interdepartmental meeting held in the Foreign Office on 20 August 1941,¹⁴⁵ a lengthy and mildly reproachful telegram was despatched to Ankara. The burden of this was that embassy reports on matters such as "Axis whispering campaigns in Istanbul" were reaching the MOI too late to be used to initiate counter-measures. The remedy was to re-launch the Information Bureau in Istanbul by giving the director's job to anyone sufficiently efficient and energetic; the assistant press attaché in Ankara, R. Syme, was such a man.¹⁴⁶

Knatchbull-Hugessen had already formed a very low opinion of the Ministry of Information. This, he believed, had not only failed to provide the embassy with sufficient publicity materials but also made his task more difficult by "blatant stupidities", for example by highlighting in the press a recent episode in which İnönü's government had turned a blind eye to Allied activity in Turkey inconsistent with its neutral status.¹⁴⁷ His response to the charge of poor liaison between the embassy press section and the MOI was therefore cool and evasive. It was not based on any evidence, he said. In any case, the main difficulty faced by British propaganda in Turkey was "the fact of Germany's proximity and military prestige, which can only be countered in this area by a comparable display of strength on our part". Despite this uncharacteristically obtuse remark, he grudgingly agreed that it would be advisable to strengthen Britain's propaganda representation in Istanbul and send Syme to oversee it. But in view of the strict control exercised by the Turkish government over foreign publicity, he thought Syme's own propaganda output in Istanbul—as opposed to reporting role to the MOI—would be limited, and he would not require much in the way of special staff.¹⁴⁸

Knatchbull-Hugessen soon seems to have realised that bile had got the better of his judgement. Boosting the propaganda effort in Istanbul

¹⁴⁴ TNA, min. of Bowker, 21 Aug. 1941, FO371/30096.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, Propaganda to Turkey. Meeting held in the Conference Room at the Foreign Office at 3 p.m. on the 20th August 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, Sargent to K-H, 23 Aug. 1941, FO371/30097; see also min. of Rushbrook Williams, 8 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, K-H to FO, 17 June 1941, FO371/30095.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, K-H to FO, 31 Aug., FO371/30097.

would be better than more energetic SOE activity; it would also provide an opportunity to strengthen his grasp over the numerous British agencies in the Pera building, most of which had a propaganda dimension to their work and had hitherto resisted all embassy attempts to coordinate their activities. Only a week after his tetchy reply to the Foreign Office, therefore, he made a proposal that was even more ambitious than London's own. Syme should be put in charge of a newly constituted 'Press Department (Istanbul Section), HM Embassy Turkey'. He should have a staff of three and "be in charge of all publicity organizations in Istanbul". These would include not only the Balkan Press Reading Bureau, now run by Chalmers Wright, but also the *Agence Française Indépendante* and *Britanova*.¹⁴⁹ This was "a definite advance on the one-horse show previously advanced by His Excellency", noted George Clutton of Southern Department.¹⁵⁰

Unfortunately for the ambassador, this proposal soon ran into problems. The MOI was apprehensive that such a strong organization would weaken its own control of propaganda in Turkey, while the Ministry of Economic Warfare raised the obvious objection that *Britanova*'s cover would be blown if placed under the embassy.¹⁵¹ The result was that although certain improvements were made to Istanbul's propaganda machine, these did not include improvements to its coordination. At the beginning of 1942, therefore, Knatchbull-Hugessen had to repeat his view that the only way to tackle this effectively was to station a senior diplomat in Istanbul, although in the circumstances the best he could do was ensure that one visited at regular intervals.¹⁵² Meanwhile, the embassy had to content itself with making more use of the weekly news guidance telegrams sent out by the Foreign Office in the hope that all the British agencies would sing to the same tune.¹⁵³

The whole position remained unresolved until the MOI imposed its own man, Leigh Ashton, formerly of the Victoria and Albert Museum, as head of the revived British Information Office in Istanbul. Ashton was head of its Neutral Countries Division and had earlier been sent

¹⁴⁹ TNA, K-H to FO, 26 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097. *Britanova* was an ostensibly independent but in fact British intelligence-run news agency launched in December 1939, Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, min. of Clutton, 30 Sept. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁵¹ TNA, min. of Clutton, 5 Oct.; Jebb to Loxley, 1 Oct. and FO to Angora, 11 Oct. 1941, FO371/30097.

¹⁵² TNA, Morgan to FO, 26 Dec. 1941; K-H to Eden, 15 Jan. 1942, FO195/2473.

¹⁵³ TNA, Eden to K-H, 11 Feb., and Morgan to FO, 13 Feb. 1942, FO195/2473.

out to Turkey to investigate the general state of propaganda in the country. Subsequently he became head of the embassy's press office in Ankara, in his spare time keeping up a tradition going back at least to Sir Thomas Roe of acquiring rare artefacts for Britain.¹⁵⁴ It was only in the last years of the war that British propaganda in Turkey really got its act together.

Juggling High-Level Visitors

The pressures of the war for urgent decisions, the relish of Anthony Eden for going to trouble spots to see things for himself,¹⁵⁵ and Churchill's taste for dealing directly with his foreign counterparts, together led to an increase in *ad hoc* diplomacy during the war. The importance attached to this is underlined by the fact that it occurred despite the complications for travel caused by severe winter weather, aircraft that were still relatively primitive, and the risks of enemy interception.¹⁵⁶ *Ad hoc* diplomacy was particularly marked in Anglo-Turkish relations because of Churchill's special interest in Turkey and his growing impatience with Knatchbull-Hugessen, whom he thought too gentle with the Turks:¹⁵⁷ to the prime minister they were men with a "guilty conscience", and to Sir Alexander Cadogan, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, simply "villains".¹⁵⁸

Anthony Eden, accompanied by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John Dill, had visited Ankara in the course of the ill-fated Balkan tour made at the behest of the War Cabinet in February-March 1941. It was to be the start of 1943, however, before high-level visitors from London began to descend in numbers on Ankara, or convenient spots nearby. This was a result of a shift in the military balance. As the war slowly began to go better for the Allies in the last months of 1942, Turkey began to be seen by Churchill less as a barrier to an Axis assault on Britain's position in the Middle East and more as a tool for

¹⁵⁴ In April 1945 Ashton became the director of the V&A: Royall, *History of the V&A*; *The Times* (obit.), 17 Mar. 1983.

¹⁵⁵ Rhodes James, *Anthony Eden*, pp. 247–8.

¹⁵⁶ Eden, *The Reckoning*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁷ He also thought his telegrams long-winded and too numerous: Gilbert, *The Churchill Papers*, vol. III, pp. 889–90, 1588–9; Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, p. 75.

¹⁵⁸ Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, pp. 354, 365.

shortening the war. For the prime minister this had become something of a personal fixation and he had for long been reading the relevant diplomatic decrypts.¹⁵⁹ What he envisaged was a Turkish push into the Balkans in the spring of 1943.¹⁶⁰

It was with a view to persuading the Turks to fall in with his plan that in January 1943 Churchill suggested that he should secretly meet the Turkish leadership. A conference was duly held near Adana, and was followed up quickly by visits to Ankara by the commanders of all three branches of the British armed forces.¹⁶¹ The Turks managed to dodge this effort to edge them into the fighting, so in early November 1943, on his way home from the successful Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, Eden—egged on by Churchill—applied further pressure to them. This occurred at a meeting in Cairo with the allegedly pro-Axis Numan Menemencioğlu, who was now foreign minister. Just a month after this meeting, İnönü received the same treatment in Cairo, where—at the invitation of Britain—he joined the conference which was held after the ‘Big Three’ meeting in Teheran. Failure to persuade the Turks on this occasion to enter the war was followed by a distinct cooling in relations, and despite—or perhaps in part because of—all this high-level personal pressure, it was 2 August 1944 before Turkey severed diplomatic relations with Germany and 23 February 1945 before it declared war on its ally of the earlier world conflict.¹⁶² What was the embassy’s contribution to these encounters, and were they completely without redeeming features?

Knatchbull-Hugessen and his staff had been instrumental in setting up all these high-level meetings. This in itself was usually a delicate, complicated and even nerve-racking business, especially when they were kept guessing over the timing, as before the first Cairo conference.¹⁶³ This was not just because of the protocol and travel questions involved but because the Turks were only too well aware of the purpose of the

¹⁵⁹ Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, pp. 7, 11, 35, 47, 51, 52, 81.

¹⁶⁰ Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 141–3.

¹⁶¹ Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas, 1939–1947*, pp. 155–8.

¹⁶² On these meetings, see Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*; K-H, *Diplomat in Peace and War*; Eden, *The Reckoning*; Dixon, *Double Diploma*. There appears to have been mutual antipathy between Eden and the Turks, and Knatchbull-Hugessen believed that they would have come into the war earlier had it not been for his “maladroit handling” of them at Cairo: Langhorne, ‘Hugessen’; see also Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, p. 7.

¹⁶³ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 7 Nov. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

meetings. When they were outside Ankara, a strong embassy party, led by the ambassador, accompanied the Turkish leaders on the journey.¹⁶⁴ At the conferences themselves the diplomats were called on to advise the visiting British leaders as well as take part in the talks, at which point Knatchbull-Hugessen usually found himself serving almost as a mediator between the Turks and his own government.¹⁶⁵ After the meetings the embassy had the vital task of following them up, which included preparing the way for and then assisting the work of the military missions which arrived afterwards, and then following these up as well.¹⁶⁶ Without the embassy, the high-level meetings could have taken place only with immense difficulty if at all, their value—such as it was—would have been much reduced, and the fall-out would have been more serious.

A question remains as to any value that these meetings may have had from the embassy's point of view, since the situation was very different from the days when Sir Percy Loraine had encouraged high-level visits to Turkey in order to flatter its leaders and adorn his embassy; the visitors were also of a different order. In fact, three advantages emerge. These are of particular interest since it is easy to assume that heavy-weight special envoys are always disliked by embassies because—apart from the risk that they might mess everything up—their visits suggest that they cannot be trusted with the most important business and so undermine their authority.

First, the importance of these high-level meetings to the Turkish government gave the ambassador a perfect pretext for intensive, top level access during negotiation of their arrangements, often at very short notice.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, the journeys to meetings outside Ankara gave the embassy party plenty of additional time to bend the ear of the Turkish leaders to the British perspective on events. Secondly, they brought the ambassador's political masters face to face with the situation on

¹⁶⁴ At the Adana conference, for example, the ambassador was supported by five senior colleagues and a cipher clerk, CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 2 Feb. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

¹⁶⁵ On his role at the Cairo Conference in December 1943, for example, see CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 5 and 7 Dec. 1943, KNAT 1/14; Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, pp. 582–3 (4 and 5 Dec. 1943). K-H was also instructed to draft the minutes of the Cairo talks, Baxter, 'The Cicero papers'.

¹⁶⁶ In the case of Adana, for example: CAC Cam., K-H Diary, esp. 5 Mar. 1943, KNAT 1/14; Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas, 1939–1947*, pp. 155–8. As for the second Cairo conference, K-H made sure that he saw Numan again as soon as possible after they had both returned to Ankara, CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 9 Dec. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

¹⁶⁷ CAC Cam., K-H Diary, 26 Jan. 1943, KNAT 1/14.

the spot—and with the opinions of his staff. How ‘educational’ this might prove, however, seems to have depended in some degree on the personalities involved and whether or not the visitors came singly or mob-handed. Eden, accompanied only at senior level by “that ninny Dill”, astonished Cadogan by his apparent conversion to the embassy/Turkish point of view;¹⁶⁸ by contrast Churchill, accompanied by a galaxy of British heavyweights at Cairo three years later, shifted not at all, and it was only at the end of the first week in January 1944 that Cadogan himself confessed to his diary that it was “Snatch’s recent reports” that had persuaded him to accept the embassy viewpoint.¹⁶⁹ The third advantage of the high-level encounters for the embassy was that they made it obvious to the Turks that any unpleasantness in Anglo-Turkish relations was due to the politicians and not the ambassador. Knatchbull-Hugessen certainly met some coolness after the second Cairo Conference but it did not seriously impair his functioning. What did impair this, although not as greatly as might be imagined, was something quite different.

Scripting a Spy Film: the ‘Cicero’ Affair

By the beginning of 1942 the embassy had become a highly militarized institution. Nevertheless, it had stymied the development of an SOE sabotage organization for Turkey itself and had rightly insisted on the overriding importance of sympathy, frankness and trust in the conduct of relations with the Turkish ‘ally’. These were the corollaries of its instructions to bring Turkey into the war when this was judged expedient in London and, in the meantime, to preserve Ankara’s benevolent neutrality as a formidable obstacle to an Axis attack on Britain’s position in the Middle East. By constant pressure—now gentle, now more vigorous—it had succeeded in the latter objective (with tangible advantages) although it had failed in the former. But in April 1943 even Churchill’s own man in the embassy, Admiral Kelly, judged that it was just as well that Turkey had not been dragged early into the war.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, p. 359 (28 Feb. 1941); see also Dixon, *Double Diploma*, p. 68. It is important to note, though, that Eden was more sympathetic to Turkey than to Greece before his visit, regarding it indeed “as the key to his whole policy”, Carlton, *Anthony Eden*, p. 178.

¹⁶⁹ Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, pp. 582–4.

¹⁷⁰ Ranfurly, *To War with Whitaker*, diary entry for 17 Apr. 1943, pp. 180–1.

It was, however, just as the course of the war was beginning to favour Knatchbull-Hugessen in his duel with the German Ambassador that something happened inside the British Embassy which could have had disastrous consequences for the whole Allied war effort. Contrary to regulations, Knatchbull-Hugessen had got into the habit of removing classified documents—including ‘Most Secret’ ones—from the chancery in order to work on them in his residence, despite having been warned against this in 1942.¹⁷¹ Unfortunately, over several months from late in 1943 until he left the embassy at the end of February 1944, the ambassador’s valet, Ilyas Bazna, a Turkish subject of Albanian origin, managed to photograph many of these documents and sell the reels to Ludwig Moyzisch, the commercial attaché at the German Embassy. The documents included papers from the Cairo conference and Knatchbull-Hugessen personal notes on Anglo-Turkish relations. Bazna was codenamed ‘Cicero’ by the Germans.

That copies of secret documents which must have come from the British Embassy at Ankara had fallen into the hands of von Papen was discovered on 17 January 1944, and at the end of the month Sir John Dashwood, deputy head of the security department of the Foreign Office, was sent out to investigate. He failed to identify the thief, although in the very last line of his report recommended that, since Bazna had left, this individual “particularly” warranted investigation.¹⁷² As to what had given the thief his opportunity, suspicion pointed strongly at negligence by Knatchbull-Hugessen, who was immediately asked by Cadogan to do his work in the chancery in future.¹⁷³

Fortunately, the Germans failed to make as much use as they might have done of the material supplied by ‘Cicero’, and the damage appears not to have been great. Bureaucratic politics in Berlin and a German suspicion that the documents were British misinformation had come to the ambassador’s aid. Nevertheless, the potential for harm had been enormous and even now there is no certainty that some was not done.¹⁷⁴ Accordingly, although Knatchbull-Hugessen always refused to accept

¹⁷¹ In January 1942 the head of SIME had reported to MI5 in London his concern about “the state of security in the Embassy in Ankara, of which”, he said, “I have no doubt you are fully aware”, TNA, Maunsell to Petrie, 24 Jan. 1942, KV4/306. Whether this was a reference to K-H’s sloppiness is not clear.

¹⁷² TNA, Sir John Dashwood, Leakages in Turkey, 1943/44, 7 Mar. 1944, p. 23, FO850/128.

¹⁷³ TNA, min. of Codrington, 22 Mar. 1944, FO850/128.

¹⁷⁴ On this point, see especially Baxter, ‘The Cicero papers’.

any guilt, he was officially reprimanded by the permanent under-secretary when his culpability was confirmed in 1945.¹⁷⁵ A tired man who had lost interest in his work, according to SOE's Harris Burland,¹⁷⁶ he left Turkey by special plane on 9 September 1944 to take over the embassy in Brussels.

Worse punishment than Cadogan's reprimand was the criticism from which Knatchbull-Hugessen suffered when the affair became public some years later. Even a film was made of it, *Five Fingers*, which starred, implausibly enough, the elegant James Mason as the ambassador's treacherous valet.¹⁷⁷ What added further to his distress was that the Foreign Office refused to permit him to deny "even patently ridiculous orchestrations of the story".¹⁷⁸

The 'Cicero' affair certainly revealed a regime of lax security in the embassy; this also extended to the ramshackle telephone equipment, which was maintained by the ambassador's chauffeur.¹⁷⁹ In his defence, however, it should be added that Knatchbull-Hugessen was hardly alone in this kind of laxness. In fact, there was what would today be called a 'culture' of casualness towards internal security in the Foreign Office itself as well as in Britain's missions abroad.¹⁸⁰ It was actually Douglas Busk, acting first secretary and head of chancery, who first employed Bazna in the embassy and presumably on his recommendation that his chief took him over. Moreover, if Bazna's own memoir is to be believed, Busk also took classified documents home and received the

¹⁷⁵ On the Cicero affair generally, see Baxter, 'The Cicero papers'; Bazna, *I Was Cicero*; Moyzisch, *Operation Cicero*; Rolfs, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*; Wires, *The Cicero Spy Affair*; Elliott, *Never Judge a Man by His Umbrella*, ch. 12.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, D/H.44 to AD 1, 18 Aug. 1944, HS3/223.

¹⁷⁷ *Five Fingers* stands for lust, greed, passion, desire, and sin. Based on Moyzisch's book, *Operation Cicero*, directed by Joseph Mankiewicz and scripted by Michael Wilson, the film was released in February 1952. If somewhat cavalier with the truth and, no doubt for legal reasons, presenting K-H as "Sir Frederick" (played by Walter Hampden), *Five Fingers* is a witty and atmospheric thriller, with exteriors shot in Ankara. John Wengraf's von Papen steals the show. Mankiewicz and Wilson were both Oscar-nominated for their work on this film and Wilson subsequently won three awards for it. It is now available as a DVD.

¹⁷⁸ Langhorne, 'Hugessen'.

¹⁷⁹ The situation was no better in the consulate-general in Istanbul, which was a particular worry in light of the number of secret agencies that it housed; see the papers in TNA, FO850/128, especially the reports in early 1944 by the GPO engineer, R. A. Pattison.

¹⁸⁰ Dilks, 'Flashes of intelligence', pp. 106–18.

same treatment from the great spy.¹⁸¹ This did not prevent Busk from subsequently writing—perhaps it inspired him to do so—a chapter on embassy security in a book on *The Craft of Diplomacy: How to Run a Diplomatic Service*. One general conclusion drawn from the ‘Cicero’ affair by William Codrington, chief of security in the Foreign Office, to whom Dashwood had reported, was that locally recruited staff were a particular menace and should no longer be employed in any chancery.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ This claim is dismissed as “ridiculous” by Elliott in *Never Judge a Man by His Umbrella*, pp. 135–6.

¹⁸² TNA, min. of Codrington, 22 Mar. 1944, FO850/128; Codrington to Busk, 5 Jan. 1945, FO850/183.

CHAPTER NINE

BUSINESS AS USUAL, 1945-74

Britain emerged from the Second World War much weakened but still a world power with far-flung interests, not least in the Middle East. As for Turkey, the war was barely over before it was apparent that it had become a frontline state in the West's emerging 'Cold War' with the Soviet Union. Over the coming years, therefore, it was inevitable that the British Embassy in Turkey would have to deal with many questions pressing heavily on British interests. Among these were integrating Turkey into the Western alliance system, providing it with economic aid and technical assistance, and ensuring that it remained indulgent to the use of its sovereign territory for intelligence gathering and over-flying by military aircraft. After the mid-1950s another question constantly threatened the smooth conduct of Anglo-Turkish relations and thus became the embassy's main preoccupation: the fate of Cyprus. First, though, how did the embassy adjust to peacetime mode? How, in other words, did it organise itself for business as usual?

Return to Peacetime Mode

During the lifetime of the first post-war government in Britain, a Labour one, the embassy's transition to peacetime mode was initially slow. This was because the southern extension of Soviet influence in the last years of the war, together with the outbreak of the Cold War, discouraged any rush to run down the defence section. However, following the announcement in 1947 that an exhausted Britain could no longer afford to continue its existing level of support for Turkey (and Greece), and President Truman's declaration that the United States would take up the burden, the pace of change in the embassy accelerated. How did it evolve during these years? What role did it play in rebuilding the relationship that had been soured by Turkey's policy of neutrality in the war?

Turnover in staff was the most marked feature of the embassy of the new ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, who arrived in October 1944. When he left less than two years later only three of the diplomats he

Table 9.1 The structure of the embassy, 1944-51

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Chancery	8	7	5	5	4	5	6	5
Commercial	2	2	2	2	3	5	4	4
Defence	14	13	14	14	16	7 ¹	7	7
Information	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1
Others	6	5	3	3	4	4	3	2
TOTAL	32	29	26	26	29	23	21	19

Source: *FO List*. Excludes posts listed but vacant at the time.

inherited were still there. The defence section maintained its exceptionally high numbers until as late as 1947 (see Table 9.1) but thereafter was dramatically halved. This reflected not just a change in British policy towards Turkey but a general retrenchment in the posting of service attachés worldwide.

Changes were afoot, too, in regard to the embassy's buildings in Ankara. In late 1944 the Foreign Office decreed that the time had come to re-fit the much abused residence for its proper representational purposes: Peterson was to be moved in as soon as possible. Accordingly the chancery was squeezed into the smaller building, although it could not accommodate the commercial secretariat and information section, and a new wing had to be added a few years later.² The disruption caused by these developments suited the new ambassador, for he was able to enjoy a full six months of the summer of 1945 in Istanbul with a clear conscience. After all, the old capital remained the haunt of press editors and leader writers, the major commercial centre of Turkey, and home to much the greater part of the resident British community.³ While living in Pera House, as it had come to be known, Peterson naturally took a close interest in its tenants. These now included consular officers as well as spies and saboteurs.

To the satisfaction of the Treasury, the original mid-nineteenth century premises of the consulate-general in Galata had been vacated at the

¹ On 14 August 1949 the RAF component of the embassy's defence section was completely wiped out in a crash at the military airport at Ankara, *The Times*, 15 Aug. 1949.

² Helm, 'The Beginnings', pp. 9-11.

³ Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, pp. 245-7.

beginning of 1944 and—13 years after this had first been mooted—the consular staff finally transferred permanently to Pera House; later in the year, after payment by the consul-general of the usual bribes, the Galata premises had been sold off to the municipal authorities. The advantages of this change were not only financial. It also facilitated consultation and collaboration with the ‘wartime departments’; gave the consular staff better rooms; and served to make a more favourable impression on visitors than the former premises, which were not central, suffered a “malodorous” location and were inaccessible by car.⁴ In two other regards, however, the consulate-general was unchanged: it remained highly dependent on Turkish-speaking men and women of the British community in Istanbul (see Appendix 7); and rented living accommodation for the consul-general still had to be found outside the Pera House compound.

The ambassador approved of the arrangements for the consulate-general but objected to sharing Pera House even with the rump of SOE, and soon served notice that he looked forward to its speedy departure.⁵ Unfortunately, SOE London had other ideas. Talk of ‘liquidation’ of the Turkey organization was premature, it believed, because future developments and the relative importance of Turkey could not yet be foreseen. There was likely to be work for it, including unofficial contacts with ‘opposition elements’, similar to that carried out by SOE in the Arab world during the previous year. Furthermore, once the Russians were firmly installed in Bulgaria and Roumania, Istanbul might well have to continue playing the same sort of role that it had during the period of German domination. In short, since SOE in Turkey might well be required to perform a peacetime role it should not completely forfeit its position and its contacts in Istanbul. The field commander was told to stonewall the ambassador.⁶

Although Peterson tried hard through the winter to hound SOE out of Pera House, it was still there in March 1945. At this point he also received what was in effect an instruction from the Foreign Office to accept the presence of two more of its representatives. However, these much more covert officers were not to be based in Pera House but

⁴ TNA, FO369/3039, especially Hurst to FO, 11 Mar. 1944 and K-H to Eden, 20 Aug. 1944; Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, p. 251.

⁵ TNA, D/H60 to A/D1, 20 Oct. 1944, HS3/223.

⁶ TNA, D/HX to D/HT, 14 Oct. and draft tel. to Force 133, 22 Oct.; D/HT[?] to AD/H.1, 15 Dec. 1944, HS3/223.

merely to have a cupboard there for holding cyphers and letters delivered by bag; their brief—the ambassador was misled to believe—would not include Turkey or even the Balkans but focus just on ‘the Moslem world’; and the ‘Shipping Department’ was to be closed at once. So it was a victory of sorts for him.⁷

Sir Maurice Peterson also found the staff of the MI6 station, which had rooms on the ground floor of Pera House and was now headed by Cyril Machray, reluctant to shrink in size. “C’s organisation”, he complained to the Foreign Office, “...is not cutting down here to anything like the extent I had expected”.⁸ However, since MI6 presented fewer difficulties than SOE in relations with the Turkish government, the ambassador looked on it with more indulgence. Furthermore, the focus of MI6 activities was switching to the common Soviet enemy.⁹ The Turkish intelligence service knew this, and was in any case being paid a monthly bribe to look the other way.¹⁰ It was also common knowledge that Near and Far East News Ltd. (NAFEN), based in Istanbul, was an embassy front for an MI6/IRD media manipulation operation.¹¹ It was just a pity that the man who arrived in February 1947 to take over from Machray as head of the MI6 station was Kim Philby, one of the most damaging Soviet moles ever to have operated within the British secret service.¹²

In Pera House Philby found an MI6 team consisting of four officers with diplomatic cover: a second secretary, a third secretary, and an attaché whom he described as “an ebullient White Russian of boundless charm and appalling energy”. The passport control officer, a cover routinely employed by MI6 officers in British missions before and during the war but by this time so well known that it was being phased out, made up the fourth. This was J. G. Whittall of the well known Anglo-Levantine family, who held the local rank of second secretary

⁷ TNA, FO to Ankara, 10 and 16, and Peterson to FO, 13 and 16 Mar.; D/HT to D/H224, 20 Mar. 1945, HS3/223. SOE was dissolved in January 1946 and its remaining staff merged with MI6.

⁸ TNA, Peterson to FO, 13 Mar. 1945, HS3/223.

⁹ Philby, *My Silent War*, p. 121; Dorril, *MI6*, chs. 3–7, pp. 206–7.

¹⁰ Philby, *My Silent War*, pp. 125–7.

¹¹ TNA, Knox Helm to Clarke (FO), 5 Feb., and min. of Halsey Colchester (MI6 agent with cover as second secretary), 14 Mar. 1952, FO195/2687.

¹² Philby had the local rank of first secretary and appeared on the *FO List* in 1948 and 1949, although he was given no biographical entry. He had “no known Embassy duties”, Philby, *My Silent War*, p. 124.

(commercial).¹³ Together with their support staff, ‘Mr Philby and Passport Control Officer’ accounted for a section in Pera House that was 15-strong in June 1947.¹⁴

Philby remained in Istanbul for almost three years, among other things fruitlessly attempting to secure the cooperation of members of the British colony,¹⁵ liaising with Turkish intelligence officers, and all the while drinking heavily to calm his nerves.¹⁶ In the main, though, he concentrated on reconnoitring the frontier region with the Soviet Union, which enabled him to provide topographical data for the war planners in London and infiltrate his doomed agents across the border.¹⁷ In the late summer of 1949 Philby left Turkey for an even more damaging appointment as chief MI6 representative in the United States. He was replaced by Rodney Dennys, a veteran of ISLD.¹⁸

Consular officers and spies did not exhaust the list of all-year-round tenants of Pera House. Indeed, when Peterson’s successor, Sir David Kelly, counted them in 1947 he found five other departments as well: those of the naval attaché (with a staff of 9), military attaché (23), air attaché (3), press attaché (12), and embassy (6).¹⁹ The old embassy building was “a regular bee-hive”, he told the Foreign Office,²⁰ which helped it to shrug off a suggestion by the Treasury that it was a luxury which post-war Britain could no longer afford. Therapia, which was still a ‘bare site’ used for little more than summer camping by embassy staff, was also spared because—like Pera House—it had been a gift from a sultan; the cost of its upkeep was in any case very small.²¹

¹³ Philby, *My Silent War*, pp. 124–5.

¹⁴ TNA, Kelly to Gardener (Establishment and Organisation Dept., FO), 25 June 1947, FO366/2472.

¹⁵ Philby, *My Silent War*, p. 132.

¹⁶ Not long before arriving in Turkey he had only narrowly escaped being discovered following the attempted defection to the British of a Soviet intelligence officer who appeared to know of his role. This was Konstantin Volkov, who, as it happened, was attached to the Soviet Consulate-General in Istanbul and had approached the British Consulate-General in August 1945 with a request for political asylum. On the circumstances enabling the Russians to forestall this, see Seale and McConville, *Philby*, pp. 219–29.

¹⁷ Philby, *My Silent War*, pp. 127–34; Dorril, *MI6*, pp. 210–13.

¹⁸ Dorril, *MI6*, pp. 391, 822 (n. 69). However, in his footnote, Dorril says that Dennys did not take over until 1951. Dennys has no entry in the *FO List*.

¹⁹ TNA, Kelly to Gardener, 25 June 1947, FO366/2472.

²⁰ TNA, Kelly to Gardener, 10 June 1947, FO366/2472.

²¹ TNA, Fraser (Treasury) to Caccia (FO), 30 Apr. 1947, and following papers in FO366/2472.

In the provinces there were changes in the consular network, where some thinning out had occurred despite the continuing value attached to it for military intelligence gathering as well as commercial and representational purposes.²² By 1947 the posts at Adana, Samsun and Çanakkale had all been effectively closed, leaving just those at Mersin, Iskenderun, Izmir and Trabzon.

NATO, Payments, and Planes

The major questions in Anglo-Turkish relations in the years immediately following the war concerned chiefly the integration of Turkey into the emerging Western alliance system, together with trade and payments arrangements, and—to a lesser extent—civil aviation. They were also questions for which the embassy certainly did not have exclusive responsibility. There was, after all, a well staffed Turkish embassy in London led by a man related by marriage to the late Atatürk,²³ and an increasing stream of Turkish ministers and military figures coming to Britain. There were also many more opportunities for direct if brief discussions between Turkish and British delegations in the wings of international bodies, for these were much more numerous after the war and Turkish participation in them was enthusiastic.²⁴ Still, the embassy's own role in the conduct of Anglo-Turkish relations remained of great significance. What form did it take?

In a valuable but now largely forgotten book published in 1955, Lord Strang, a recently retired permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, provides us with a hypothetical answer to this question, which, as we shall see, and although it leaves some things unsaid, the historical evidence substantially confirms.²⁵ In this work Strang spelled out, with

²² TNA, Bevin to Ankara etc. 'J.I.B. Questionnaire', 25 June 1948, FO195/2611; min. of Wing Commander P. A. L. Cooper, 16 Jan. 1950, FO195/2655.

²³ This was Cevat Açıkalın, who was Turkish Ambassador in London from late 1945 until the beginning of 1952 and a very senior and influential member of the Turkish diplomatic service; on returning to Turkey he became secretary-general of the ministry of foreign affairs, Güçlü, 'The life and career of a Turkish statesman, Cevat Açıkalın'.

²⁴ Turkey was a founding member of the UN (in October 1950 elected to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council), and the OEEC, which was established in July 1947 with headquarters in Paris. It was admitted to the IMF in October 1946, the IBRD in March 1947, and the Council of Europe in August 1949.

²⁵ Strang, *The Foreign Office*. Strang was deeply interested in the organization and role of the Foreign Office and its missions abroad. The significance of this work as an insight into the official mind of this period is further underlined by the fact that, as he

great authority and lucidity, the Foreign Office view of the complex role of a British embassy in the modern world. This was constantly to promote the British point of view, whether in discreet conversations with ministers and officials or by means of political and cultural propaganda; report home and comment on political and economic developments; carry out representational duties; prepare the ground for and then support those ministers or specialist officers sent from home to conduct important talks; and, under instructions, conduct many bilateral negotiations of “secondary but still considerable importance”.²⁶

Some of these tasks, admitted Strang, could in principle be carried out either entirely or in great degree by means of direct contact between the Foreign Office and foreign governments, for example by telephone or by conferences called for the purpose: embassies could be dispensed with altogether. However, this would forfeit the “cushioning effect” of professional diplomacy at a time when international business was daily expanding and daily becoming more dangerous, and would have two serious disadvantages. First, it would impose a crushing burden on both the foreign secretary and his officials. Secondly, it would remove both the time for reflection and the ability to recover from any mistakes without loss of face.²⁷ Strang also explained frankly why as a general rule the Foreign Office remained strongly attached to negotiating abroad via its own embassies rather than negotiating in London through the medium of foreign embassies—even when initiatives for negotiations came from foreign states. This was not simply because it helped to ‘cushion’ the Foreign Office by devolving most of the work to British embassies. It was also because it was thought likely that Foreign Office communications with a British embassy would, from a technical point of view, be more secure and less prone to garbling; and, above all, because more confidence could be placed in the ability of a British embassy—well staffed and under the control of the Foreign Office—to communicate promptly, and without any politically motivated distortions, with the heart of the foreign government.²⁸ For both these reasons it would be a more reliable channel than a foreign embassy in London.²⁹ This was

explains in its foreword, he had a great deal of help with it from colleagues. On Strang himself, see the excellent article: Deighton, ‘Strang’.

²⁶ Strang, *The Foreign Office*, p. 116, and chs. 1 and 6 generally.

²⁷ Strang, *The Foreign Office*, pp. 115–17.

²⁸ Strang put this key point a bit more tactfully but this is obviously what he meant.

²⁹ Strang, *The Foreign Office*, pp. 151–2.

a model which did not always match reality, as we have seen in the prominent role played by Turkish special missions to London in the negotiation of bilateral commercial agreements in the 1930s. Nevertheless, it was the official thinking against the background of which the British Embassy in Turkey, like all other British embassies at the time and for many years to come, operated. And so back to Turkey.

Clear-headed and decisive, if somewhat thin-skinned, Sir Maurice Peterson was—like his political masters—unsympathetic to Turkey’s policy of neutrality in the war.³⁰ However, this policy was crumbling, so in attempting to shift it he was soon pushing at an open door. In August 1944 Turkey had severed diplomatic relations with Germany and in February 1945—following a general ultimatum by the ‘Big Three’ to non-belligerents delivered to the Turks by Peterson himself—it declared war on both the Germans and their Japanese allies.³¹ A dramatic growth in Soviet influence in the Balkans was also in progress, and hostile gestures by Moscow to Ankara in the early summer of 1945³² alarmed the British almost as much as the Turks, so reviving an old and powerful common interest.

At this point the main tasks of the embassy had been to watch, listen and report until the situation became clearer, and facilitate the delivery of as much tangible assistance in the shape of instructors and equipment for Turkey’s armed forces as could be afforded. It also had to reassure Turkey of the value of the British alliance, and ensure that British influence in Turkey was not completely eclipsed by that of the United States. As the embassy’s annual report for 1947 pointed out, using a phrase that was by now familiar, the decline in Britain’s physical and economic strength meant that this imposed on it “the tricky duty of making bricks without straw”, or, to put it another way, this decline meant that it was more important than ever.³³ This was probably true, and the embassy’s role soon became more important still.

After the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, American aid to Turkey had rapidly overtaken that of the exhausted British. But the Turkish government staked its prestige on obtaining

³⁰ Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, pp. 236–41; Rothwell, ‘Peterson’.

³¹ Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, p. 241; Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 178–9.

³² Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, pp. 38–9, 157–8; Peterson, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, p. 249; Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War*, pp. 179–80; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000*, pp. 111–12.

³³ TNA, AR 1947, 15 Jan. 1948, FO371/72540.

something else about which the Americans were initially cool, namely full membership of the American-led alliance that evolved during 1948 and early 1949 into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This would not only give Turkey a formal American security guarantee but also, as the embassy repeatedly advised the Foreign Office, provide “confirmation of her claim to rank amongst the civilised and democratic European powers”.³⁴

Unfortunately, Britain had even stronger reservations about this ambition than the United States and wanted Turkey instead to focus its security arrangements on a British-led Middle East defence grouping; its American guarantee should be obtained directly from Washington. Accordingly, Britain was among those NATO members who most strongly opposed Turkish (and Greek) membership of the North Atlantic Pact. So when the news leaked out from Washington in May 1951 that the Americans had dropped their own opposition to it, Turkey’s ire with Britain rose dramatically, for it was convinced—with good reason—that it was only continuing British resistance to its admission to NATO that was maintaining the opposition of the other members.³⁵ Even before this news broke Sir Noel Charles, who became ambassador in 1949, had warned that Britain was getting an unusually bad press in Turkey;³⁶ after it, Turkish pressure on Britain became intense and the anti-British press campaign vitriolic.

The Foreign Office, where there was something approaching fury at the difficult spot in which Britain had been placed with Turkey by the United States,³⁷ had to cope with frequent calls from a distressed Turkish Ambassador. However, it was chiefly the embassy at Ankara that had to try to stifle and, when that proved impossible, absorb the anger of the Turks. This meant not just private attempts to soothe the foreign minister, Fuad Köprülü, and vigorous efforts to influence the media,³⁸ but also public confrontations with the press. For example,

³⁴ For example: TNA, Scott Fox to Schuckburgh (FO), 29 May 1951, FO371/96543.

³⁵ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, pp. 328–9; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000*, pp. 115–19; TNA, Scott Fox (Ankara) to FO, 18 May and 14 June 1951, FO371/96541 and 96544 resp.; AR 1951, 2 Jan. 1952, FO371/101848.

³⁶ TNA, Charles to Morrison, 1 May 1950, FO371/96540.

³⁷ TNA, min. of J. C. Petrie, 22 May 1951, FO371/96541; see also min. of E. M. Rose, 28 May 1951, FO371/96543.

³⁸ TNA, Ankara to FO, 21 June 1951, FO371/96545; Ankara Chancery to Western Organisations Dept. (FO), 17 July 1951, FO371/96548.

facing journalists at Istanbul on his return from leave in late June, Sir Noel Charles, who had himself been pressing for the admission of Turkey to NATO,³⁹ found himself having to express surprise at the tenor of the Turkish press, lament that it was all a misunderstanding, and offer the hope that he would soon be able to straighten things out.⁴⁰ Although it was the embassy's Bosphorus season, he departed for Ankara on the following day and after his arrival had to see Köprülü twice in quick succession.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the embassy had been giving advice on tactics, for example urging that a soothing confidential message be sent to Köprülü by Herbert Morrison, who was then foreign secretary; this was accepted.⁴²

When in early July the British finally decided to support the claim of Turkey (and Greece) to membership of NATO, always provided it cooperated in Middle East defence, this was also quickly conveyed to Köprülü in a personal message from Herbert Morrison delivered by the ambassador.⁴³ It was confirmed by the foreign secretary in the House of Commons on 18 July, employing a text previously agreed with the Turkish foreign minister via the embassy.⁴⁴ Sir Noel Charles then had the pleasant representational duty of attending the session of the Grand National Assembly two days later at which Köprülü thanked Britain for its friendly attitude. Basking in the diplomatic gallery in the "loud and general applause" with which this was greeted, Sir Noel, together with the Canadian Ambassador, was then invited into the president's box to receive his personal thanks.⁴⁵ Strang's diplomatic 'cushion' in Turkey, having been almost flattened by the weight of Turkish criticism it had been required to bear but able nevertheless to retain sufficient stuffing to prevent damage to the relationship, had been fluffed up again.

In the highly complicated commercial and financial spheres the role of the embassy was equally important, although this was not at first obvious. In this area Anglo-Turkish relations needed urgent attention,

³⁹ TNA, Charles to FO, 17 Apr. 1951, FO371/96542.

⁴⁰ *The Times*, 29 June 1951.

⁴¹ *The Times*, 6 July 1951.

⁴² TNA, Scott Fox (Ankara) to FO, 23 May, FO371/96542; Morrison to Scott Fox, 12 June 1951, FO371/96544.

⁴³ TNA, FO to Ankara, 3 July and Ankara to FO, 5 July, FO371/96546; min. of Dixon, 4 July 1951, FO371/96547.

⁴⁴ TNA, Ankara to FO, rec. 8.30am ("Emergency") and 11.14am ("Emergency"), and FO to Ankara, despatched 3.50pm and 8.03pm 18 July 1951, FO371/96548. Turkey was formally admitted to NATO in February 1952.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 21 July 1951.

and between the end of the war and the beginning of the 1950s there were, in addition to amendments of existing arrangements, three significant new bilateral agreements (see Appendix 9). With the Turks the supplicants in this area as well,⁴⁶ and the embassy in want of sufficient expertise, the post-war period actually began with a resumption of the trend seen in the late 1930s: the important new Trade and Payments Agreement that was signed between Britain and Turkey on 4 May 1945 was the result of negotiations conducted in London rather than Ankara. For this purpose the Turkish government sent a large special mission led by Cevat Açıkalın, then the secretary-general of the Turkish foreign ministry, and including senior officials from the ministries of commerce and finance and the Turkish central bank.⁴⁷ The agreement itself also provided that technical questions arising out of its operation would be tackled by direct contact between the respective central banks.⁴⁸ Even in this case, however, the embassy had a hand. It was required to negotiate an agreed Turkish translation of equal authenticity with the English text signed in London;⁴⁹ and the commercial counsellor was specifically instructed by the Treasury to “keep a watch” for any attempt by the Turks to avoid dollar payments for certain kinds of goods: that is, to follow up on this point in particular.⁵⁰

In September 1947 the reintroduction of the non-convertibility of sterling into dollars and the prospect of a major devaluation, following what for Britain was a disastrous six weeks of currency freedom, prompted the need for further talks between Britain and Turkey. This time they fell into what was to become the routine shortly to be codified for general purposes by Strang: they were conducted in Ankara with substantial embassy participation but with the lead eventually taken by a home-based expert, on this occasion H. Somerville Smith, the embassy’s former commercial counsellor and by then an assistant secretary at the Treasury.⁵¹ A little over a year later he was back again, this time at the head of a mission including representatives from the Ministry of Food and the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), when he successfully negotiated a new procedure whereby Anglo-Turkish

⁴⁶ The continuing high level of mobilization required by the Soviet threat was imposing severe costs on an economy already dislocated by the breach with Germany.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 12 and 14 Feb., 8 May 1945.

⁴⁸ HCPP (Cmd. 6632), 4 May 1945, art. 8.

⁴⁹ TNA, Helm to Eden, 1 June 1945, BT11/2563.

⁵⁰ TNA, Sandberg (Treasury) to Lomax (Ankara), 19 July 1945, BT11/2563.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 27 Sept., 17 Oct. 1947.

trade might continue following the exhaustion of Turkey's holdings of sterling. This agreement was signed by Charles's immediate predecessor, Sir David Kelly, on 25 January 1949.⁵²

The negotiation and frequent later amendment of another important agreement followed similar lines. This was the comparatively uncomplicated one designed to promote as soon as possible the establishment of an air service to Ankara via Marseilles, Rome, Athens and Istanbul, one of many similar agreements to which Britain was a party during this formative period of world-wide civil aviation when American competition was so formidable.⁵³ By dramatically reducing the cost and increasing the speed of the journey compared with the existing one via Cairo, it was expected that this would provide more commercial opportunities for Britain in Turkey, boost British prestige, and underline the value of the British alliance. It would also be of direct benefit to the embassy itself: its bag service would be much better; it would be relieved of the highly unpopular duty of allocating priority seating on the existing route; and staff starved of leave for years would at last be able to get home.⁵⁴

The air services negotiations, which took place in December 1945 and January 1946, were led on the British side by C. M. Holbeck, a Ministry of Civil Aviation official temporarily attached to the embassy. However, he was much in demand by embassies elsewhere in the Middle East and support by the embassy's counsellor, Knox Helm, was essential. The agreement was signed in Ankara by Peterson on behalf of Britain on 12 February 1946 and ratified in June.⁵⁵ Shortages of aircraft and crews threatened to delay the inauguration of the service until 1947 but the personal interest in the matter of the powerful foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, who attached great political importance to Turkey, supported by vigorous lobbying by the Foreign Office and especially by Sir David Kelly, enabled a London to Ankara air service to be launched on 17 September. It was operated by the recently formed British European

⁵² HCPP (Cmd. 7652); *The Times*, 23 Nov. 1948 and 26 Jan. 1949.

⁵³ Hunt, *On the Spot*, pp. 17-18; James and Stroud, *The World's Airways*, ch. 1. In Turkey, there was also competition in the aviation sector from France and Sweden.

⁵⁴ TNA, Haigh (Ankara) to Gallop (FO), 10 Apr. 1946, FO371/54526.

⁵⁵ HCPP (Cmd. 6755). Colbeck was in Cairo at the time of the signing. Following up, it was also the embassy which secured an assurance from the Turks that Britain could start its air service before ratifications were exchanged should this prove desirable. The agreement was amended by exchanges of notes in Ankara later in 1946 and again in 1951, TNA, FO371/54526, esp. Peterson to Bevin, 14 Feb. 1946.

Airways company (BEA) and the journey time was just two days.⁵⁶ Initially, it was only a weekly service but in mid-1947 it became bi-weekly and new 36-seater *Vikings* were put on the route.⁵⁷ By 1952 the embassy had acquired a permanent civil air attaché.⁵⁸

In addition to its valuable role in the negotiation of these bilateral agreements, the embassy continued to fulfil its other usual duties, always with a view to maintaining confidence in British prestige and the Western alliance.⁵⁹ Kelly, for example, although in retirement a trenchant and outspoken critic of the 'new diplomacy', was ahead of his time in awareness of the importance of what is now known by the euphemism 'public diplomacy' and was then known by the euphemism 'information work'⁶⁰—although those who actually did the business continued for many years afterwards to refer to it by the more usual and suggestive name, propaganda.⁶¹ The ambassador made well publicized travels around the country and encouraged his erudite, Belgian wife, Marie Noële, to give public lectures. Assisted by his able press attachés, one of whom was the gentleman scholar, former Unionist MP for West Belfast, Mosleyite, and advertising executive, W. E. D. 'Bill' Allen,⁶² Kelly also gave close attention to the publicity for important

⁵⁶ TNA, Edwards (Min. of Civil Aviation) to Edden (FO), 14 Sept. 1946, FO371/54528.

⁵⁷ At Kelly's strenuous urging, for prestige reasons the proving flight at the beginning of September 1946 had been undertaken by an earlier vintage British Vickers *Viking* aircraft but there were fears about its safety in hot climates and the service was initially operated by American *Dakotas*: TNA, FO371/54526–8 (esp. Kelly to Bevin, 2 Oct. 1946); *The Times*, 17 May 1947.

⁵⁸ *FO List 1952*.

⁵⁹ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, p. 337.

⁶⁰ Kelly, *The Hungry Sheep*, ch. 2, and *The Ruling Few*, pp. 354–5; Wylie, 'Kelly'; Strang, *The Foreign Office*, pp. 23, 111. The term 'information work' had its own problem since in some countries, including Turkey, it carried the connotation of 'intelligence', hence of gathering information rather than imparting it. It was on this ground that Kelly objected to being required to change the title of his press attaché to 'first secretary (information)', TNA, Kelly to Bevin, 14 Aug. 1946, FO930/378. The FO view was that the traditional name would no longer serve since this officer now had to deal with media other than the press and could not be an 'attaché' in a service of which he was already a member.

⁶¹ Marett, *Through the Back Door, passim*; HCPP (Cmd. 913), April 1954, *passim*; HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964, para. 260.

⁶² Allen was given the local rank of first secretary but was of independent means and worked for the embassy because he enjoyed it. He also supplied topographical intelligence to the JIB and personally paid a retired Turkish police official to provide information on Communist activities among Istanbul workers, TNA, Brig. Way, MOD (JIB) to Allen, 24 June 1948, FO195/2611; Kelly to Warner (FO), 4 Oct. 1948, FO1110/127; information kindly supplied by Andrew Mango.

visitors from Britain, including parliamentary delegations.⁶³ He seems to have had plenty of time for this sort of thing. It was work that was undemanding since he found the Turks too polite to ask him awkward questions, uninterested in foreign affairs (the USSR excepted), and devoid of the pressure groups on which tabs would otherwise have had to be kept. “This simple and straightforward attitude was reassuring and convenient for a British Ambassador”, he later wrote.⁶⁴

It may have been in part his enjoyable but less than taxing experience in Turkey that also led Kelly, described by Philby as “a shy man with an acute and sensitive mind”,⁶⁵ to observe later that it would be difficult in the future to secure good men for the diplomatic service. They would not come forward if heads of mission were “treated by democratic governments as glorified postmen and their responsibility in the delicate art of negotiation confined to routine matters, and if all important relations [were] directly handled by politicians at public conferences under batteries of television cameras”.⁶⁶ Fortunately, although the trend was certainly in this direction, it did not go as far as he feared.

A Typical Medium-Sized Post

The embassy had shrunk steadily after the war, and in the early 1950s, when Knox Helm, the former wartime counsellor, returned as ambassador, there was pressure for further economies on staffing, especially among the more ‘menial’ locally engaged staff.⁶⁷ It later recovered some ground and grew a little more in the following decade, averaging 24 UK-based diplomatic and consular staff over the whole period from 1952 until 1974.⁶⁸ This put it on a par with British missions in other middle powers such as Argentina, Denmark, Greece and Sweden. What

⁶³ These were also facilitated in the opposite direction.

⁶⁴ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, pp. 327–8.

⁶⁵ *My Silent War*, p. 131.

⁶⁶ Kelly, *The Hungry Sheep*, p. 45.

⁶⁷ Helm (by then Sir Knox Helm) tried to get some of the pruning diverted to NAFEN, which he now believed to be not just ineffective but politically embarrassing. But its costs were borne by the secret vote, with the Americans latterly chipping in as well, and MI6 continued to value it: TNA, Helm to Clarke (FO), 5 Feb.; min. of H. S. Colchester, 14 Mar. 1952, FO195/2687.

⁶⁸ *FO List* and *DS List*.

was more striking, however, was the change in the composition and distribution of the embassy staff.

In the first place, the 1950s saw the chancery doubling in size and in 1955 acquiring an administrative officer to assist its head; at the same time the commercial section dwindled to half of its previous strength. Even at the end of the 1960s—despite some signs that the trend was going into reverse—the picture was not much different, and an inspection in 1968 found the commercial section in poor shape.⁶⁹ On the face of it this is surprising since in the British Foreign Service as a whole “fully one-third” of its work was by the mid-1950s preponderantly commercial or financial in character.⁷⁰ A possible explanation is that in the 1950s British exports were doing so well in the Turkish market and Turkish exports doing so badly in Britain that a strong commercial section was not only seen as unnecessary but also politically ill-advised.⁷¹ It also needs to be remembered that there was a long-established British Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul, which had organized the British industrial exhibition there in 1952.⁷² In any event, there is little doubt about the reason for the acceleration in the growth of the chancery staff: this reflected the need to cope with the dramatic political developments in the region.

The defence section of the embassy withered after 1957 to just one representative of each of the armed forces. But this is unlikely to have led to any loss in military intelligence gathering capacity because other British officers continued to be housed in the embassy on attachment to the new headquarters in Ankara of the Baghdad Pact, renamed the ‘Central Treaty Organization’ (CENTO) following the defection of Iraq in 1958.⁷³ Besides, although the need caused some resentment in the

⁶⁹ TNA, H. M. Embassy, Ankara. Commercial Department. Report by Mr. W. Nicholl, October/November 1968, FCO19/68.

⁷⁰ Strang, *The Foreign Office*, p. 39 and—on the work of commercial diplomatic officers at this period—pp. 110–11.

⁷¹ Turkey’s debts to Britain were far larger than to any other country and had made it one of the largest debtor countries in the European Payments Union. With Turkish resentment against Britain mounting accordingly and the press demanding drastic action, in March 1953 the Turkish Minister of Commerce announced trade reprisals, *The Times*, 6 Jan., 28 and 30 Mar. 1953, 23 Mar. 1954. In 1958 the Turkish balance of payments was in such dire straits that a “major rescue operation” by the USA and the OEEC was judged necessary, TNA, AR 1958, 17 Feb. 1959, FO371/144739.

⁷² *The Times*, 14 Apr. 1952.

⁷³ Hadley, *CENTO*, p. 7; BDOHP, Interview with Sir Richard Parsons in 2005, DOHP 10. The original signatories of the Baghdad Pact in February 1955 were Turkey and Iraq. It was joined by Britain in April, Pakistan in September, and Iran in November.

Foreign Office, information on the Turkish armed forces was available from the United States, whose military assistance teams now had such a heavy presence in Turkey.⁷⁴

In July 1957, when the government eventually got round to making a comprehensive statement on its ‘overseas information services’, Turkey was one of the countries in which it announced that an expansion of the ‘long-term’ work of the British Council was “urgently necessary”.⁷⁵ Among other specialists, therefore, two cultural attachés (British Council) were acquired in 1960, and with them added to the information officers, roughly 20 per cent of the embassy staff was concerned with public relations until the early 1970s. At Pera House, the information section, which had been housed in a mere wooden hut in the grounds, was moved into the main building at the beginning of the 1970s.⁷⁶ All this demonstrated that, albeit somewhat belatedly, the embassy in Turkey had gradually been provided with the resources that were the corollary of the general principles urged on the British government when the Drogheda Committee submitted its report on overseas propaganda in July 1953, among them that high quality work of this sort was more essential to Britain than to any other great power.⁷⁷ This was just as well because the Timothy Davey affair in March 1972 was a British public relations disaster in Turkey and required the most skilful and energetic handling.⁷⁸

Despite Turkish urgings, the United States never formally became a member but in practice was closely associated with it. It was in October 1958 that its headquarters was moved from Baghdad to Ankara, where it was installed in the Old Grand National Assembly building.

⁷⁴ TNA, min. of Brant (on AR 1956), 7 Feb. 1957, FO371/130174.

⁷⁵ HCPP (Cmnd. 225), July 1957, para. 23.

⁷⁶ TNA, Roberts (Accommodation Dept., FO) to Chief Clerk, 10 Dec. 1970, FCO9/1336.

⁷⁷ HCPP (Cmnd. 9138), Apr. 1954, para. 12. For financial reasons, the Drogheda Committee’s widely applauded recommendations for a major expansion in Britain’s overseas propaganda effort was substantially stonewalled by the government until 1957, although its secretary, Robert Marett, was swiftly made head of the FO’s Information Policy Department. It was the Suez failure in 1956 which forced their adoption, Marett, *Through the Back Door*, pp. 177–82. Drogheda’s views were endorsed again by the Plowden Committee in 1964, HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964, paras. 256–78.

⁷⁸ Timothy Davey was a 14-year old Kent schoolboy sentenced by a Turkish court on 2 March 1972 to over six years in gaol on drugs charges. His guilt was beyond doubt but there was uproar in Britain at the severity of this sentence on someone so young, and some British newspapers used colourful language in condemning it and demanding more lenient treatment. This led to press retaliation in Turkey and a marked cooling in relations. The episode was a headache for the consular sections in Istanbul and Ankara as well. Davey was finally released under an amnesty in May 1974.

The British Embassy in Turkey may have become a typical medium-sized post but this did not mean physical stagnation. Indeed, in the latter half of the 1960s a 2.5 acre site adjacent to the Ankara compound was acquired and plans approved for new building, for both offices and staff accommodation. This was partly to protect the amenity of the embassy, partly to avoid the security risks attendant on acquisition of the adjacent site by an unfriendly power, and partly to be able to provide a higher proportion of staff accommodation within the compound against the future possibility of ‘troubulous times’. (A high proportion of staff lived in houses and apartments rented by the embassy in the city.)⁷⁹ However, it was also prompted by a desire to give better amenities and more elbow room to the existing staff.⁸⁰ Good facilities were also needed because the British community in Ankara—small and to a significant extent fairly transient in composition—was very much dependent on the embassy as the focal point of its social and religious life.⁸¹

There was, however, one pronounced weakness from which the embassy still suffered in this period, and that was lack of Turkish language expertise. This was largely a consequence of the retirement of the men of the now defunct Levant Service; the limited promotion prospects offered by learning Turkish compared say with Arabic;⁸² and the dearth of graduates in any Eastern language coming out of the universities who had the necessary all-round ability for a diplomatic career, despite the stimulus given to Oriental Studies by the Scarbrough Report in 1947.⁸³ The situation was particularly bad in Ankara because the British colony there was so small that few Anglo-Levantines could be called on to supply the Turkish language expertise in which the embassy was so deficient. (In Istanbul, where the colony was much larger, the consulate-general’s problem was by no means so acute.) Between the retirement of Helm himself in August 1954 and the arrival in the following spring

⁷⁹ It appears to have been the 1990s before real progress was made with the provision of staff accommodation within the embassy grounds.

⁸⁰ HCPP (666), 26 Oct. 1967: Report, p. x; Mins. of Evidence, paras. 466–7.

⁸¹ TNA, British Embassy, Ankara: Report on the British Community in the Ankara Consular District, 1970, FCO47/534.

⁸² The Plowden Report noted that while 32 members of the Foreign Service had qualified for a Turkish language allowance, only 5 had kept it up to an “approved standard”; by contrast, 168 had an allowance for Arabic and 94 had kept it up, HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964, para. 185.

⁸³ Hayter Report, Part I. At the end of the 1950s the FO was very anxious on this score and disappointed that its view was not shared by other departments; see papers in TNA, FO924/1321.

of Anthony Parsons, there were no Turkish-speakers in the chancery at all.⁸⁴ Later describing himself tactfully as the chancery's "principal Turkish speaker", Parsons had special responsibility for watching the domestic situation.⁸⁵

It was only at the beginning of the 1960s that the language competence of the embassy began slowly to improve, probably with the appointment of Timothy Daunt in August 1959. In the following April he was transferred to Istanbul as a language student and six months later to Ankara as third secretary. By 1961 he was often being informally described as the 'oriental secretary'. Thereafter a succession of young diplomats followed this path and in due course produced a good number of ambassadors in Ankara who were genuinely proficient in Turkish, which was exceptional in comparison with other west European embassies in the capital. Unfortunately, only one young diplomat was trained in the language at intervals of four to five years; inevitably, too, some fell by the wayside. As a result, it was impossible to ensure that every ambassador was fluent.

The paucity of Turkish speakers in the embassy naturally made it more reliant on locally engaged staff. Their numbers are only possible to determine at intervals but they undoubtedly made an increasingly important contribution across a wide spectrum of activities.⁸⁶ In this regard the embassy had returned to the situation prior to the creation of the Levant Service in the late nineteenth century. A notable case in point is John Hyde, an Anglo-Levantine who joined the press office at Pera House in the late 1940s shortly after leaving the English High School in Istanbul, where he was a contemporary of Andrew Mango, and remained there until the beginning of the 1980s. Although his formal speciality remained press relations and he was usually referred

⁸⁴ Mott-Radclyffe, *Foreign Body in the Eye*, p. 277.

⁸⁵ BDOHP, Interview with Sir Anthony Parsons, 22 Mar. 1996, DOHP 10.

⁸⁶ After some hesitation, in 1949 it had been decided as general policy "to use locals rather than United Kingdom based staff in most consular posts and in a lot of jobs in Commercial and Information Sections", and in order to retain able ones to offer them better conditions of employment, TNA, min. of Sir Andrew Noble [superintending under-sec., Consular Dept.], 12 May 1949, FO366/2817. In 1968 the consulate-general in Istanbul had a total staff, excluding the WLS, of 23: 3 senior UK-based staff (including the consul-general), 5 locally engaged consular staff, 3 locally-engaged commercial staff, 4 locally-engaged information staff, 1 UK-based officer (grade 10) and 1 locally-engaged in administration, 1 UK-based officer (grade 10) in the registry, 4 security guards and one UK-based shorthand typist, TNA, Pera House, Istanbul. J. C. Cloake, Accommodation Dept., 7 May 1968, FCO78/18.

to later as the ‘press attaché’,⁸⁷ in practice he was very much an old-style oriental secretary. Although resentful of the non-Turkish speaking diplomats who “wafted down from Ankara to boss him about”, and not always easy to manage, he was “enormously useful” and provided political information.⁸⁸ As a mark of his value he was awarded an MBE in 1962 and promoted to consul a few years later.

In Istanbul, John Hyde’s stamping ground, Pera House remained the British base and in 1953 extensive repairs and changes to the building were completed.⁸⁹ The grand building now provided living accommodation for the consul-general, which was thought appropriate in the Foreign Office since he was now Britain’s chief representative in the city, but still had spacious living and reception areas for the use of the visiting ambassador. The first to enjoy these throughout his posting was Sir James Bowker, who like Helm had served in Turkey before becoming ambassador and took over from him in January 1954. By the end of the decade, however, the tradition of leisurely summers on the Bosphorus was beginning to wear thin. Sir Bernard Burrows, who became ambassador in late 1958, found himself having to travel back to Ankara—with which even much later the telephone link remained not only insecure but also “regularly subject to exasperating delays and interruptions”—almost every week.⁹⁰

Another tradition of Pera House remained very much alive and well: namely, its use as a base for secret intelligence gathering. In 1953 Dennys was replaced as head of the MI6 station in Istanbul by Harold Perkins, a senior figure in the Secret Service who had run its special operations section and been heavily involved in the ill-fated Anglo-American attempt in 1949–50 to subvert the Communist regime in Albania.⁹¹ Like Philby before him, Perkins had the cover of first secretary at Istanbul, and appears to have remained there until at least early in 1958. He

⁸⁷ *Turkish Daily News*, 13 May 2008. The Drogheda committee had recommended appointing some persons for information work who were “local experts with special language qualifications in areas like the Middle East”, HCPP (9138), Apr. 1954, para. 14.

⁸⁸ Information kindly supplied by Jeremy Varcoe; TNA, Inspection of Posts in Turkey [Information], 1972, FCO9/1626. See also TNA, min. of Woodrow, 26 Oct. 1973; Phillips to Brinson, 7 Aug. and 1 Oct. 1973, FCO26/1317.

⁸⁹ TNA, papers in FO366/2957; *The Times*, 29 July 1953.

⁹⁰ TNA, Barltrop to Eaden (Communications Dept.), 26 June 1969, FCO19/68; Burrows, *Diplomat in a Changing World*, p. 128.

⁹¹ Dorril, *MI6*, pp. 363–92 *passim*.

was not alone.⁹² There is also clear documentary evidence from the late 1960s that at this juncture most of the third floor attic rooms of Pera House were home to a massive signals intelligence operation run by Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham, the ‘Wireless Liaison Service (WLS)’.⁹³

Elsewhere eyes and ears were disappearing. During this period the embassy lost all its four remaining outlying consular posts except Istanbul. At hot and malarial Mersin, the consul, E. C. ‘Spud’ Nock, who had previously enjoyed good reports, had since fallen from grace. His attitude to security had been discovered to be alarmingly casual and his reporting useless. He was dominated by his paranoid wife, who believed firmly in black magic and had installed a Svengali-like kavass called Fevzi in the consulate’s guest room. (The local joke was that in Mersin, Nock was the pro-consul, his wife the consul, and Fevzi the consul-general.) In these circumstances, Nock, who was pompous and hot-tempered, had blotted his copybook further by feuding with colleagues and mistreating staff. The upper floor of the villa occupied by the consulate was employed as a brothel. Following an investigation on the spot by the droll, shrewd, former assistant air attaché at the embassy, Wing Commander Peter Cooper, who found the situation exceeding in fantasy anything that he had ever come across outside a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, the general conclusion was that the Nocks were barking mad and the laughing stock of southern Turkey.⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, they were soon replaced. Since it had also been felt for a while that it was difficult to maintain separately two posts as close together as Mersin and Iskenderun,⁹⁵ the former was reduced to

⁹² *FO List 1954–8*. Dorril identifies Halsey Colchester (second secretary at Istanbul, 1950–4) and Alan Banks (vice-consul at Istanbul, 1950–3) as MI6 agents, *MI6*, p. 822, n. 69.

⁹³ TNA, Burrows to Cloake, 17 Oct. 1967; Istanbul Consulate General, Pera House: Allocation Schedule, MPBW, London, Nov. 1967; mins. of K. H. Syrett, 21 Mar. and 3 Apr. 1968, FCO78/17. WLS must have had about 20 staff since, asked to state the total number of UK-based staff in Pera House by the Estimates Committee in April 1967, the consul-general, Reggie Burrows, replied “Twenty-five”, although only six were listed by the FO’s Accommodation Department in the following year, HCPP (666), 26 Oct. 1967: Mins. of Evidence, paras. 577, 585–6; compare TNA, Pera House, Istanbul. J. C. Cloake, Accommodation Dept., 7 May 1968, FCO78/18.

⁹⁴ TNA, min. of Cooper, 16 Jan. 1950, FO195/2655. Cooper’s lengthy report on this affair is a masterpiece of its kind.

⁹⁵ TNA, min. of John Wilson (Ankara), 22 Aug. 1949, and following papers in FO195/2632.

an agency, and in 1952 closed altogether. In September 1956 it was announced that for economy reasons both Iskenderun and Trabzon were—to the regret of the ambassador—to be closed as well.⁹⁶ The once great consulate-general at Izmir held out until 1970, when it found itself doubly humiliated: it was henceforward to be not merely a consulate but an honorary one to boot.⁹⁷

Cyprus: “the main preoccupation of the embassy”

Despite the steady loss of its eyes and ears in Turkey’s provinces, British diplomacy, as we have seen, remained reasonably well equipped in Ankara and Istanbul. This reflected a continuing political consensus in Britain that its embassies remained indispensable to the country’s diplomacy. It also reflected the influence of the Foreign Office view, which found eloquent expression in the Plowden Report on Representational Services Overseas of 1964,⁹⁸ that the decline in Britain’s relative military and economic power meant that more rather than less importance needed to be attached to diplomacy in general and these embassies in particular, for modern conditions meant that their advice was needed much more quickly and on far more subjects than ever before.⁹⁹ But the continuing vigour of the posts in Ankara and Istanbul was also a reflection of local and regional circumstances which positively demanded it.

Turkey’s own problems, especially those concerning payments and economic development, certainly took up some of the embassy’s time; between 1952 and 1974 over 50 Anglo-Turkish agreements dealing with these subjects were negotiated, all but a small handful in Ankara.¹⁰⁰ But its greatest preoccupation in these years involved regional questions.

⁹⁶ *The Times*, 15 Sept. 1956; TNA, Bowker to Lloyd, 22 Feb. 1957, FO371/130230. Although Iskenderun was re-opened as an honorary vice-consulate in the early 1960s.

⁹⁷ The Diarist in *The Times*, 2 Mar. 1970, claimed this as a victory for the Duncan Report but the honorary consul was given a paid assistant.

⁹⁸ HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964.

⁹⁹ The Plowden Report was accepted *in toto* by the government of the day: Mott-Radclyffe, *Foreign Body in the Eye*, ch. 16; Home, *The Way the Wind Blows*, ch. 17.

¹⁰⁰ HCPP, General Index to Treaty Series; TNA, FO93/110, Protocols of Treaties/Turkey; and HCPP, Command Papers. Four of these agreements were signed during Zeki Kuneralp’s first tour as Turkish Ambassador in London (1964–6) and nine during his second (1969–72) but not one is mentioned in his memoirs, *Just a Diplomat*.

The rise of Nasserism in Egypt in the mid-1950s and the simultaneous spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East set light to the whole region, and the British position was in danger of complete collapse, especially after the failure of the Suez expedition in 1956. The contribution to the 'northern tier' of defence against the Soviet Union of a stable, pro-Western and in some ways anti-Arab Turkey, formalised by Ankara's founder membership of the Baghdad Pact in 1955, was in these circumstances more than ever vital; it became even more so following the overthrow of the pro-Western regime in Baghdad in July 1958, Iraq's subsequent defection from the Western alliance, and the re-location of CENTO's headquarters to Ankara, where the ambassador became Britain's representative on its council of deputies.¹⁰¹ Moreover, with Britain's important commitments in the Gulf and especially in the Far East, its overflying rights in Turkey were a vital and sometimes sensitive interest until the early 1970s. But what made Turkey central to British policy in the eastern Mediterranean in this period was the question of Cyprus.

The Cyprus conflict, which had started to simmer in late 1954, exploded on 1 April 1955 when the Greek majority on the island, more or less openly supported by the government in Athens, launched a campaign of violence designed to overthrow the British colonial government and achieve *enosis* (union) with mainland Greece. This made it essential for Britain, which was wedded to the notion that Cyprus had to be kept for vital strategic reasons, to enlist Turkish support for its policy. Turkey, which had been enjoying unusually good relations with Greece and showing little interest in Cyprus, had to be persuaded that both its own security and the safety of the Turkish Cypriots, not to mention peace between Greece and Turkey and the integrity of NATO's right flank, depended on the revolt being crushed. Unfortunately, having been aroused without too much difficulty, the Turkish government then began to suspect that the British would give in to the Greeks. As a result, it demanded partition of the island between Greece and Turkey—'double enosis'. Not surprisingly, Cyprus periodically strained relations between London and Ankara almost as much as it strained those between London and Athens.

¹⁰¹ This effectively ran the organization between annual meetings at ministerial level, which rotated among the capitals of the members. Chancery staff had to contribute to CENTO's technical (including aid) work and sit on its various committees, notably the budget and administration committee: Hadley, *CENTO*, pp. 19, 24; BDOHP, Interview with Sir Reginald Hibbert, 15 July 1997, DOHP 14.

The Cyprus emergency, which by the late 1950s had produced Britain's "most onerous overseas commitment",¹⁰² meant that no method of diplomatic engagement with Turkey could be ignored, and these were not only multiplying but also becoming more efficient. Telecommunications between Britain and Turkey had improved, and some steps had been taken to improve telephone security, although the foreign service itself remained extremely wary of this medium, which was not only vulnerable to eavesdropping but also—except when used at the highest levels—generated no written record.¹⁰³ More importantly, during the 1950s the air links connecting Turkey to both Britain and the focal points of multilateral diplomacy in North America and continental Europe also improved significantly, although Istanbul was always better served than Ankara. A new international airport at Yeşilköy outside Istanbul was fully opened in 1953, the very limited service from London had become daily, and the journey time was cut from two days to nine hours.¹⁰⁴ This was slashed further when in April 1960 BEA introduced jets into the service for the first time, and shortly afterwards flew them onwards to Ankara.¹⁰⁵ In 1971 it began a non-stop flight to Istanbul on four days a week, two of them going on to the capital,¹⁰⁶ and by this time other airlines were also serving the route, among them Turkish Airlines (THY) (see Chapter 10). The result was that it was in principle comparatively easy for much Anglo-Turkish diplomacy on Cyprus to bypass the embassy in Ankara altogether.

In the case of the multilateral forums where ministers and senior officials could make direct contact, NATO headquarters in Paris, where the Turks had established a first class team, was particularly important.¹⁰⁷ So too were the annual ministerial meetings of CENTO and its military committee. In writing of his attendance as foreign secretary at the first

¹⁰² Duncan Sandys, British Minister of Defence, speaking in the House of Commons, *The Times*, 26 Feb. 1959.

¹⁰³ See papers in TNA, FO850/173; *The Times*, 18 and 27 Feb. 1953; information kindly supplied by Sir Timothy Daunt and Sir Brian Barder.

¹⁰⁴ This was with a stop-over at Rome (two days a week); it was eleven hours with a stop-over at Athens as well (five days a week), *BEA Comprehensive Timetable, 1 February to 31 March 1958*, p. 16. From Istanbul the onward service to Ankara was operated by THY.

¹⁰⁵ *Flight International*, 14 Apr. 1966.

¹⁰⁶ British Airways Archives and Museum Collection <http://www.bamuseum.com/museumhistory70-80.html> [accessed 28 May 2008]; *The Times*, 20 May 1971.

¹⁰⁷ This was headed initially by Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, soon to be deputy prime minister and then foreign minister, and included Zeki Kuneralp: Greenhill, *More by Accident*, p. 84; Kuneralp, *Just a Diplomat*, ch. 6; TNA, AR 1958, 17 Feb. 1959, FO371/144739.

ministerial council of the Baghdad Pact, in November 1955, where he had the first of many encounters with the Democrat Party leader and prime minister, Adnan Menderes, Harold Macmillan reflected in his memoirs that:

In the old days Foreign Secretaries seldom left their desk in Whitehall. Today they have become of necessity peripatetic salesmen. Whether there has been gain or loss in this development is certainly arguable; but no Foreign Minister, least of all the British, can avoid the necessity.¹⁰⁸

Senior cabinet ministers, typically including in their party the Foreign Office official supervising the Southern Department, visited Ankara itself on average once a year in the second half of the 1950s.¹⁰⁹ In addition, important conferences on Cyprus between Britain, Greece and Turkey were, as we shall see, held in London.

The fact remains that the embassy was by no means sidelined even on so important a question as Cyprus. Even here, indeed especially here, it was needed as a ‘cushion’. For one thing, the press of other urgent business simply made it impossible for British ministers and senior officials to give very much time to direct contact with the Turks, whether in the margins of multilateral meetings or via their embassy in London. (There was also probably less incentive to deal with the Turkish Embassy in London at the beginning of the Cyprus emergency since the ambassador at the time, Suad Ürgüplü, a political appointee, was regarded as untrustworthy and even as “rather stupid”.)¹¹⁰ The same applied to visits to the Turkish capital, which in any case were difficult to contemplate without making matching ones to Athens. Starting with Churchill and Eden, one prime minister and foreign secretary after another, from the middle of the 1950s until the late 1960s, had to make excuses for not being able to make an official visit to Turkey, despite increasingly anxious pleas from the embassy, which feared that

¹⁰⁸ *Tides of Fortune*, p. 652; see also pp. 654, 674.

¹⁰⁹ High-level visitors included the colonial secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, in December 1956; the foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, in March 1956 and January 1958; and the prime minister, Harold Macmillan, in August 1958.

¹¹⁰ TNA, Southern Dept. (FO) min., 13 Jan. 1956, FO371/124056. This minute, probably written by the head of the department, W. H. Young, and prompted by a rather damning despatch about Ürgüplü from the Ankara chancery, added that he also had “an odd tendency to ignore instructions which he receives from Ankara”. He was appointed in October 1955 and left in March 1957. Subsequently, Turkey’s ambassadors to London were invariably senior and very influential career diplomats, although they tended not to stay for very long.

the Turks would be insulted.¹¹¹ Fleeting stop-over visits such as that of Lord Home in April 1963,¹¹² or those principally concerned with CENTO affairs such as that of Michael Stewart in April 1966, were the norm and these were themselves few and far between.¹¹³

Where Cyprus was concerned, however, the embassy was important not just because of the practical difficulties in the way of alternative means of contact and its role in assisting them when they were attempted. It was also important because, only too aware of the island's incendiary potential, Britain wished to settle the affair by quiet diplomacy; quiet diplomacy which would, it was true, have to culminate in noisy tripartite talks but talks that were well prepared—and well consolidated. So, as Anthony Parsons later observed, Cyprus became “the main preoccupation in the Embassy”.¹¹⁴ For it was only the embassy that could give continuous, informed and unobtrusive attention to Turkey's role in the question and so avoid the many risks of publicised high-level visits. These included the risks of humiliating treatment and providing an excuse for riots, as happened in January 1958 when the British foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, followed by the even less welcome Sir Hugh Foot, the governor of Cyprus, arrived in Ankara at an excitable juncture.¹¹⁵

Throughout the second half of the 1950s until a settlement of sorts was finally achieved in early 1959, a seemingly endless series of formulas for an agreement on Cyprus was canvassed by the various interested parties. The chief tasks of the embassy were to report on likely Turkish attitudes to the contending proposals, lobby for support in Ankara for the formula then backed by Britain, report the actual Turkish response,

¹¹¹ *The Times*, 6 Apr. 1953 and 16 Mar. 1955. See also papers in TNA, FO371/163838; Allen to Dodson, 1 Nov. 1963, FO371/169522; Allen to Stewart, 25 Apr., Allen to Gore-Booth, 31 May, and Davidson (FO) to Pemberton-Pigott (Ankara), 23 Dec. 1966, FO371/185833.

¹¹² Home, who was en route to the CENTO meeting in Karachi, arrived in the early evening of 28 April and left at lunchtime the following day, hoping to compensate for the brevity of his visit by giving a lift to the Turkish foreign minister in his aircraft; see papers in TNA, FO371/169522.

¹¹³ It was to be July 1967 before the FO responded to the embassy's pleas—and then by sending out a junior minister, Fred Mulley, who, accompanied by the asst. head of the Central Department, Ivor Lucas, spent two days in Ankara and two in Istanbul, Lucas, *A Road to Damascus*, pp. 82–3; *The Times*, 17, 18, 28 July 1967.

¹¹⁴ BDOHP, Interview with Sir Anthony Parsons, 22 Mar. 1996, DOHP 10.

¹¹⁵ Foot, *A Start in Freedom*, pp. 150–1; Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, pp. 226–30; Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt*, p. 276; Mayes, *Makarios*, pp. 112–13.

and make recommendations in the light of it.¹¹⁶ In late August and early September 1955 there were trilateral talks in London to which the then ambassador, Sir James Bowker, an old friend of Macmillan's,¹¹⁷ was invited to advise the British delegation. He was recalled again in December 1956, this time to advise on the likely reaction in Ankara to the recommendations of Lord Radcliffe on a new constitution for Cyprus contained in his recently concluded report.¹¹⁸ But in 1957 the Greeks, who much preferred the UN forum, declined a new tripartite conference and rejected the idea of NATO mediation. As a result, more traditional channels of communication continued to be at a premium.¹¹⁹

In the event the British government itself was sidelined in the final negotiations between Greece and Turkey at Zurich in early February 1959 which produced the formula for a settlement. Nor was Sir Bernard Burrows, who had replaced Bowker in late 1958, recalled to take part in the trilateral talks in London which followed immediately thereafter,¹²⁰ although this did not reflect a diminished regard for the embassy but rather the fact that the London conference was called essentially to secure the high-level blessing of the Zurich deal by all the interested parties, notably Archbishop Makarios. The fact remains, though, that the embassy had drawn off a great deal of Turkish venom in the previous few years and thus helped to preserve a good working relationship between Britain and Turkey at a critical time; Bowker had been rewarded with the embassy in Vienna.¹²¹ It is also noteworthy that a former ambassador, Sir Knox Helm, was appointed deputy chairman of the joint committee established in London to flesh out important elements of the Zurich formula just agreed, especially on the precise contours of the British sovereign base areas that were to remain on the island.¹²²

In early 1963 Sir Bernard Burrows left Ankara. His own most delicate, if not necessarily most important, task had turned out not to be Cyprus

¹¹⁶ Eden, *Full Circle*, pp. 409, 413; Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, pp. 662, 683; Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, *passim*.

¹¹⁷ They had served together in Algiers during the war, Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, p. 278.

¹¹⁸ The ambassador to Greece, Sir Charles Peake, was recalled for the same purposes on both occasions, *The Times*, 26 Aug. 1955, 3 Dec. 1956.

¹¹⁹ Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt*, pp. 234-5, 260, 267; Mayes, *Makarios*, p. 126; Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, pp. 666-8; Xydis, *Cyprus*, p. 69 n. 24, 71.

¹²⁰ Nor was the British Ambassador at Athens.

¹²¹ Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, pp. 250-1, 275-6.

¹²² *The Times*, 24 Mar. 1959; Xydis, *Cyprus*, pp. 477-9.

but to fulfil his instructions to try by means of discreet appeals—unsuccessfully as it turned out—to save the lives of the Democrat Party leaders brought down by the military coup in Turkey in May 1960, and then repair the damage caused to Anglo-Turkish relations by the fallout when the Foreign Office publicly condemned the executions.¹²³ Burrows was replaced by Sir Denis Allen, who soon found the embassy once more preoccupied with Cyprus.

At Christmas 1963 inter-communal fighting broke out on the island and Turkey threatened to come to the rescue of the imperilled Turkish minority. This carried the high risk of war with Greece and thoroughly alarmed NATO in general and Britain in particular.¹²⁴ So too did the prospect of injuring relations with Turkey, to which, in the event of the loss of the bases retained in Cyprus, Britain would need to turn for alternative base and staging facilities still needed for the projection of power in the Far East as well as the Middle East.¹²⁵ So Sir Denis Allen—as the representative in Ankara of the former colonial power and one of the three guarantor powers established in the 1959 settlement—found himself at the centre of a swirl of activity. Urgent reports had to be sent to London advising on Turkish intentions, pleas for restraint had to be made, pressure for support of the British proposal for a peacekeeping force exerted, and denials issued of the allegation of a jumpy government that RAF jets had been violating Turkish airspace on the coastline of southern Anatolia.¹²⁶ Any idea that these tasks could have been discharged by a visiting minister would have been particularly absurd at this juncture: the cynical and by now weary foreign secretary, R. A. Butler, disliked foreign travel for diplomatic purposes and saw no political mileage in Cyprus, while the Commonwealth secretary, Duncan Sandys, was well known to be a “loose diplomatic cannon”.¹²⁷ In the second half of January the centre of gravity of Anglo-Turkish

¹²³ Menderes and Zorlu were both hanged, along with another minister: Mango, *The Turks Today*, pp. 53–4; Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, p. 400; Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, p. 700; Burrows, *Diplomat in a Changing World*, pp. 137–46; *The Times*, 16 Sept. 1961.

¹²⁴ On the important Western interests in Cyprus, see James, *Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64*, ch. 4.

¹²⁵ James, *Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64*, pp. 54, 57–8.

¹²⁶ James, *Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64*, pp. 35, 47, 59–60; *The Times*, 27, 30, 31 Dec. 1963.

¹²⁷ James, *Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64*, pp. 62–4, 81. Sandys flew at once to Cyprus (as a Commonwealth country this was in his bailiwick rather than the FO's) and achieved results. His bullying manner would hardly have worked

diplomacy on Cyprus shifted to a multilateral foreign minister-level conference in London, to which the appointment as ambassador of one of Turkey's most gifted diplomats, Zeki Kuneralp, had been brought forward.¹²⁸ As the crisis continued to simmer in 1964 there were further stop-over visits to London by the Turkish foreign minister and indeed by the prime minister; no doubt there were also discussions at NATO headquarters and the UN. But the Ankara embassy continued to play a key role in managing the crisis until American threats in June effectively ended the prospect of a Turkish intervention and the UN peacekeeping force was properly installed.¹²⁹

The embassy had the same tasks during the next war scare over Cyprus, in November 1967, by which time Sir Roger Allen was ambassador. Allen was dogged by ill-health but was a complete professional. He also had the advantage in handling Cyprus that he had served as ambassador in Athens from 1957 until 1961, and the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office subsequently had no hesitation in saying that he had played an important part in this latest crisis over the island.¹³⁰ His successor, Sir Roderick Sarell, who came of an Anglo-Levantine family which had prospered in Turkey during the nineteenth century and even contributed staff to the embassy,¹³¹ had a relatively quiet time over Cyprus. It was the man who followed him, Sir Horace Phillips, who had to face the denouement.

In July 1974, following a Greek Cypriot coup against the president of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, engineered by the military junta in Athens, the Turkish government finally ran out of patience and sent troops to the north of the island. This raised all the old fears and even entailed a risk of fighting between British and Turkish forces.¹³² In the frantic diplomacy that followed, designed to secure a genuine ceasefire and then facilitate an inter-communal settlement on the island that

so well in Ankara. On Butler, see BDOHP, Interview with Sir Richard Parsons in 2005, DOHP 10.

¹²⁸ Kuneralp, *Just a Diplomat*, pp. 99–103. Kuneralp judged that 80 per cent of all the initiatives he took with the FO during this London posting concerned Cyprus.

¹²⁹ James, *Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64*, chs. 8–11.

¹³⁰ Lord Gore-Booth, 'Sir Roger Allen', *The Times*, 12 Feb. 1972; see also Desmond Donnelly, 'Sir Roger Allen: Coolness and Clarity', *The Times*, 19 Feb. 1972.

¹³¹ The Philip Sarell who was a dragoman in the embassy during the Crimean War was probably his grandfather, while the Philip Sarell who was first a clerk and then a vice-consul in the consulate-general between 1883 and 1901 was certainly his father: Sarell, 'The Sarells of Constantinople', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 Nov. 2001 (obit.).

¹³² Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, pp. 347, 351–3.

would give the Turkish army no excuse for remaining, the leading role was taken personally by James Callaghan, foreign secretary in the Labour government which had been in office since early the previous year. Among other things, this involved telephone calls to all the principal parties. Callaghan spoke to the Turkish prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, and negotiated face-to-face with him when, accompanied by a large and powerful team which included two generals, on 17 July the Turkish leader flew at short notice to London.¹³³ Later in the same month and early in the next, Callaghan also held two rounds of talks with his Greek and Turkish counterparts in Geneva.¹³⁴ But unlike the US secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, with whom he also had to deal intimately in this same affair, he did not try to do everything himself.

Callaghan, like Douglas-Home, had a deep respect for both the Foreign Office—"this Rolls Royce of Departments"—and its officers abroad,¹³⁵ so it is hardly surprising that they were permitted to take some of the strain in this crisis. The chancery in Ankara was at once on four hour shifts for 24 hours day,¹³⁶ and Sir Horace Phillips—en route by car to England to take leave when he heard the news—immediately flew back to Ankara. Thereafter his part in the diplomacy—judging by his own account—was certainly a bit part compared with that of the foreign secretary: supporting his line and seeking clarification of Turkish intentions. However, one incident shows just how vital it is to have a permanent representative in place at a time like this, especially one already on good terms with government leaders.

In the hurried evacuation of the large British community from the north of the island, planned for 22 July, there was the risk of a collision between the British and Turkish navies which Callaghan was naturally anxious to avoid. So, he thought, was Ecevit, but any complacency he might have had about this evaporated when he learned that "some fire-eating Turkish Generals were at large in Cyprus, backed by a belligerent Turkish Ambassador".¹³⁷ Clearly, Ecevit needed to be impressed with the need to keep them under control but for some reason this only

¹³³ Ecevit spoke excellent English and was regarded as "[m]oderate, friendly to Britain and pro-western in approach", Background Brief for the Prime Minister's Working Dinner with the Turkish Prime Minister and Acting Foreign Minister, Mr Ecevit and Mr Işık: 17 July [1974], Annex B, TNA, FCO9/2117. The full party is listed at Annex A.

¹³⁴ Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, ch. 11.

¹³⁵ Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, pp. 294, 315.

¹³⁶ James, *Diplomatic Moves*, p. 110.

¹³⁷ Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p. 347.

became apparent in the early hours of the 22nd when he was asleep. Never mind the hour, Phillips was instructed by Callaghan at once to seek reassurance from Ecevit that there would be no problems with the evacuation, so he went straight to the prime minister's apartment:

the door was opened by his wife, obviously just wakened, who knew me. . . . She invited me in and went to rouse him. After a short time Ecevit appeared, wide awake, freshly dressed and spruce; he greeted me affably and assured me there was no need for apologies at so critical a juncture for our two governments. He perfectly understood London's concern over the evacuation of its citizens; and lifted the phone there and then to waken the chief of defence staff and ask him to instruct all Turkish units in the area appropriately. Ecevit got his assurance, which I passed on at once to the Foreign Office, and the evacuation was accomplished without incident.¹³⁸

Neither the foreign secretary nor the ambassador had been able to prevent the Turks from landing on Cyprus and subsequently extending their occupation to include roughly a third of the island. However, both had helped to prevent the outbreak of war between Turkey and Greece, as also to avoid a clash of arms between Turkey and Britain.

Still Juggling High-Level Visitors

By the beginning of the 1970s the message had finally begun to get through to London that relations with Turkey would suffer in the absence of high-level official visits that were actually dedicated to nurturing them. In April 1970 the foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, paid a five-day official visit in the course of which he signed the UK/Turkey (Bosphorus Bridge) Loan Agreement. In October of the following year, by which time a Conservative government was in power in Britain, there was a week-long state visit by the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Anne, accompanied by the Foreign Office minister of state, Joseph Godber.¹³⁹ In 1972, it is true, there were visits at only junior minister level (one from the Ministry of Defence, the usual add-on to

¹³⁸ Phillips, *Envoy Extraordinary*, pp. 128–9. Callaghan does not mention this incident, only that he phoned Ecevit on the morning of 22 July when some “slight attempted harassment” of the evacuation by the Turkish navy nevertheless took place, *Time and Chance*, p. 347.

¹³⁹ This was in return for the state visit to Britain by President Sunay in November 1967.

a CENTO meeting), perhaps because the Timothy Davey affair in early March, followed just a few weeks later by the unsuccessful attempt by the Turkish military to rescue three GCHQ men kidnapped by leftist extremists, had badly clouded the atmosphere.¹⁴⁰ But in 1973 there was a stream of high-level visitors, not least because this year saw both the funeral of İsmet İnönü and the 50th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Turkish Republic. Julian Amery, the flamboyant but highly experienced right-winger who had recently been shifted to a junior ministerial post in the Foreign Office, went three times.¹⁴¹ What immediately becomes obvious to anyone who looks at the official papers on these and other visits is just how dependent were ministers for their success on the local knowledge and contacts of the embassy.¹⁴² This applied to the forward planning, the visit itself and its immediate aftermath.

In preparation for a visit, the Ankara embassy was relied upon for advice and action on a great many points. These included its precise timing, where guidance had to be acutely sensitive to the possibility of a sudden general election or deterioration in the internal security situation, especially when such a high profile visit as that of the Royal Family in 1971 was in view. The timing of the announcement of the agreed dates also required embassy advice, as did its programme, and—where necessary—agenda for discussions. These points also had to be negotiated with the Turkish foreign ministry. It was also expected to advise on the informal junctures at which it would be best to raise any sensitive

¹⁴⁰ The three men were employed at one of a number of GCHQ listening post on the Black Sea coast, although at the time they were described as being MOD ‘radar technicians’ on contract to the Turkish Air Force. It was assumed that the kidnappers hoped to use their captives to bargain for the release of three members of the Turkish Peoples’ Liberation Army held under sentence of death by the Turkish government. In the event, the government refused to negotiate and the ‘technicians’ were executed before troops stormed the building in the village of Kizildere in which they were held. “Especially in the aftermath of the Davey affair, we are very conscious of the need to avoid offending Turkish susceptibilities”, the FO had told the embassy before the incident reached its deadly climax, adding that it should “take particular care not to give the appearance of exerting pressure on the Turkish authorities with regard to the death sentences”, TNA, Douglas-Home flash Istanbul tel./info flash Ankara, 27 Mar. 1972, PREM15/1256. As is obvious from the papers in FCO9/1616, now released under the Freedom of Information Act, the embassy was careful to observe this instruction to the point of not sending a representative to the short siege at Kizildere.

¹⁴¹ TNA, AR 1973, 8 Jan. 1974, para. 6, FCO9/2112.

¹⁴² In addition to the papers already mentioned, see for example those on Amery’s visit to Ankara from 30 May until 4 June 1973 in TNA, FCO9/1843 and 1844.

point, and whether or not an exchange of modest—or immodest—gifts would be expected. When the Turkish ministers and officials who would be encountered were not already known quantities, the embassy was also required to supply notes on their personalities. While briefs on the subjects likely to come up were generally drafted in the Foreign Office, the embassy would normally be asked to comment on them and even to provide general briefs for a minister's visit, especially if the political situation in Turkey was fluid.¹⁴³ The information section was also expected to play a major role in the advance publicity for visits.

For the royal state visit to Turkey in October 1971, a general brief was provided by the embassy. So, too, were notes on subjects of conversation and—perhaps especially with the Duke of Edinburgh and his Greek antecedents in mind—dire warnings of “topics to be avoided” and “possible *faux pas*”. For example: “Istanbul—never Constantinople [or, just to be on the safe side] (Byzantium)”; and, with mounting panic, “Turks are not Arabs”, and “There are no harems in active use”.¹⁴⁴ The embassy also drafted all three of the Queen's speeches and provided notes for the one to be delivered by Prince Philip, having coordinated their content with those to be delivered by the Turkish leaders.¹⁴⁵ This did not prevent the ambassador, Sir Roderick Sarell, from later reporting to the foreign secretary, with an air of perfect innocence, that their speeches “were beautifully judged and gave rise to much favourable and thoughtful comment”.¹⁴⁶

During the visitors' stay in Ankara, it was usually the embassy that gave them their base, with its comfort, secure communications, convenient location, and advisers and support staff all to hand.¹⁴⁷ The visiting party then relied on embassy staff to shepherd them to their meetings with Turkish ministers, at which the ambassador and one or more of his senior colleagues always sat in and sometimes contributed to the discussion—as well as making sure that the minister did not drop a

¹⁴³ For example, in the case of Lord Home's stop-over visit in April 1963, TNA, Wood (FO) to Aiers (Head of Chancery, Ankara), 29 Mar. 1963, FO371/169522.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, Briefing Papers for State Visit, 18–25 Oct. 1971, FCO9/1474.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, Sarell to Secondé (Southern European Dept.), 9 Sept. 1971, FCO9/1473.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, Sarell to FO, 1 Nov. 1971, FCO57/316.

¹⁴⁷ State visits were different. For the Royal Family in 1971, two houses in the presidential grounds were gutted and completely refitted, although “not everyone admired the result”, the droll ambassador subsequently reported: “I was ashamed”, said Madame Olcay, the wife of the foreign minister, “but what can you do when generals deal with it all[?]”, TNA, Sarell to FO, 1 Nov. 1971, FCO57/316.

clanger. On the rare occasions when a Turkish foreign minister was regarded as particularly difficult, as in the case of Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, “the rudest man I ever met”, said the British governor of Cyprus, Sir Hugh Foot,¹⁴⁸ embassy balm was especially important. The embassy also provided hospitality in return for the visitors’ Turkish counterparts, which could mean coping smoothly with gatecrashers—a tricky business if one of them happened to be “the most distinguished living Turk”.¹⁴⁹ If desired by a visiting minister, it was also the embassy that negotiated arrangements for meeting the local press. Then it was usually the embassy that wrote up the record of the discussions, provided an analysis of the Turkish reaction—including press reaction—to the visit and its general significance,¹⁵⁰ and followed up any agreement made. In short, contrary to a once fashionable and still influential view, the increase in the number of official visits made possible by the great post-war improvements in international air services did not make embassies like the British Embassy at Ankara less necessary but more so.

¹⁴⁸ *A Start in Freedom*, p. 150. See also Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, pp. 699–700; Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, p. 74; Xydis, *Cyprus*, pp. 215–16. A more rounded picture of Zorlu is given in Kunalp, *Just a Diplomat*, pp. 48–9.

¹⁴⁹ Although formally debarred from attending because he was still an active party leader, İsmet İnönü unwittingly turned up, unannounced and uninvited, to the Queen’s dinner for President Sunay at the embassy in October 1971. “My counsellor reseated the tables with masterly deftness in a matter of minutes”, reported the ambassador, TNA, Sarell to FO, 1 Nov. 1971, FCO57/316.

¹⁵⁰ For example, TNA, Allen to Home, 3 May 1963, FO371/169522.

CHAPTER TEN

BUSINESS ABOVE ALL? 1974–2008

Between the end of the Second World War and the early 1970s British diplomacy in Turkey had slowly adjusted to peace and then settled down to business as usual. At the end of this period, however, mounting concern in Britain about the balance of payments prompted two further investigations into the diplomatic service to emphasise the need for it to achieve significant economies and also to give much higher priority to commercial work. What was the impact of this thinking on the embassy in Turkey, where the market for British exports was already believed to be valuable and might be expected to become more so if—encouraged by aid from the OECD Turkey Consortium and other donors—the country joined the ranks of the developed nations?¹ Had business as usual become business above all? The short answer is: at most only occasionally and then only by the narrowest of margins.

In July 1969 the Duncan Report on Overseas Representation concluded that “In Britain’s present economic situation commercial work is the most urgent task of our overseas representatives.”² Afterwards, the permanent under-secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Denis Greenhill, remarked that this emphasis on commercial and economic work was excessive and that the report as a whole “did not in fact achieve significant change”.³ A myth has since emerged that goes even further, claiming that when the Conservatives returned to power a year later and Sir Alec Douglas-Home once more became foreign secretary, the Duncan Report was consigned to the archives.⁴ There is however little doubt, as Greenhill himself implied, that although some of Sir Val Duncan’s recommendations concerning commercial work were rejected,

¹ TNA, Country Policy Paper: Turkey, 29 July 1970, FCO9/1323.

² HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, ch. 6, para. 61(a).

³ Greenhill, *More by Accident*, p. 154; see also Gore-Booth, *With Great Truth and Respect*, pp. 391–3.

⁴ For example, Dickie, *The New Mandarins*, p. 177. The most cursory inspection of the statements of FO officials to the House of Commons Expenditure Committee in the early 1970s shows that this report was giving food for constructive thought for a long time afterwards, HCPP (HC 628), 26 Oct. 1971, pp. 122–3.

his report gave a firm push to an existing trend: commercial work was now even more fashionable than before,⁵ even though it had probably peaked before a report published in 1977 by the Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS) tried to give it a similar nudge.⁶ Against this background it is not surprising that, in thanking Sir Roderick Sarell for his annual review of Turkey for 1971, William Wilberforce of Southern European Department remarked that “Our political relations being so solid, it seems to me that the main British interest is now in the commercial field; and we will do our best in the Department to support your efforts there”.⁷

Ankara was not a commercial centre and had little else about it to recommend a visit. It had also become notorious for its health-threatening smog.⁸ So British trade missions to Turkey normally omitted the capital or favoured it with only a short stop. Nevertheless, the big projects for which British companies might tender involved the government departments in Ankara,⁹ and the commercial section of the embassy had already started to expand in the mid-1960s; by 1974 its staff had more than doubled. It included a counsellor as its head, two first secretaries,¹⁰ and two attachés. One of the latter, Mahmut Ebeoğlu, was locally engaged and the section was supported by others similarly appointed. Such officers were not only cheaper than UK-based staff but were also often preferred by some British exporters because for certain tasks they were usually more effective.¹¹ Furthermore, in 1970 the counsellor (commercial) was number two in the hierarchy, thus

⁵ “[I]n the event”, he said, “the desirable reforms evolved naturally and without too much prompting”, Greenhill, *More by Accident*, p. 154. See also Gore-Booth, *With Great Truth and Respect*, pp. 391–3; and especially Moorhouse, *The Diplomats*, pp. 300–1.

⁶ *Review of Overseas Representation*. See also Hennessy, *Whitehall*, pp. 266–73.

⁷ TNA, Wilberforce to Sarell, 17 Jan. 1972, FCO9/1606.

⁸ The smog in Ankara had become so bad that the US foreign service did not require officers with young children to serve there and in 1974 the FO reduced the length of tours for British officers similarly placed, James, *Diplomatic Moves*, pp. 100–1, 107.

⁹ TNA, H.M. Embassy, Ankara. Commercial Department. Report by Mr. W. Nicholl, October/November 1968, FCO19/68.

¹⁰ Although one of these was only “loosely attached”, James, *Diplomatic Moves*, p. 99.

¹¹ The Duncan Report (pp. 82–3) and the CPRS (paras. 6.132–3) both favoured an expansion of LE commercial officers. However, because their knowledge of British industry was bound to be relatively limited and excessive reliance on them would also make it difficult to expose home-based diplomats to commercial work, the enthusiasm for them was treated by the government with some caution, HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, pp. 27, 33.

showing that here at least—whether by accident or design—a general rule recommended in the Duncan Report had been applied.¹²

A similar increase in the emphasis on commercial work was observable at the consulate-general in Istanbul, which remained the business capital of Turkey. In 1970 the post was given a second commercial officer and in 1972 a commercial section was formally recognized for the first time in the *Diplomatic Service List*. Over the following years this section did not always retain a second officer but, as in Ankara, what it always had was “a strong set of locally engaged officers” able to communicate with middle level executives who could speak only Turkish.¹³ This was the more necessary here because it was now common for the Foreign Office to fill the position of consul-general with persons who had no previous Turkish experience and were often close to retirement (see Appendix 8).

The growth of the commercial section in Istanbul had also been encouraged by the transport situation: the old capital continued to be more quickly and comfortably reached by air than Ankara, while the poor links with the new capital made it impossible to consider running Britain’s commercial diplomacy in Istanbul from the embassy. The government’s response in 1978 to the CPRS Report might have argued that improved communications made subordinate posts less necessary,¹⁴ but this hardly applied to Turkey. “We have problems getting from Ankara to Istanbul and vice versa”, wrote Sally James, the wife of the first secretary (economic and aid), in 1974. The flights were “terrible” and the road was so dangerous that embassy staff were forbidden to drive on it. This left the train, which was comfortable but slow, and believed to be rat-infested.¹⁵

Transport was not just a house-keeping question for British diplomacy in Turkey in the 1970s. As well as having implications for its consular sections, as we shall see, not to mention its bag service, it was also an important and sometimes controversial question of commercial policy. There had already been a serious row between the two governments in the second half of 1969 and the early months of 1970

¹² HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, p. 82, para. 38.

¹³ Information kindly supplied by Jeremy Varcoe. There had been three of these in 1968, TNA, Pera House, Istanbul. J. C. Cloake, Accommodation Dept., 7 May 1968, FCO78/18.

¹⁴ HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, para. 37.

¹⁵ James, *Diplomatic Moves*, pp. 104, 122.

over air services,¹⁶ and just a few years later another Anglo-Turkish transport problem came up. This is worth looking at in detail because it not only points up the importance of the embassy's commercial work but also nicely illustrates the contribution that it made to a serious bilateral negotiation.

Trouble with Trucks

Despite the further advances in transport and telecommunications in the 1970s, which—as in the mid-nineteenth century—led in some quarters to calls for the scrapping of embassies altogether, the embassy at Ankara was as active as ever, not least in the negotiation of bilateral agreements. In the first half of the 1970s these still dealt with development loans and then, as an economic crisis in Turkey began to bite deeply, with their re-financing. Like almost all their predecessors, these agreements, which remained numerous until the mid-1980s, were signed in Ankara (see Appendix 9). Standing apart from them, however, except that it was also signed in Ankara, was the Anglo-Turkish Agreement concerning International Road Transport. The prenegotiations for this agreement began in 1973 but did not come to fruition until 1977, thereby coinciding almost exactly with the ambassadorship of Sir Horace Phillips.

In the early 1970s, prosperity in the Middle East—especially in Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states—was rising dramatically on the back of petroleum exports, and British hauliers carrying goods to feed the appetites of these countries were not alone in driving across Turkey in greatly increased numbers. With overcrowding on rail links via the USSR and congestion at ports in the region, this route was much the most attractive and the rewards were high. However, it was not without its problems, some old and some new.

Turkish roads were poor and winter weather conditions often came as a nasty surprise to British drivers. There were frequent breakdowns

¹⁶ This affair was prompted by a British bid to make Turkish Airlines use Gatwick rather than Heathrow, resulted in a retaliatory ban on BEA landings in Turkey, and was only resolved when Britain publicly capitulated in March 1970. The role of the British Embassy in it had been to underline why the Turks were so angry, negotiate a one-week delay in the introduction of the ban on BEA in order to minimise the inconvenience to its passengers, and—having failed to persuade the Turks to accept Gatwick—suggest face-saving solutions. The Turkish Ambassador in London lobbied hard for Turkish Airlines: TNA, FCO14/572-4, FCO14/698, and BT245/1386; Kunalalp, *Just a Diplomat*, pp. 120-1.

and accidents, and drivers—sometimes uninsured, carrying inadequate or forged documents, and ignorant of Turkish law—were getting into all sorts of difficulties in the interior as well as at the customs, where long queues were soon forming. Owner-drivers were particularly vulnerable to mishap but those of larger companies were by no means immune and even these companies lacked agents in Turkey to provide them with assistance. Lurid stories about their experiences began to appear in the tabloid as well as the trade press,¹⁷ and they became a major headache for the consular sections in both Istanbul and Ankara.¹⁸ A further worry was that the upsurge in traffic provided an incentive to the Turkish government to impose not only transit taxes but also quotas on vehicles, and it could do this without notice in the case of British vehicles because there was no Anglo-Turkish agreement giving them any right of entry. As early as the middle of 1973, therefore, the Road Freight Division of the Department of the Environment (DoE) in London began to think the time was ripe to sort out some of these problems—and anticipate others—by negotiating a bilateral agreement on road haulage with the Turkish government. Other European governments had either already done so or were thinking the same.

The embassy at Ankara did not initially distinguish itself in this affair. In early July 1973 the marine and transport department of the Foreign Office asked it to “sound out” the Turks on the possibility of opening negotiations between experts in the autumn but, despite repeated reminders, it was a full year before the head of the commercial section, Alan Elgar, even replied, pleading pressure of work and local political difficulties.¹⁹ This moved the highly experienced Reg Dawson, head of the road freight division in the DoE, to remark later that “Embassies normally regard these matters as of minor importance, and sometimes as a positive nuisance”.²⁰ Nevertheless, the commercial section was by now seized with the matter and proceeded with the prenegotiations: establishing that the Turkish government had no objections in principle

¹⁷ TNA, Dawson to Ball, 20 Feb. 1975, MT174/70. See also Consular Dept. (FO), Background Note. Road Haulage Problems—The Middle East Route, 18 July 1975, FCO47/755.

¹⁸ TNA, Piddington (Consul/Commercial, Istanbul) to Calmels (Consular Dept., FO), 24 Feb. 1975, MT174/70; Consular Dept. (FO), Background Note. Road Haulage Problems—The Middle East Route, 18 July 1975, FCO47/755.

¹⁹ TNA, Elgar to Pendleton (Marine and Transport Department, FCO), 11 June 1974, MT174/70.

²⁰ TNA, Dawson to T. L. Beagley (Dep. Sec, DoE), ca. end-Jan. 1975, MT174/709.

to a new agreement; supplying the DoE with intelligence on such subjects as Turkish transit regulations, tensions between the interested Turkish ministries, and similar negotiations that Turkey had conducted or was currently conducting with other countries;²¹ and agreeing with the Turkish government the procedure for substantive negotiations, which was that the DoE should submit a first draft of the proposed new agreement, and that only after the Turks had produced a formal counter-proposal should face-to-face talks take place. The embassy also sought periodically to goad the Turkish government into action when it became clear that, to the mounting alarm of the DoE, the agreement with Britain was fairly low down its order of priorities.²²

The British draft was duly submitted on 28 November 1974 but by the following March there was still no Turkish reaction. As a result, the DoE, feeling that the embassy was attaching insufficient urgency to the matter, persuaded the Foreign Office to instruct it to make a higher level approach to the Turks and urge negotiations in the summer at a venue of their choice.²³ This led to a visit to the Turkish foreign ministry on 22 April 1975 by the *chargé d'affaires*, David Lane. He was accompanied by the new commercial counsellor, Arthur Ball, who had 20 years experience of commercial diplomacy and received the OBE in 1973. To no-one's surprise the embassy deputation heard little it did not already know: Turkish roads were crumbling under the weight of the traffic they were being asked to bear; there was a queue of countries trying to negotiate agreements; and the British would just have to be patient, although they need not fear any restriction on their traffic. "The Turks road transport problems are enormous. . . . They are doing their best and any more, or high level pressure, in the near future would in my opinion do more harm than good", Ball concluded his report on this meeting to the Foreign Office.²⁴ Reassured at least by the promise

²¹ Much of this intelligence came from the periodic meetings of the commercial counsellors of the EEC embassies in Ankara: "When he calmed down, he told me that they had submitted a draft Agreement to the Turks in 1972 and were still without the Turkish comments even though they had kept up steady pressure ever since", TNA, Elgar to Dawson [on his German opposite number], 16 Aug. 1974, MT174/70.

²² TNA, Elgar to Dawson, 28 Nov. and Dawson to Elgar, 6 Dec. 1974, MT174/70.

²³ TNA, Beagley to Maitland, 1; Maitland to Beagley 11; and Callaghan to Ankara, 15 Apr. 1975, MT174/70.

²⁴ TNA, Ball to Chambers (Marine and Transport Dept., FCO), 22 Apr. 1975, MT174/70.

on restrictions, the DoE was content to leave the embassy “to keep an eye on matters” for the time being.²⁵

Shortly after this all the EEC commercial counsellors in Ankara undertook to help each other in negotiating their individual road haulage agreements with the Turks.²⁶ But by September there was still no sign of movement for the British and the tailback of trucks at the Iranian frontier was 12 miles long.²⁷ Then in October the embassy had to inform the DoE that, as predicted, Turkey proposed to introduce new road regulations and transit taxes. These would nullify all existing bilateral agreements, including an Anglo-Turkish agreement of 1968 that dealt just with vehicle taxes (see Appendix 9), so that many of these would need to be re-negotiated as well, thus lengthening the queue of negotiating hopefuls still further. “I fear that we are further back than ever”, Ball told the DoE.²⁸

In December the British commercial counsellor reported a rumour that the Turks, despairing of the task and with winter making road conditions “even more chaotic than before”, had decided to produce a model road haulage agreement to which all interested states would be invited to subscribe.²⁹ A week later, on Christmas Eve 1975, he telegraphed news of the expected Turkish announcement. The most notable features of this were new licensing arrangements, quotas on trips, maximum axle weights and truck dimensions, fuel taxes, and tolls for road maintenance—the latter falling more heavily on those countries without existing road haulage agreements with Turkey. All charges were to be paid in convertible foreign currency, and control points manned by officials with powers to impose large fines on miscreant drivers were to be established in the interior as well as at the frontiers. The new regulations were to come into effect as early as 7 January 1976. Although *Commercial Motor*, predictable in both sentiment and metaphor, called it “highway robbery”,³⁰ the embassy’s commercial section thought the Turkish action reasonable in light of local conditions. As a result, it asked to be instructed only to protest on the

²⁵ TNA, Beagley to Maitland, 1 May 1975, MT174/70.

²⁶ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 12 June 1975, MT174/70.

²⁷ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 11 Sept. 1975, MT174/112.

²⁸ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 13 Oct. 1975, MT174/112.

²⁹ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 18 Dec. 1975.

³⁰ 9 Jan. 1976.

point of discrimination in tolls against countries like Britain which lacked a bilateral road haulage agreement.³¹

The DoE, seeming to feel that the embassy had come down with a bout of localitis, was at first inclined to be less understanding about the new regulations and was angry at the shortness of notice given before they were to come into effect. Nevertheless, Britain's hand was a weak one: a threat to take its trucks elsewhere would hardly move the Turks since reducing the heavy traffic on their roads was as much in their minds as raising revenue; such a threat was in any case incredible; and, in contrast to Germany, Britain could not threaten retaliation in kind since Turkish traffic through the United Kingdom was non-existent.³² In general, therefore, the DoE reluctantly accepted the advice of the embassy's commercial section. Indeed, it authorised Ball to negotiate a deal with the Turkish foreign ministry, where fortunately he had established a good relationship with the head of the department of bilateral relations, Behiç Hazar.³³ This he duly did: in return for prompt acceptance of the new regulations by Britain as amending the 1968 agreement, he obtained the *quid pro quo* that Turkey would treat this agreement as a *general* road haulage agreement (although in reality it was only a *partial* one), and thus charge British drivers the lower rate of road tolls. Ball also secured a two months' stay of execution before this would come into effect. Turkey would also 're-negotiate' the 'road haulage agreement' with Britain within 12 months. The deal was confirmed by an exchange of notes in early February and was to remain in force until 15 March 1977 unless re-negotiated earlier.³⁴ Arthur Ball, who was by this time only half-jokingly describing himself as 'Counsellor (Road Haulage)!', was told that the British road hauliers' associations were grateful to him for getting the best result possible in the circumstances.³⁵

³¹ TNA, Dawson to Frost (Freight Transport Association), and Ball to Dawson, 29 Dec. 1975, MT174/112.

³² TNA, Dawson to Ball, 3, and Ball to Dawson, 4 Feb. 1976, MT174/112.

³³ Hazar, who had earlier spent five years (believed to be happy ones) at the Turkish Embassy in London, was described by Ball as "competent, friendly and helpful" but hindered by obstructiveness in other ministries, TNA, Ball to Dawson, 6 Jan. 1976, MT174/112; Dawson to Lazarus, 22 Aug. 1977, MT174/140.

³⁴ TNA, Dawson to Ball, 30 Dec. 1975; Ball to Dawson, 6, 9, 27 Jan. and 6 Feb. 1976, MT174/112.

³⁵ TNA, Dawson to Ball, 3, and Ball to Dawson, 4 Feb. 1976, MT174/112.

With Turkey now taking a tougher attitude to foreign hauliers, the countries that were now managing to negotiate new road haulage agreements found themselves getting poor terms, especially smaller quotas of journeys than those for which they had hoped. This caused a re-think in the Department of Transport³⁶ since no quota of any kind was imposed on the British traffic and yet it still enjoyed the lower tax rate. Indeed, by late 1976 the department was beginning to think that it was better off with the status quo and so should not only relax the pressure for negotiation of a full agreement but also angle for a six months' extension of the existing, interim one.³⁷ Ball was instructed accordingly, and in an exchange of letters of 11 March 1977 secured this objective as well.³⁸

However, Ball, who had at first agreed that it was now in Britain's interests to stall the negotiations, was soon having second thoughts. On 31 March he told Dawson that:

This is a dangerous argument. When the Turks reach the point of final exasperation with the international transit trade, countries like Britain, with nothing to offer in return, are likely to find themselves holding the short end of the quota stick. In my opinion the sooner we can bring the Turks to the negotiating table the better. However I am observing the instructions we have received not to press them.³⁹

Although maintaining that the recent policy of stalling had secured the "short-term objective of getting through the best part of 1977 without being subjected to a quota", the Department of Transport now accepted Ball's view without reservation. Pending negotiation of a new agreement, it also authorised him to get the best terms he could (it had been his own suggestion) on the question of return loads to the UK, which the Turks had recently refused to allow British trucks to carry.⁴⁰ It was also left to his judgement as to when and with what weight to make representations about the overcharging of British drivers that was now occurring at Turkish border posts.⁴¹

³⁶ In September 1976 Transport had regained its separate departmental status from the elephantine 'super department', the DoE.

³⁷ TNA, Rigby to Dawson, 30 Nov. 1976, MT174/112.

³⁸ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 17 Mar. 1977, MT174/112.

³⁹ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 31 Mar. 1977, MT174/112.

⁴⁰ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 31 Mar., and Hampson (Transport) to Ball, 17 Apr. 1977, MT174/112.

⁴¹ TNA, Turner (FO) to Stobart (Trade), 14 Apr. 1977, MT174/112. Copies of the official tables on which the charges were supposed to be calculated, which had been

In a little over a fortnight Ball had obtained an assurance from the Turks that negotiations would take place in late June or early July but later they agreed to postpone them by two months when this proved impossible for the British. The Department of Transport's Dawson told Ball that negotiations of this sort normally took two meetings to conclude and, interestingly, that he would prefer the first to be in Ankara and the second—and decisive one—in London. "We find playing at home has a psychological and practical advantage", he had told him earlier.⁴² Being in no position to argue, however, he would defer to the Turks.⁴³ In the event, they left him no choice, informing Ball at the start of June that they would submit a draft agreement that would be handed simultaneously to other countries and that they doubted if more than one meeting would be necessary. It was taken for granted that this would be in Ankara. Dawson thought all this ominous.⁴⁴

Matters then went quiet and it was the embassy's role to keep reminding the Turks every two to three days of the need for a firm date for the negotiations and a copy of their promised draft.⁴⁵ In the end, in mid-July, ambassadorial intervention at the foreign ministry was considered advisable.⁴⁶ Sir Horace Phillips had left on 1 June, so this task fell to his replacement, Sir Derek Dodson, who had little patience with bureaucrats but was highly professional and a man of great charm.⁴⁷ This seems to have produced movement; at any rate, only a few days later Ball was able to cable the news that a date had been agreed for the start of the negotiations and that the Turkish draft was on its way to London.

The negotiations took place in Ankara between 15 and 16 August. On learning that he could not get a direct flight, Dawson had contemplated travelling from Istanbul to Ankara by road "in order to get some idea at first hand of conditions" but—to the relief of all concerned—had

obtained "on a strictly personal basis" by a locally engaged member of the embassy's commercial section, revealed that the overcharging was "monstrous". However, Ball was by no means convinced that the British drivers were always innocent parties in this, TNA, Ball to Dawson, 8 July 1977, MT174/140.

⁴² TNA, Dawson to Ball, 6 Feb. 1976, MT174/112.

⁴³ TNA, Dawson to Ball, 23 May 1977, MT174/140.

⁴⁴ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 1 June and Dawson to Edwards, 13 June 1977, MT174/140.

⁴⁵ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 4 July 1977, MT174/140.

⁴⁶ TNA, Ball to Dawson, 14 July 1977, MT174/140.

⁴⁷ 'Sir Derek Dodson' (obit. by Sir Timothy Daunt), *The Independent*, 23 Nov. 2003.

found his diary could not accommodate the plan.⁴⁸ Accordingly he arrived in the Turkish capital by air, with a delegation whose large size he justified by stressing the complexity and importance of the task ahead.⁴⁹ Ball, whose health was not good, did not regard himself as a transport specialist, and had actually never met Dawson in person, had been diffident about joining the delegation; nevertheless, he was included as well.

The attitude of the Turks to their draft agreement was ‘take it or leave it’. With British aid to Turkey having effectively dried up there was also no prospect of any horse-trading. It was therefore clear to Dawson that if he was to achieve his main aims—preserving the existing low taxes enjoyed by British hauliers and obtaining a quota that would meet their transit needs—the essence of the Turkish draft would have to be accepted. Nevertheless, there were legal problems with the drafting and disquiet at the inclusion of passenger transport in the draft, and if possible Dawson hoped to get changes under these heads.⁵⁰

The negotiations, in which the British confronted a Turkish delegation led by Behiç Hazar, ran much more smoothly than Dawson had expected, and an agreement was initialled at the last meeting. Although it also covered passenger transport, the substance of this section reflected no more than the status quo. The important points were that on transit traffic for goods a quota of 7000 journeys would be imposed for 1978, although the British would have gone as low as 5000;⁵¹ while the concession on taxation would continue—provided the agreement was formally signed by 15 September, when the temporary taxation agreement expired. Any changes to the quota on transit journeys would be determined on an annual basis by either a joint committee (meeting alternately in Britain and Turkey) or correspondence. The joint committee would also deal with any problems arising from the application of the agreement.⁵²

⁴⁸ TNA, Dawson to Ball, 24 June and 28 July 1977, MT174/140.

⁴⁹ In addition to Dawson and Ball, this included another member of the road freight division of the DoTpt; the head of finance, national taxation division, DoTpt; and representatives of the two trade associations—the Road Haulage Association, and the Freight Transport Association: TNA, Dawson to Ball, 28 July, and Hampson to Cockram, 1 Aug. 1977, MT174/140.

⁵⁰ TNA, UK/Turkey Bilateral Agreement—15 & 16 August 1977. Brief. MT174/140.

⁵¹ The traffic had actually been diminishing of late.

⁵² Ball suggested that an item for the first meeting of the joint committee should be the outstanding claims concerning overcharging, about which he had been reminding Hazar but so far with no success, TNA, Ball to Hampson, 17 Aug. 1977, MT174/140.

Dawson was quick in his private praise of the contribution made to this success by the embassy's commercial counsellor, not only in the preparatory stage but also during the negotiation itself.⁵³ The embassy's work, however, was not yet over, not least because the issue of the drafting of the agreement had clearly been fudged in the haste of the negotiations.

As the Department of Transport had feared, the Foreign Office's treaty department and legal advisers were nervous about some inconsistencies and sloppy language in the initialled draft, and on 25 August Ball was warned by a Foreign Office telegram that he would have to clear certain "textual amendments" with the Turks prior to signing.⁵⁴ This prospect alarmed the commercial counsellor, who replied that it was the understanding of the Turks, and indeed of himself, that the negotiations were complete and that the initialled agreement constituted the signature copy. Dawson, he said, had also understood this, although Dawson had pointed out that "our signature copy would have to be retyped on the correct treaty paper", to which the Turks had not objected. If re-typing on the correct paper turned out to be re-drafting, they would regard the Foreign Office attitude as an attempt to re-open the negotiations, and the consequences, Ball advised, would be dire.⁵⁵

In light of this warning, and with pressure from Transport, the Foreign Office came close to capitulating. It cabled to Ankara that it needed three changes in the text at the "minimum" but in the same breath added that "If you are unable to obtain any changes, we can reluctantly agree to signature as soon as possible and preferably this week". It added that if there was a risk of overcharging British drivers at frontier posts even if the agreement was signed before the deadline of 15 September, the embassy had the authority to ask for an extension of the existing agreement for long enough to guard against it.⁵⁶

On Wednesday 7 September Dodson told the Foreign Office that Ball had already telephoned Hazar and received a predictably dusty response: the four day Bayram holiday would start on 14 September and if the agreement was not signed by Friday 9 September there was no legal way to prevent the higher tax rate coming into force on 15

⁵³ TNA, Dawson to Lazarus, 22 Aug. 1977.

⁵⁴ TNA, Brown (FO) to Ball, 25 Aug. 1977, MT174/140.

⁵⁵ TNA, Ball to Brown, 27 Aug. 1977, MT174/140; see also Ball to Dawson, 1 Sept. 1977, MT174/140.

⁵⁶ TNA, FO to Ankara Embassy, 6 Sept. 1977, MT174/140.

September. “We will do our best” to get the desired changes, Dodson said, but concluded: “Under the circumstances however I propose to sign one way or the other on Friday”.⁵⁷

The Foreign Office had, however, put the embassy on its mettle and on the following morning, 8 September, Ball followed up his phone call to Hazar with a personal visit. The result of this was that while the Turkish official flatly refused to make the terminological changes wanted by the Foreign Office, he conceded some minor editorial adjustments and also suggested that the objection to the definition of ‘vehicle’—which he accepted—could be met by an exchange of letters made simultaneously with the signature of the main document. The Turkish official also undertook immediately on signature to inform frontier posts that British trucks should continue to enjoy the lower tax rate; this was obviously an important practical point.⁵⁸ The agreement and the side letters were duly signed in Ankara on Friday 9 September, provisionally entering into force immediately and definitively on 5 May 1978.⁵⁹ Shortly afterwards, apparently in part for health reasons, Arthur Ball left Ankara to take up the highly desirable post of consul-general in Perth.⁶⁰

Still a ‘comprehensive post’

In view of the priority that it had assigned to commercial work, the Duncan Report of 1969 had argued that British diplomacy should henceforth concentrate its efforts more on the regions containing its major markets, namely ‘Western Europe plus North America’. Only in the ‘Area of Concentration’, Duncan added, should Britain have ‘comprehensive posts’, that is those designed to exert political influence as

⁵⁷ TNA, Dodson to FO, 7 September 1977, MT174/140.

⁵⁸ TNA, Dodson to FO, 8 Sept. 1977, MT174/140.

⁵⁹ HCPP (Cmnd. 7276), 9 Sept. 1977. Subsequent distractions at home for the Turkish government and an end to the boom in transit traffic meant that over the next few years neither party attached high priority to following up the agreement by means of the newly created joint commission. The first meeting was not scheduled until February 1980 and was then cancelled at the last minute by the Turks. Thereafter, certain issues were thought to require discussion by the British but it was only after “prodding hard” by the embassy in Ankara that the Turks were brought to agree to a meeting, in London, in January 1981, TNA, Fitt to Dawson, 15 July 1980, MT174/178.

⁶⁰ In 1980, aged only 57, he retired from the diplomatic service, eventually taking a history degree at the University of East Anglia and becoming a school teacher.

well as deal with commercial and other matters; for the 'Outer Area', 'selective posts' would have to do.⁶¹

In 1969 Turkey took less than 0.5 per cent of Britain's total exports, and whether—if pushed—the Duncan Committee would have included it in the Area of Concentration, or even classed it as one of those countries in the Outer Area requiring close attention for special reasons, cannot be said for certain.⁶² In any event, the geographical categories of its report proved controversial and the Foreign Office rejected them as too rigid.⁶³ It is not surprising, then, that as well as its commercial work the embassy at Ankara continued to have its hands full with political, information, defence, cultural and consular preoccupations as well; and later, as we shall see, it also had to give great attention to drugs and immigration questions. Its main functions also remained the responsibility of clearly demarcated 'sections', despite the inflexible use of staff and barriers to communication which 'sectionalism' was believed by the CPRS to encourage.⁶⁴ In short, Ankara remained one of the most comprehensive of comprehensive posts.

As it turned out, too, the marked growth of the commercial section in the early 1970s did not continue. In fact, the counsellor (commercial) was never at number two again in the embassy hierarchy, and between the late 1970s and mid-1980s the section shrank to the point at which it was represented among UK-based staff only by a first secretary dealing with economic as well as commercial affairs;⁶⁵ by contrast, the chancery had a staff of eleven. This shift in the balance of work in the embassy was not just a reflection of an increase in political difficulties caused by the intervention in Cyprus in 1974 and Turkish resentment at the reaction to this of its allies.⁶⁶ (This had also led in 1977 to two high-level visits to Ankara that the embassy, with the need for props for its

⁶¹ HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969.

⁶² Australia, South Africa and Japan were mentioned as Outer Area exceptions, and none resembled Turkey in the latter's dependence on development aid, HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, p. 12, para. 9.

⁶³ Moorhouse, *The Diplomats*, p. 29.

⁶⁴ *Review of Overseas Representation*, paras. 19.32–3. See also HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, ch. 10 and p. 99, para. 10; HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, p. 64, 19.12.

⁶⁵ The section still contained two or three experienced and effective locally engaged commercial officers. What was probably a small amount of the section's work had also been taken over by the EU mission in Ankara. Information kindly supplied by Jeremy Varcoe.

⁶⁶ In February 1975 the US Congress placed an arms embargo on Turkey.

propaganda work as ever in mind, thought long overdue.)⁶⁷ It was also a result of a decline in the attractions of the Turkish market to British exporters as Turkey plunged into a massive balance of payments deficit and was brought to the verge of bankruptcy.⁶⁸

It is perhaps not entirely coincidental either that the shrinkage of the commercial section in Ankara followed publication in 1978 of the government's reaction to the CPRS Report. This reaction contained clear echoes of the earlier Plowden Report and reflected the view of the youthful Dr David Owen, who had taken over the Foreign Office following the sudden death of Anthony Crosland early in the previous year, that it was time for Britain to shake off its economic blues and adopt a more self-confident tone in world affairs.⁶⁹ Commercial work was obviously important, the response acknowledged, but this did "not mean that export promotion was a pre-eminent requirement of overseas representation in all countries of the world". Other interests, political as well as security, still had to be priorities, "both in their own right and as an influence on our economic fortunes".⁷⁰ The size of posts and the balance of their work needed to be judged on a country-by-country basis.

Although Ankara remained very much a comprehensive embassy, this did not mean that its other sections were immune to probing for economies. Here as at other posts some cutbacks had been suffered in the defence section, which was particularly expensive, following a general economy drive on service attachés that had been demanded by the Treasury in 1966. The assistant naval attaché post at Istanbul had been closed,⁷¹ and the ranks of the naval and air attaché posts reduced. At the same time the military attaché, whose rank of brigadier was equivalent

⁶⁷ TNA, FCO9/2681–4.

⁶⁸ Official guarantees of credits for Turkish purchases of British exports by the ECGD were actually withdrawn in 1977, TNA, AR 1976, para. 17, FCO9/2671; Visit by the PUS to Ankara, Athens and Nicosia, 18–24 Oct. 1977. Brief on the Turkish Economy, Anglo-Turkish Trade and ECGD Policy, FCO9/2682; UK/Turkey Trade, Dept. of Trade, 9 Jan. 1981, MT174/178. See also Sir Timothy Daunt's obituary on Sir Derek Dodson, *The Independent*, 28 Nov. 2003.

⁶⁹ Owen, *Time to Declare*, pp. 262, 266.

⁷⁰ HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, para. 5.

⁷¹ In early 1966 there was a drive by the Turkish government against all diplomatic attachés in Istanbul, reportedly because of exasperation at their heavy involvement in espionage. The assistant naval attaché was therefore due to lose his diplomatic immunity at the end of September and so would have had to be removed anyway, *The Times*, 19 May 1966.

in Turkey to a one-star general and was retained to preserve his standing with the all-important Turkish army, had been re-styled the ‘defence and military attaché’, thereby indicating that he was responsible to the ambassador for general defence as well as army matters.⁷² This was a straw in the wind because, following this, the Duncan Report had urged that wherever possible one ‘tri-service attaché’ should be employed and more use made of multiple accreditation.⁷³

Despite the fact that Sir Roger Allen had in 1968 been prepared to sacrifice his naval attaché, the defence section of the embassy continued to have representatives of all three services until the end of the 1970s. This reflected the continuing strength of single service feeling in the MoD and a belief that naval intelligence from the eastern Mediterranean, which was already poor, could not bear the loss of the naval attaché.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, following further pressure on the service attaché budget from the CPRS,⁷⁵ in 1981 the Ankara section finally lost one of its posts. Thereafter, at roughly three to four year intervals, the navy and air force took it in turns to send an officer to Ankara to represent them both. It might have been thought that the value of the defence section for insights into military thinking in Ankara would have been underlined in 1997, when the Turkish military became “completely incommunicado” to visiting diplomats, including Sir David Hannay, Britain’s recently appointed special representative for Cyprus.⁷⁶ This was not true in respect of its thinking about Cyprus but it may have been the case regarding other questions.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, although in 2001 a first secretary (political/military) became a fixture in the embassy, in 2004 the defence section proper suffered another minor blow when

⁷² In view of the importance of the army in Turkey it was accepted as inevitable that an army officer should always hold the senior position in the defence section. Informally, the air attaché came next because of the importance of the over-flying question. On the defence section generally, see TNA, FO371/190905, and Allen to Crowe, 2 Apr. 1968, FCO46/228.

⁷³ HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, pp. 144–7.

⁷⁴ TNA, Allen to Crowe, 25 and 26 Mar. [the last personal]; Pritchard to DMSI, and DI 1 to DI 22, 4 Apr.; Peck to Allen, 19 June, 1968, FCO46/228.

⁷⁵ *Review of Overseas Representation*, ch. 8; HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, paras. 49–50.

⁷⁶ Hannay, *Cyprus*, pp. 25, 62.

⁷⁷ “I am afraid the Defence Section of the Embassy was no more able than anyone else to penetrate the formulation of Turkey’s policy towards Cyprus by the Turkish military”, e-interview with Lord Hannay, Sept, 2008.

the rank of the defence and military attaché was finally reduced from brigadier to colonel.

What of the cultural and information sections? The embassy had for some time believed that their work was of greater importance than ever, for in Turkey “the influential few” (a phrase popularised in Whitehall by the Drogheda Report) were increasingly nationalistic, left-leaning and inclined to support a more independent foreign policy; and the promotion of the English language by the British Council was believed to be the most efficient long-term way to keep them onside.⁷⁸ The Duncan Report had also been generally enthusiastic about the British Council, whose staff in Ankara, still part of the mission, grew to a peak of seven members in 1988, when it quite dwarfed the commercial section.⁷⁹

While also being in favour of propaganda in general, the same Duncan Report thought that information sections were too large. As a result, it recommended that the commercial section of comprehensive missions should handle commercial publicity while a “modernized version” of the traditional press attaché, effectively attached to the chancery and sometimes sharing in its ordinary work, would suffice for the political work.⁸⁰ This had been broadly accepted by the government,⁸¹ and was clearly reflected in the pattern of embassy organization that evolved in Ankara. Here the information section, which contained five or six locally engaged staff and was headed briefly in the mid-1970s by the highly effective UK-based but Turkish-speaking Jeremy Varcoe, struggled on until 1980 and then disappeared altogether. It had stepped up commercial publicity, although it shared responsibility for it with the commercial section and remained chiefly preoccupied with the political field;⁸² it continued to attach great value to personal contacts

⁷⁸ TNA, Allen to Stewart, Turkey: Information Policy Report, 5 Aug. 1968, BW61/41.

⁷⁹ The Duncan Report thought that British Council staff should normally work from missions as cultural attachés. This was more economical and likely to facilitate coordination of their activities with the embassy without significantly impairing such reputation for independence as the Council already enjoyed, HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, pp. 106, 111–12. However, the government later noted that separate Council offices in certain countries not only made them more approachable but also easier to keep open following a severance of diplomatic relations, HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, para. 57.

⁸⁰ HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, pp. 99–100, 102.

⁸¹ *Review of Overseas Representation*, ch. 14; HCPP (Cmnd. 7308), Aug. 1978, paras. 45–8.

⁸² The information officer was also the British representative on CENTO’s counter-subversion committee.

with opinion leaders.⁸³ In 1989 a second secretary was asked to take on information as well as political work, and this established the pattern, although occasionally two officers were required to hold a part-time information brief and occasionally there was no-one at all.

Already in 1964 the Plowden Report had noted that consular work would need more attention in British missions because of the greatly increased numbers of British subjects travelling abroad in recent years.⁸⁴ This particularly affected Turkey, where Istanbul and points east were becoming major destinations for students;⁸⁵ these were followed by truck drivers in the 1970s, as we have already seen; and since then the country has become an orthodox and increasingly popular tourist destination.

Like the information section, the consular section of the Ankara embassy was generally overseen by one diplomatic officer and relied very much—perhaps more—on loyal and experienced locally engaged staff, “who could open doors when diplomats would have been powerless”.⁸⁶ In the last few years numerous officers specialising in drugs and, above all, immigration have been added (see p. 255 below).

In the late 1980s, during the period when Sir Timothy Daunt was ambassador, the consular network in the provinces also enjoyed a marked resurgence. Management of the post at Izmir, which in 1981 had been made a salaried post once more, was transferred from Istanbul to Ankara and its facilities upgraded.⁸⁷ Already in the late 1970s—over the resistance of the Foreign Office—the embassy had managed to

⁸³ James, *Diplomatic Moves*, p. 110; TNA, Phillips to Brinson, 7 Aug. and min. of Gaydon (Guidance and Information Policy Dept., FO), 21 Nov. 1973, FCO26/1317; Turkey: Information Policy Report for the Year ended June 1974, FCO26/1536. The information section survived for so long partly because of the need to manage Hyde in Istanbul, where “the major information work” was carried out, and partly because the chancery had already been asked to take on other work, including labour affairs, TNA, min. of Edes, 14 Sept. 1973, FCO26/1317.

⁸⁴ HCPP (Cmnd. 2276), Feb. 1964, paras. 21, 283.

⁸⁵ In 1966 the author, with two fellow undergraduates from the University of Durham, was among them.

⁸⁶ Jeremy Varcoe to the author, 2 July 2008. At the time of the consular inspection in 1975 the section, which was only just coping, consisted of a second secretary and consul who did not speak Turkish, and two LE staff, TNA, British Embassy, Ankara: Report . . . , Oct. 1975, FCO47/755.

⁸⁷ When Izmir became a salaried vice-consulate in 1981 it was placed in the charge of a locally engaged officer of Maltese extraction, A. Willie Buttigieg, who was eventually promoted to consul and awarded the MBE—and was still British Consul in Izmir in 2008. His post was also regarded as a commercial one, with one member of staff working on commercial matters, TNA, British Consulate-General, Istanbul. Report . . . Oct.

revive the honorary consulate at Iskenderun,⁸⁸ and at the end of the 1980s similar posts were opened at Antalya, Bodrum, Marmaris, and even once more at Mersin, where they were placed in the charge of Turkish nationals with British connections. In 1998 another was added at Bursa. Iskenderun, it is true, was closed in 1999 and Mersin survived only until 2003. Nevertheless, new posts were later opened at Fethiye and Adana, so that at the time of writing (2008) there are six provincial posts in Turkey. A recent trend has also been to provide some honorary consuls with paid administrative assistance.

Drugs and Immigrants

Drugs had long been a problem for Western diplomats in Turkey, where opium poppies were legally grown on a major scale for medical purposes but some production 'leaked' into the illicit market. Intense international pressure, especially from the United States, eventually led to Turkish agreement in 1971 to ban production altogether in return for US-funded compensation to the farmers, although Bulent Ecevit rescinded the decision in 1974. Fortunately a technical breakthrough in the extraction of the raw opium gum soon afterwards made illegal leakage much easier to prevent and the problem did not become acute again.⁸⁹ What later did become serious, however, was the use of Turkey as a major illegal transit and refining route for drugs produced to the east, particularly in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran—the 'Golden Crescent'; as also its use as a centre for the money laundering associated with this trade. By the 1990s if not before, most of the heroin arriving in Britain came via Turkey and involved Turkish drug gangs operating within the growing Turkish diaspora in Europe.⁹⁰

To begin with, the Turkish authorities showed relatively little interest in combating the illegal passage of Europe-bound drugs through their territory, for Turks themselves were rarely users. This produced much criticism from Western law-enforcement agencies, and in the early

1975. Section 6A. Honorary Consulate at Izmir, FCO47/755; HCPP, FAC 5th Report, 27 June 2000, p. 41; *Turkish Daily News*, 16 Aug. 2008; *Levantine Testimony* 37.

⁸⁸ TNA, Moberly (PPD) to Chief Inspector, 5 Jan. 1976, FCO47/755.

⁸⁹ Spain, *In Those Days*, pp. 114–15; Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000*, p. 154.

⁹⁰ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Memorandum from the FCO on UK-Turkey Relations, Jan. 2002, Ev 59; *The Times*, 21 Aug. 2006.

1990s Britain—among other states—began to offer financial assistance to Turkey for a campaign against the traffic.⁹¹ However, it was only with the improvement in the political atmosphere that followed the decision of the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 to accept Turkey as a candidate to join the European Union that Turkish co-operation in tackling illegal drugs smuggling really improved.⁹²

Shortly after the good news from Helsinki it was acknowledged for the first time that a ‘Drugs Liaison Officer’ (DLO) had been attached to the Ankara embassy, and in the following year that he had been joined by another.⁹³ In 2003 or early 2004 they were publicly reinforced by the appointment of three more at the consulate-general in Istanbul.⁹⁴ However, DLOs, who were also being employed by other EU countries and the USA, were usually intelligence officers from customs and excise and sometimes from the police, and there was understandable official reticence about revealing their names and precise locations.⁹⁵ In fact, they had existed in growing numbers in many posts in Europe since the 1980s and it seems clear that their quiet arrival at the British posts in Ankara and Istanbul pre-dated the turn of the millennium; it seems equally clear that their numbers exceeded those publicly acknowledged later.⁹⁶

What did the DLOs do? Chiefly, they gathered intelligence on likely drug shipments to Europe but they also had numerous secondary tasks. Among these were helping to coordinate Turco-British operations against the drugs processors and traffickers, which included the identification of key figures via ‘controlled deliveries’ after illegal move-

⁹¹ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Report, para. 112.

⁹² HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Report, para. 8.

⁹³ With the rank of first and second secretary respectively, *DS List 2001* and *2002*. In 2001 the FO reported a total of 64 British DLOs posted at 52 British diplomatic missions overseas, HCPP (HC 5110), Apr. 2001, p. 54.

⁹⁴ Each of these was given the rank of consul, *DS List 2004* and *2005*.

⁹⁵ HCPP (HC 370), 8 Nov. 1989: Vol. II, Mins. of Evidence, paras. 61–2, 689; and HCPP (363), 20 July 1990: Vol. I, Report, p. viii; Vol. II, Mins. of Evidence, para. 116.

⁹⁶ At least one was in place in early 1999 to help with a ‘controlled delivery’ of a precursor chemical originating in Romania, which led to the arrest by the Turks of the traffickers, HCPP (HC 478), paras. 92, 175–7; and as early as March 2002 the foreign secretary, Jack Straw, stated that “we have *six* liaison officers in Turkey tackling the drugs trade and other manifestations of organised crime” (emph. added), HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Evidence, Opening Statement by the Foreign Secretary, 13 Mar. 2002. MI6 was also involved in the campaign against the illegal drugs trade and, as usual, probably also had officers in these posts, *The Times*, 21 Aug. 2006.

ments had been detected;⁹⁷ liaising with the DLOs of other countries in Turkey; and promoting regional cooperation against the drugs trade.⁹⁸ Presumably they also helped to arrange the drugs-related technical assistance and training financed by Britain;⁹⁹ and kept an eye on the spending of drugs-related financial assistance.¹⁰⁰ The DLOs in Turkey were also probably no different from their colleagues elsewhere in frequently being called on for assistance by police forces at home for practical help on non-drugs crimes.¹⁰¹

The work of these officers worldwide was obviously of great importance and its effectiveness was regularly praised by both their home departments and by the House of Commons. As elsewhere, it was therefore extremely useful for them to find bases in the British diplomatic posts at Ankara and Istanbul.¹⁰² Attachment to these posts with ranks carrying full diplomatic or consular immunity gave these officers not only more security but also administrative support and secure communications. It also facilitated coordination of their actions with official policy.¹⁰³

Turkey was not only a major transit route to Britain and other EU states for drugs but also for illegal migrants coming chiefly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Syria. In the late 1990s their numbers increased dramatically. Criminal gangs were also involved in this, as in the trafficking of women and children from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. The United States government had placed Turkey in Tier 3, the lowest rank in terms of compliance

⁹⁷ HCPP (HC 478), 25 May 1999, paras. 92, 175–7.

⁹⁸ In February 2005 a DLO from the Ankara embassy attended a regional conference at Mashad in Iran sponsored by the UN and Iran's anti-narcotics police. Meanwhile, the senior DLO, also at the conference, had been shifted to the British Embassy in Tehran, a move no doubt designed in part to promote the long-sought improvement in Turco-Iranian anti-drugs cooperation, Sixth International Conference of Drug Liaison Officers, 5–7 Feb. 2005, Mashad, Islamic Rep. of Iran. Report of the Conference.

⁹⁹ This was a generally accepted role for DLOs, HCPP (HC 318), 23 Oct. 2001, p. 41.

¹⁰⁰ For example, the Turkish Academy Against Drugs and Organised Crime received £500,000 from the FO Drugs and Crime Fund in 2001–2, FO to FAC, 28 Nov. 2002, HCPP (HC 116), 18 Dec. 2003, Ev. 3.

¹⁰¹ HCPP (HC 363), 20 July 1990: Vol. I, Report, p. xl.

¹⁰² HCPP (363), 20 July 1990: Vol. I, Report, p. xli.

¹⁰³ Other countries followed the same practice; see for example, Special Agent Harry Felecos Lecture, US Drugs Enforcement Administration: Museum Lecture Series, 16 Mar. 2004, <http://www.deamuseum.org> [accessed 26 Aug. 2008].

with the standards laid down in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.¹⁰⁴ On top of this, many Turkish nationals (chiefly Kurds wanting political asylum but including a growing number of university educated professionals chasing employment) had been arriving in Britain since the early 1980s, in late 1988 rising in such numbers that on 23 June 1989 the Home Office had been forced to impose a visa requirement on all Turks seeking entry to the country. This was the first time that such a requirement had been imposed on Turkish nationals since 1952 and had a dramatic effect on both the embassy and the consulate-general: visa and entry certificate officers (many from the Home Office) arrived from London in numbers, and temporary buildings sprang up in both compounds; there were also serious teething problems, and eventually the sifting operation was concentrated in Istanbul.¹⁰⁵

In the run-up to the European Council meeting at Seville in June 2002 the British prime minister, Tony Blair, was among the most vociferous leaders calling for strong measures to stem illegal migration and asylum applications, including further pressure for action on source and transit countries. In November, Turkey was one of the four countries added to the list of those with which the Commission was authorised to try to negotiate readmission agreements.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, opinion in the EU was turning increasingly to the decision which would have to be taken by December 2004 on whether or not to begin accession negotiations with Turkey. Britain was a strong supporter of this but Turkey's admission to full membership of the EU conjured up the prospect—however remote in practice—of Europe's borders becoming even more porous at this critical position. Against this background, it is hardly surprising that illegal immigration became a major preoccupation of the embassy in the first years of the new millennium.

¹⁰⁴ This meant that there were 'significant numbers' of victims of this sort of people-trafficking in Turkey (a country of destination as well as transit), and that its government neither complied with the standards laid down in the act nor was making significant efforts to do so, US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/> [accessed 3 Sept. 2008].

¹⁰⁵ Information kindly supplied by Sir Timothy Daunt; House of Commons Debates, 6 June 1989, Written Answers, cols. 45–6 (Douglas Hurd).

¹⁰⁶ Kirişçi, 'Reconciling refugee protection with combating irregular migration'; and 'Turkey'. See also 'Readmission agreements', Rapid Press Releases, *Europa*, 5 Oct. 2005; *Turkish Daily News*, 19 Dec. 2006.

One of the main tasks for the embassy on this front was—as with drugs—to encourage the Turks to curb these flows by the provision of advice and practical assistance. It had been hoped to appoint an ‘immigration liaison officer’ (ILO) to Ankara in 2002, although he appears not to have arrived until the following year.¹⁰⁷ ILOs were a relatively new kind of attaché but were by this time being heavily deployed, particularly on the main people-smuggling routes in central and southern Europe.¹⁰⁸ Their main functions were to exchange information with local law enforcement agencies with a view to identifying the traffickers and their methods, organizing training sessions for consular officers involved in entry clearance, and liaising with the ILOs who at this time were also being appointed by other EU countries.¹⁰⁹

There is no reason to suppose that the ILO attached to the British Embassy at Ankara did anything different from his colleagues elsewhere. It is, however, unlikely—at least while he was in the embassy—that he contributed to the bilateral readmission agreement between Britain and Turkey, which seems to have been concluded a little earlier.¹¹⁰ In 2006, by which time the US government had acknowledged that Turkey was making significant efforts to eliminate trafficking, the Foreign Office reported that progress with Turkey had been “excellent” on migration, with the “tipping point” (the number of failed asylum seekers removed exceeding the intake) having recently been achieved.¹¹¹ By this time four members of the embassy with diplomatic rank were visibly dedicated to immigration work.¹¹² At the end of the same year the cooperation

¹⁰⁷ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Q. 180. Presumably coming from the Home Office, the ILO was appointed as a second secretary, *DS List 2004*.

¹⁰⁸ In 2002 the FO announced that it expected to have 18 in place here by the following year, HCPP (Cm 5601), Sept. 2002, p. 120. One had also been appointed by the Home Office to the Beijing Embassy in 2000, HCPP (HC574-II), 22 Nov. 2000: Mins of Ev., para. 129.

¹⁰⁹ HCPP (Cm 5601), Sept. 2002, p. 120. At the beginning of 2004 an EU regulation formalised the operation of local networks of EU ILOs, Council Regulation (EC) No. 377/2004, 19 Feb. 2004, *Official Journal*, L64, 2 Mar. 2004.

¹¹⁰ HCPP (Cm 6208), Apr. 2004, p. 117. This is mentioned here and in one or two other official documents but I cannot find the text anywhere. ‘Readmission’ was a sensitive question for the Turks, who feared that their country was to be made a dumping ground for Europe’s illegal immigrants, and at the time of writing (September 2008) they are still refusing to conclude an EU-wide readmission agreement with the European Commission. On the background to this, see Kirişci, ‘Reconciling refugee protection with combating irregular migration: Turkey and the EU’.

¹¹¹ HCPP (Cm 6823), May 2006, p. 116.

¹¹² *DS List 2006*.

of the Turkish authorities in ‘Operation Pachtou’ helped Eurojust—the EU body created in 2002 to assist member states in the fight against ‘serious cross-border and organized crime’—effectively to disable a sophisticated criminal network that had been moving people from the Kurdish areas of Turkey through Greece, across the Adriatic to Italy, and then on to France and Britain.¹¹³ It is unlikely to have been coincidental that before taking up his appointment at Ankara in 2007, Nick Baird, the ambassador at the time of writing, had since 2003 been on secondment to the Home Office as director in charge of immigration policy—and before that had much experience in Brussels.

The other main immigration task for the embassy fell overwhelmingly to the entry clearance unit of the consulate-general at Istanbul. Many British posts were facing unprecedented levels of applications for visas and Istanbul was now having to process on average 64,000 a year, which in 2002–3 placed it seventh in the ranks of UK visa-issuing posts.¹¹⁴ The long queues outside the building contained many persons with forged documents and other fraudulent claims, and the entry clearance officers (ECOs) had the unenviable task of sifting them out from those with bona fide credentials, including students and businessmen. This was by no means easy and, in the political climate of the time, it is not surprising that ECOs tended to be “overcautious”, according to the Joint Home Office/Foreign Office Entry Clearance Unit, which in response to widespread concerns reviewed the visa section in December 2000 and again in January 2002.¹¹⁵ The result was that, despite the fact that in 2002 nine UK-based staff and thirty-three locally engaged staff were employed in visa work in Istanbul and Ankara together,¹¹⁶ some genuine applicants had to wait for months for a visa and were not always treated with courtesy. David Barchard, the writer and former *Financial Times* correspondent in Turkey, told the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee that “During the dozen or so years the visa requirement has been in force, its application has become steadily more severe and is now regarded as the harshest of any European country.”¹¹⁷

¹¹³ HCPP (HC 76-I), 24 May 2007, p. 46; (HC 76-II), 24 May 2007, [Oral] Ev. 58.

¹¹⁴ Lagos was top, HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 49.

¹¹⁵ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev. Q 215, Supp. memorandum from the foreign secretary, ‘The visa operation in Turkey’.

¹¹⁶ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev. 13 Mar. 2002, Annex B. The Ankara embassy only processed visa applications from Turkish diplomatic, special and service passports holders, roughly 5,000 year.

¹¹⁷ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Ev. 30.

This was bad publicity for Britain in Turkey and the British Council in Ankara was wringing its hands over the whole business.¹¹⁸ In the circumstances, the Foreign Office could only admit the justice of the criticism, and steps were urgently taken to improve the situation by stepping up staffing levels and overhauling procedures. Unfortunately, there was then a major setback when the consulate-general was hit by a suicide bomber in November 2003 (see p. 270 below), just two weeks after a visit to check on the progress of the entry clearance system by three members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Two-Centre Embassy Once More

On 2 December 2003 Jack Straw, the foreign secretary, presented to parliament a white paper in which his department spelled out its strategic priorities for the next decade. This took for granted that the network of British posts abroad remained essential to their pursuit for reasons which Lord Strang would easily have recognized.¹¹⁹ It added that advances in information technology would enable posts to make an even bigger contribution to policy formation in London, and that it expected demands on the network from across government to increase in the future “as international issues become more central to domestic policy, and coordination between Government departments improves”.¹²⁰ The white paper was the product of wide consultation at cabinet level, and in connection with its observations on the value of posts abroad raised not a flicker of opposition—rather the opposite—from the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. So much for the argument that the resident embassy was a thing of the past.

However, as before, the targeting of resources—notably those represented by the posts abroad—would need to be periodically adjusted, for the Foreign Office planned to review its strategic priorities every two years. Accordingly as they contributed to their achievement, posts would flourish or decline, be born or die.¹²¹ Thus was encouraged an existing trend that saw resources in the embassies in western Europe being shifted to those located in places where the Foreign Office was

¹¹⁸ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Report, para. 116.

¹¹⁹ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, pp. 7, 54–6.

¹²⁰ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 56.

¹²¹ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, ch. 6.

required to engage with “a whole range of global issues, such as climate, energy and migration”. In any case, other departments could now “very largely... take care of their own interests” in western Europe; beyond its borders, where the working environment was more difficult and language skills more necessary, British diplomats added more value. Sir Peter Ricketts, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office who developed this point in evidence before the Foreign Affairs Committee in June 2007, mentioned India, China and Brazil as examples of the posts that were benefiting from this trend.¹²² He could easily have added Turkey.

It has already been noted that, as a comprehensive post, the Ankara embassy cruised without mishap through the temporary turbulence caused by the Duncan Report. Moreover, although its total staff level appears to have dropped in the mid-1980s, probably in part because of the winding up of CENTO,¹²³ by the late 1990s it was restored to the usual post-war level.¹²⁴ In 2003, the same year in which the strategy white paper appeared, it began to grow once more, and by 2006 stood at 29 listed staff, its highest point since 1948.

The Ankara embassy grew, as we have already seen, because drugs and illegal immigrants were major issues in Turkey. Indeed, in 2003 it was identified by the Foreign Office as one of its ‘principal’ posts in the campaign against them.¹²⁵ However, there were other reasons for the growth of the embassy, and one of these was that Turkey was by now identified as a ‘target market’ for British exports.

With the chaotic surge of the Turkish economy which eventually followed the political stability imposed by the military coup in 1980 and the entrenchment of the economic liberalism of Turgut Özal, who became the dominant figure in Turkish politics until his death in 1993, British exports to Turkey had likewise bounced back.¹²⁶ In 1996 Turkey had been admitted to a customs union with the EU and by the year 2000 was Britain’s 18th largest export market.¹²⁷ Already in June 1985 a counsellor who was a commercial specialist had been appointed as

¹²² HCPP (HC 50), 19 Nov. 2007: Ev 104 (26 June 2007).

¹²³ CENTO was dissolved in 1979 when, following the overthrow of the Shah, Iran withdrew from the organization.

¹²⁴ *DS List* figures are misleading since they include few locally-engaged staff.

¹²⁵ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 33.

¹²⁶ BDOHP, Interview with Andrew Bache, 28 Feb. 2000, DOHP 41.

¹²⁷ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Memorandum from the FCO on UK-Turkey Relations, Mar. 2002, Annex D, Ev 63.

number two in the embassy. This was Andrew Bache, who had chosen this route in the mid-1970s partly because he came from a business background and partly because he believed that “the commercial side of the office... was going to be increasingly important, in terms of our diplomacy for the future”. He also thought that there was a lot that a commercial officer could do for British business.¹²⁸ It is therefore not surprising that in the late 1980s, when Sir Timothy Daunt was ambassador, the commercial section in the embassy had begun to grow and was soon re-established as one of its more substantial components.¹²⁹ Further resources began to come its way when in June 1998 Turkey was chosen as a target market on a list of only 15 countries.¹³⁰ Shortly after this, the ambassador, then David Logan, found himself, like all other heads of mission, accountable for the commercial work of the mission not as hitherto to the Foreign Office but to British Trade International (BTI), later re-named UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), a new body with overall responsibility for export promotion.¹³¹

In June 2000 Sir John Kerr, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, told the Foreign Affairs Committee that the commercial effort in Turkey had been increased “quite steeply”, adding for good measure that the head of mission at Ankara had “always been a very senior Ambassador”.¹³² Despite suffering severe financial crises in late 2000 and early 2001, with IMF assistance the Turkish economy eventually recovered, as did British exports to the country. Accordingly, it was still regarded as a target market when the Foreign Office strategy paper appeared at the end of 2003,¹³³ and in 2006 was on UKTI’s list of what were now known as the ‘key emerging markets’ on which overseas network resources were to be concentrated.¹³⁴ Fittingly, in the same year British Airways launched a non-stop flight from London to

¹²⁸ BDOHP, Interview with Andrew Bache, 28 Feb. 2000, DOHP 41.

¹²⁹ In June 2000 eight staff, including LE staff, were engaged in commercial work at Ankara, HCPP (HC 507), 4 July 2000: Mins. of Ev., para. 203.

¹³⁰ Previously there had been 80 countries on this list. Turkey was selected not just because of its strong economic growth but also because of its “important geo-political position” between Europe and Russia and the developing republics of the Caucasus, HCPP (HC 507), 4 July 2000: Mins. of Ev., para. 199, and Supplementary Memorandum submitted by BTI, Questions 79–81, p. 43; (Cm 4211), Mar. 1999, ch. 2.30.

¹³¹ In 2003 it was estimated that 22 per cent of FO staff worked for UKTI, HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 50.

¹³² HCPP (HC 507), 4 July 2000: Mins. of Ev., para. 93.

¹³³ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 50.

¹³⁴ UKTI, ‘Prosperity in a Changing World’, p. 33.

Ankara on six days a week, the first time that such a service had been provided by an airline.¹³⁵

Another reason for the importance of the Ankara embassy at this juncture is located in Britain's policy of vigorous support for Turkey's application, first made in 1987, to become a full member of the European Union,¹³⁶ and the connection of this application to the new push to settle the conflict in Cyprus prior to the latter's admission to the EU early in the new millennium. Turkish anxiety to join the EU would inevitably put it under pressure to cooperate over Cyprus, a key ingredient of any settlement because Turkey was the only source of leverage over the obstructive Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash. In the event, Britain appointed a special representative for Cyprus, Sir David Hannay, to assist the UN/EU diplomacy, but on his many visits to the Turkish capital between 1996 and 2003 he always stayed with the ambassador, was always briefed by the embassy, and was invariably accompanied by the ambassador or a senior member of his staff on his calls on ministers and senior officials. This was the more valuable for him because of the difficulty for an outsider, to which he returns more than once in his memoir, of discovering where exactly in the Turkish government decisions on Cyprus policy were taken. The ambassador at Ankara, together with the British heads of mission in Athens and Nicosia, was also a key participant in the annual heads of mission conference on the island.¹³⁷ It was nevertheless in its direct support for Turkey's application to the EU that the embassy perhaps played its more important role.

Since Helsinki in 1999 this application at last seemed more realistic, and a decision about whether accession negotiations could commence was scheduled to be taken at the meeting of the European Council in December 2004. If it was favourable to Turkey, Britain would become heavily involved in the prenegotiations because it was to assume the presidency of the EU in the second half of 2005. Unfortunately, thanks to the political role of the military in Turkey, deficiencies in its justice system, and above all the country's human rights record, it fell well short

¹³⁵ *Business Traveller*, Apr. 2006; *Turkish Weekly*, 10 Apr. 2006.

¹³⁶ Sir Timothy Daunt's main mission when appointed to Ankara in 1986 had actually been to dissuade the Turkish government from applying for full membership. It was only after it was realised that this was impossible that Britain decided to support this bid.

¹³⁷ Hannay, *Cyprus*, pp. 23, 72, 96; e-interview with Lord Hannay, Sept. 2008.

of the ‘Copenhagen criteria’ for membership of the EU, and progress would have to be made on these points if it was to be accepted that accession negotiations could even commence. The original EU application had already freed the hands of the Ankara embassy to bang a previously muffled drum on human rights, but it was this that made it a ‘principal’ post in pursuit of another of the Foreign Office’s eight strategic objectives: ‘an effective EU in a secure neighbourhood’.¹³⁸ In 2003–4 over £2.2 million was spent by Britain from three separate funds on bilateral projects to assist Turkey with its political reforms.¹³⁹ This was a delicate and complex business and the embassy was heavily involved in both arranging this assistance and then in monitoring its progress.¹⁴⁰ It was clearly with this in prospect that one of the Foreign Office’s most able diplomats and former head of chancery in Ankara in the late 1980s, Peter Westmacott, had been appointed ambassador in January 2002.¹⁴¹

Sir Peter Westmacott, as he was soon to become, is believed to have achieved exceptional influence in Ankara, and his embassy clearly played its part well. In December 2004 the European Council judged that Turkey sufficiently met the Copenhagen political criteria for accession negotiations to start, and these were scheduled to begin on 3 October 2005. Nevertheless, they would begin only on three further conditions: Turkey would need to bring into force specific pieces of outstanding legislation, sign the protocol extending its association agreement with the EU to the new member states, and maintain its progress in improving human rights and implementing the rule of law.¹⁴²

This was a difficult programme and, with Britain assuming the EU presidency on 1 July and plenty of other things for the Foreign Office to worry about, great responsibility for the prenegotiations with Turkey fell on the Ankara embassy, although not on it alone. The British missions in Brussels and Nicosia also played their parts; there was a meeting at prime minister level followed up by telephone contact; regular meetings at foreign secretary level similarly reinforced by the telephone also took

¹³⁸ HCPP (Cm 6052), Dec. 2003, p. 35.

¹³⁹ HCPP (Cm 6213), Apr. 2004, p. 96.

¹⁴⁰ HCPP (Cm 6213), Apr. 2004, pp. 96–8.

¹⁴¹ In the interval between his departure from and return to Turkey, Westmacott had been counsellor on secondment at Buckingham Palace to the Prince and Princess of Wales, head of chancery at the Washington embassy, head of the Americas’ directorate at the Foreign Office, and then deputy under-secretary for the ‘wider world’.

¹⁴² HCPP (Cm 6611), June 2005, para. 14.

place;¹⁴³ and there was plenty of other senior official contact. As well as this there was energetic high-level lobbying in Europe and a London-orchestrated propaganda campaign in which the British Council played an important part. In the event, Jack Straw brokered a deal at the Council of the EU in Luxembourg late on 3 October 2005 and, with a ‘framework of negotiations’ thereby provided, accession talks were able to begin on schedule.¹⁴⁴ This was a considerable diplomatic achievement because there was much nervousness about Turkey’s accession, not least from Austria, and the Foreign Office—for understandable reasons—has never since missed an opportunity to boast about it. This was all handily summarised in its autumn performance report presented to parliament in December 2005.¹⁴⁵

What of the consulate-general in Istanbul? Here the growth was even more striking, although it was not in the least surprising against the background of the higher priority being given to Turkey by the Foreign Office¹⁴⁶ and the remarkable growth of the city itself, concerning which in January 2002 David Barchard wrote that:

With around 12 million people, Istanbul, Turkey’s main commercial centre, is overtaking St. Petersburg and Moscow as Europe’s largest city and has a larger economy of its own than some European countries. Since the fall of communism, Istanbul, now a large and lively centre of industry, has to some extent also recovered its former role as a hub for trade in the Balkans, Black Sea, and Near East.¹⁴⁷

In fact, the growth in the staff of the consulate-general had already been steady up to the mid-1990s, and at the end of the millennium became

¹⁴³ At least until the early 1990s and probably beyond, the embassy in Ankara had itself—for familiar reasons—continued to have little use for the telephone in its own communications with the FO. However, in fast-moving situations like this, especially when ministers were involved, its use was unavoidable. Besides, as a rule, the information conveyed would be “out of date long before hostile intelligence services could identify, record, translate and transcribe them, analyse them and circulate them to those who might find them useful” (BB). Information kindly supplied by Sir Timothy Daunt and Sir Brian Barder.

¹⁴⁴ HCPP (Cm 6762), Mar. 2006, p. 45; *The Times*, 3 Oct. 2005.

¹⁴⁵ HCPP (Cm 6709), Dec. 2005, pp. 25, 28. On the role of the British Council, especially in helping to create and then support the Independent Commission on Turkey in March 2004, see HCPP (HC 1371), 8 Nov. 2006: Mins. of Ev., Ev 61.

¹⁴⁶ It was now as much involved in human rights monitoring as the embassy in Ankara, HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Memorandum from the FCO on UK-Turkey Relations, Jan. 2002, Ev 58.

¹⁴⁷ HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Memorandum from David Barchard, Ev 30; see also Mango, *The Turks Today*, ch. 9.

Table 10.1 The growth of the consulate-general in Istanbul: staff, excluding support staff, 1945–2006, selected years

	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Number of staff	1	3	6	6	6	7	8	11	11	9
	1995	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of staff	11	6	14	21	25	27	27	29	25	29

Source: DS List

so dramatic that by 2006 it was as large as the embassy at Ankara (see Table 10.1). Moreover, except that it had no defence section, it was in every other respect a comprehensive post itself, having a large body of generalists (a chancery in all but name) and a number of specialist sections. Among the latter, the commercial section saw its total staff jump from eight to twelve in the two years following Turkey's designation as a target market in June 1998.¹⁴⁸ The consul-general himself was also expected to take an important hand in this work, and—in case he should forget it—in 1998 his position was re-styled 'Consul-General and Director of Trade Promotion'. As an afterthought, this was changed in 2004 to 'Consul-General and Director of Trade and Investment Promotion'.¹⁴⁹

Although technically a 'subordinate post', the consulate-general—which was still located in Pera House—had become to all intents and purposes the other half of a two-centre embassy. The situation of the late 1920s and early 1930s had returned—but with at least three important differences, which together led to difficulties. The first was that whereas in the earlier period the consuls-general 'knew their place', by this time the more egalitarian political atmosphere and the amalgamation of the diplomatic and consular services made them less inclined to regard the

¹⁴⁸ HCPP (HC 507), 4 July 2000: Mins. of Ev., para. 203 and Supp. Memorandum submitted by BTI, Qs. 79–81, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹ This title also underlined that he was now accountable for commercial work to 'UK Trade and Investment'.

ambassador in Ankara as a member of a superior species. Several consuls-general had actually occupied relatively minor ambassadorial posts before being sent to Istanbul. Furthermore, in 1969 the Duncan Report had observed not only that the commercial potential of 'subordinate posts' was not always fully recognised but also that the consul-general at an important one should—at least within the diplomatic service—be regarded as the equal of an ambassador.¹⁵⁰ "I am really the 'ambassador' to western Turkey", the then consul-general told me in November 1996, with his tongue only partly in his cheek and when his mission was still only half as big as the Ankara embassy.

The second difference from the earlier period was that Ankara was by now without question the political centre of Turkey and so demanded the lion's share of the ambassador's time; the embassy buildings there were accordingly comfortable and well equipped. In these circumstances there was less excuse for the ambassador to insist on keeping the best rooms in the old embassy building in Istanbul (over 7000 square feet with three drawing rooms) for his personal use on his frequent but short visits, while the apartment of the consul-general, who was there all year round, was not only smaller but also on the gloomier and noisier side of the building. At the end of the 1960s the pressure for Pera House to be put to better use (or even sold off) resumed with unprecedented intensity. This pressure, which was at first successfully resisted, came not only from the House of Commons and the Department of the Environment but also from the Foreign Office itself. Here an exasperated Chief Clerk thought that the ambassador's suite at Pera House was not merely "a great deal more than generous" but, in the light of the current demands for economy, "beyond all reason".¹⁵¹

The third difference was that in the earlier period the consuls-general—all with one exception senior members of the Levant Service (see Appendix 8)—were as a rule much more fluent in Turkish and knowledgeable about the country than the ambassadors. By this time,

¹⁵⁰ HCPP (Cmnd. 4107), July 1969, p. 83, para. 41.

¹⁵¹ TNA, draft personal letter to Sir Roderick Sarell, ca. Dec. 1970, FCO9/1336. To the usual arguments against selling Pera House, Sarell, the ambassador at the time, added that any such attempt would lead to endless trouble with the Turkish authorities responsible for historic buildings. On the question generally: TNA, Burrows to Cloake, 17 Oct. and Cloake to Thompson, 20 Nov. 1967, FCO78/17; Cloake, Memorandum: The Future of Pera House, Istanbul, 13 Feb. 1968, FCO78/17; Pera House, Istanbul [Memorandum], Roderick Sarell, 27 Oct. 1970, FCO9/1336; Roberts (Accommodation Dept., FO) to Chief Clerk, 10 Dec. 1970, FCO9/1336; HCPP (666): Report, para. 18.

however, the position was in general exactly the opposite; moreover, the view had become established in the embassy that the Istanbul post was one to which the Foreign Office too often consigned worthy old troopers prior to retirement. This stiffened the resolve of the ambassadors to stand on their rights when they swept in to Pera House, not only taking possession of the usual suite but also often appropriating the consul-general's car as well.¹⁵² To add insult to injury, important Turks would often prefer to deal with and entertain the ambassador, and quite ignore the consul-general.

In view of these developments, it is hardly surprising that the relations between the embassy in Ankara and the consulate-general in Istanbul were unusually tense in the several decades following the late 1960s. Indeed, legend has it that on one occasion an ambassador and a consul-general almost came to blows.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, in the mid-1980s the consul-general was finally allotted more space in Pera House at the expense of the visiting ambassador, and towards the end of the century the Foreign Office at last woke up to the fact that Istanbul was too important to treat as a pre-retirement posting. This seems to have established a more satisfactory balance of power between the two centres.

The astonishing growth of the Istanbul consulate-general in the first years of the new millennium was not to proceed without cruel setbacks. In the early hours of 31 May 2000, for the third time in its history, Pera House fell victim to fire and the upper stories were very seriously damaged.¹⁵⁴ At least this did not cause discomfort to the Wireless Liaison Service, which had departed from the attic rooms many years earlier.¹⁵⁵ Restoration began at once and in the meantime the consul-general had to live elsewhere; when Roger Short, who had much experience of Turkey and was fluent in its language, took the position in the following April (hoping that in due course it would

¹⁵² Private information.

¹⁵³ Private information.

¹⁵⁴ *The Times*, 1 June 2000. The cost of restoration was originally estimated at something over £4m but had risen to £5.1m by March 2002 and was not expected to be completed until January 2004, HCPP (HC 606), 30 Apr. 2002: Mins. of Ev., Memorandum from the FCO on UK-Turkey Relations, Mar. 2002, Ev 61.

¹⁵⁵ Private information; compare Bennett and Bennett, 'UK Intelligence and Security Report, Aug. 2003'.

lead him to the ambassadorship in Ankara) he and his wife rented a house in Beşiktaş.¹⁵⁶

Indirectly, the fire proved fatal, for during the restoration work it seemed unavoidable that the consulate-general should operate from buildings on the perimeter of the compound. And on 20 November 2003, just nine weeks before the work was due to be completed, a van carrying a very powerful bomb was driven by an Islamic militant at the mission's iron gates. The two brave Turkish policemen on guard duty opened fire and sounded the alarm but it was useless. Roger Short, who was working in his temporary office by the gate, was killed instantly in the explosion. The suicide bomber also took with him nine other members of the staff, a visitor and three passers-by; more than 400 persons in total were injured. It was the first time that an attack on a British diplomatic mission had resulted in deaths. The explosion was so powerful that the annex in which Short was working was obliterated and the inside of the visa section, 100 yards away, wrecked; many offices in the main building fared little better.¹⁵⁷

The consulate-general was temporarily re-located in the old American consulate building and a limited visa operation was restored within ten days.¹⁵⁸ However, this location was no more secure (only in June for security reasons the Americans had moved to a new building on a hill at İstinye halfway up the Bosphorus), so four rooms were taken in the Hilton Hotel. Here the consulate-general remained until Pera House was once more restored and much strengthened against a similar attack. Juggling the balance between security and operational effectiveness, the Foreign Office had concluded that Pera House itself was sufficiently set back from the busy surrounding streets to give security, provided it had a new blast-proof perimeter wall and gatehouse, a new access route, and protective doors and windows.¹⁵⁹ Thus provided for, staff were able to move back to the visa section in August 2004¹⁶⁰ and in

¹⁵⁶ Private information. Short's first overseas posting, in 1969, had been to Ankara, to which he returned as head of chancery in 1981. Prior to his appointment as consul-general in Istanbul he had been ambassador in Bulgaria.

¹⁵⁷ *The Observer*, 23 Nov. 2003; Peter Westmacott, 'The Istanbul bombing', HCPP (Cm 6213), Apr. 2004, pp. 39–40.

¹⁵⁸ HCPP (Cm 6213), Apr. 2004, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ HCPP (HC 745), 23 Sept. 2004: Mins. of Ev., Q173; Peter Westmacott, 'The Istanbul bombing', HCPP (Cm 6213), Apr. 2004, p. 40.

¹⁶⁰ The visa service was fully restored in November, HCPP (Cm 6533), June 2005, p. 180.

October Pera House was officially re-opened by the Prince of Wales. However, it was to be some time before the restoration work was fully completed and all the staff were able to return. By this time the sum spent on Pera House since May 2000 had almost tripled.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ *HLDeb.* 3 Nov. 2005, written answers, col. 39.

CONCLUSION

Never mind the political struggles in which the British Embassy in Turkey has been engaged and the wars to which it has been witness for well over four centuries. Can any British embassy claim a more unusual and at times dramatic internal history? Established in 1583, in the reign of England's great queen, Elizabeth I, the British Embassy in Turkey was largely financed by a private trading company, the Levant Company, until the early years of the nineteenth century. At this point its building became the first embassy to be owned by the British government anywhere in the world. In spite of this it was burned to the ground in 1831 and again in 1870, and suffered seriously from fire on three other occasions, most recently in the year 2000. For much of the first half of the nineteenth century it was dominated by the most famous of all British ambassadors, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who made his name there. Until the end of the same century it was dependent on native dragomans who—quite unjustly—excited more animosity than those at any other British embassy in the East; and it superintended a consular network which by that time had assumed gigantic proportions. At the beginning of the First World War the embassy dissolved into what must have been one of the first genuine British interests sections ever to be created. In the middle of the next world war it found itself swarming not only with spies but also with saboteurs, and, in the affair of the German agent codenamed 'Cicero', fell victim towards its end to the most sensational spy scandal of the age. When a suicide truck-bomb hit the consulate-general in Istanbul in 2003 it was the first time that an attack on a British diplomatic mission had resulted in deaths. And ever since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 it has, like all embassies in Turkey, been tormented by the rivalry between Ankara and Istanbul.

Absorbing though these points might be, they should not be allowed to obscure the fact that in many ways the British Embassy in Turkey was also a fairly typical embassy, especially in the twentieth century. In any case, its internal history has been only one part of this book. The other and more important part—although the internal history bears strongly upon it—has been about the contribution that the embassy has made to British diplomacy.

Ever since the League of Nations emerged at the end of the First World War and heralded the dawn of the so-called 'new diplomacy', the resident embassy has been widely held to have been living on borrowed time. Multilateral diplomacy, *ad hoc* diplomacy, and telephone diplomacy, all facilitated by eye-catching technological advances, would eventually, it was said, either reduce it to insignificance or see it off altogether. The experience of the British Embassy in Turkey gives the lie to both of these claims; so obviously, in fact, that to have taken a long book to make the point exposes the author to the charge of using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Today the diplomatic and consular staff at Ankara alone is double the size that it was at Constantinople during the heyday of Lord Stratford in the Crimean War; if we include the staff of its other half at the old capital (now Istanbul), it is four times its size. Including them, it is twice the size of the embassy in 1878, when it was temporarily inflated by the first cohort of student interpreters from the Levant Service and a flood of military attachés caused by the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war. This has not come about as a result of a fit of absence of mind.

To be sure, the exceptional recent growth of the embassy is partly the result of an increase in the importance of Turkey to Britain: drugs and immigration as well as its strategic location, military strength, NATO membership, EU membership aspirations, role model as a Muslim but secular state, and buoyant market. However, it has also come about because it was rightly never believed by the Foreign Office that an effective diplomacy could be conducted with Turkey, or any other state of importance, except by means of a large permanent embassy; and because in the last quarter of the twentieth century doubt on the same point gradually diminished among the British chattering classes.

It is certainly true that, beginning with the admission of Turkey to the League of Nations in 1932 and culminating in the creation of CENTO in the mid-1950s, the opportunities for high-level Anglo-Turkish contact in the wings of multilateral bodies multiplied. After the Second World War the air service between Britain and Turkey also steadily improved, as did the telecommunications between them, thereby making short-term visits in both directions much easier and direct contact equally possible. But the press of international business on British ministers and senior officials was such that, even if they had some grasp of the issues in Anglo-Turkish relations, they rarely had the time fully to exploit these opportunities when they occurred. Where visits from London to the ever unpopular Ankara were concerned, the relatively late appear-

ance of direct flights, and the absence of non-stop flights until as late as 2006, did not help. Nor did the fact that, after the explosion of the Cyprus crisis in 1955, visits to Turkey were always politically difficult to contemplate without matching ones to Greece. The result was that high-level British visits to Turkey were a comparative rarity and, rather than rejoice at thus being spared the risk they might represent to their authority, ambassadors begged for more of them out of fear that their absence would be interpreted by the Turks as insulting evidence that their country was not taken seriously in London. The irony is that when such visitors did turn up, their dependence on the embassy was so complete that they actually made it more, not less, important.

Throughout the twentieth century the embassy remained indispensable, not only because it was the most convenient point of continuous contact with those with power in Turkey but also because it was the chief repository of expertise on the country. The embassy's expertise, including its language expertise, came from three main sources. The first and without doubt most valuable was the cadre of locally recruited members of its staff, whether called 'dragomans' until the First World War, 'native assistants' for a short time after it or, in our own more prosaic age, merely 'locally engaged staff'. These persons often achieved great influence within the embassy and also contributed to the political education of its established diplomatic staff; they also had the endearing advantage of being cheap. Sometimes suspected of divided loyalties and insufficient courage in pressing a British case, various attempts were made to get rid of them but even when alternatives were most freely available—as in the years before the First World War—this never proved completely possible: Onik Efendi and Richard Marinitch spring to mind. Permitting the best among them to become naturalized British subjects was a way of accepting the inevitable while consolidating their loyalty.

The second source of Turkey expertise, at least from the late nineteenth century until about a decade after the Second World War, was the corps of 'natural-born Englishmen' of the Levant Consular Service who made their careers in the dragomanate of the embassy. Men such as Adam Block, Harry Lamb, Gerald Fitzmaurice, Andrew Ryan, James Morgan, and Knox Helm were extremely able and of unquestioned loyalty, and were more often than not in effect number two to their chiefs; the last actually became an ambassador himself. As for the diplomats, the third source of expertise on Turkey, their knowledge waxed as that provided by the men of the Levant Service waned with

the disappearance of the men themselves—it had to. In the twentieth century few were appointed to senior diplomatic posts in the embassy who had not spent some years there earlier in their career, or in the Foreign Office department covering Turkey—or in both; and after the 1950s their Turkish language training was much improved.

It is because of the embassy's unrivalled local knowledge that it has always been such a valuable source of political and commercial intelligence on Turkey, which by the second half of the nineteenth century was being reported by telegram immediately, elaborated on by letter later, and from 1906 distilled in an annual report when time permitted. (The embassy was not required to produce an annual report during the Second World War.) Even during the critical initial eight months of the First World War consular staff transferred to the protection of the American Embassy were able to supply the War Cabinet in London with intelligence of political and military importance. Which point serves to remind us that the British consuls in the provinces, who also employed local dragomans, were always such a valuable source of the embassy's own intelligence. It is no surprise that the British consular network in Turkey was quickly expanded during the Second World War.

During the twentieth century the speed, security, and economy of the embassy's telecommunications slowly improved, although whether this made the embassy a more valuable source of information on Turkey seems unlikely. Rival sources of information—notably secret agencies, and mass media organizations—were multiplying and able to adjust more flexibly to the new technologies. It is striking that it appears to have been 1936 before the British Embassy in Turkey used its telephone to communicate a message to the Foreign Office, and that the form this took—a dictated 'telegram'—also seems to have prevailed for a good number of years thereafter. It is also notorious that at the end of the twentieth century the Foreign Office itself was slow to adjust to the computer age.

On the other hand, the experience of the British Embassy in Turkey does not provide any evidence that the Foreign Office was attaching, or could have attached, less importance to it as a source of information on Turkey than to rival sources. It was still the embassy that knew best what the Foreign Office wanted to know and the form in which it liked to receive its information. As for the spies, it is in any case a moot point to what extent they were a rival source of information since they were part of the embassy machine, although it is true that in practice

they answered first to the heads of their own services. The symbiotic relationship between British journalists and the embassy is also striking: the embassy certainly 'worked the press' (British and other) to shape opinion and glean information but journalists 'worked the embassy' to help them write their own copy. During the important road haulage negotiations in the 1970s the Department of the Environment and the Foreign Office took an interest in press reports to judge the mood among truck drivers and political opinion in Turkey but they relied entirely on the embassy for all essential background information and intelligence on Turkish government intentions, and it would be absurd to expect them to have done otherwise.

It is also because of the embassy's expertise that the advice of ambassadors was always sought on policy by the Foreign Office, as by select committees of the House of Commons; and also because of this that embassy staff were even sometimes temporarily withdrawn from Turkey to be employed in the multilateral and ad hoc diplomacy that was supposed to be serving them their notices of redundancy. This sort of thing was also made easier by advances in transport and communications. Innovations in these areas which allowed ministers and senior officials to descend on Turkey in person (if they could find the time) or send fresh instructions to the ambassador in quick-fire succession, also enabled embassy staff to take more regular home leaves during which they could be consulted, permitted ambassadors to be recalled for a brief period for just this purpose, and allowed them to send messages home as fast as their political masters could send them out—and sometimes at greater length than they would have preferred.

The ability of the Foreign Office to exploit the exceptional local knowledge of embassy staff in these ways is not a recent development. With the technical improvements in the telegraph and the reductions in its cost, together with the introduction of the Orient Express, it was already possible in the late nineteenth century. After the First World War it became even more common. It was, for example, because they were both expert and by then easily in reach that the ambassador, Sir Horace Rumbold, and his chief dragoman, Andrew Ryan, were invited to play such crucial roles in the multilateral conference at Lausanne in 1922–3, and that Sir Ronald Lindsay was called back to London in the middle of March 1926 to help write his own instructions for the negotiations in Ankara on Mosul that he was to lead for Britain so successfully shortly afterwards.

It was also in good part because of the embassy's knowledge of Turkey and carefully cultivated acquaintance with its ministers and senior officials, not to mention the personal qualities of its chiefs of mission, that it was relied upon throughout the twentieth century to play such an important role in the negotiation of Anglo-Turkish agreements. This reliance was encouraged by a strong, general Foreign Office reflex, re-stated by Lord Strang in 1955, in favour of negotiation via British embassies abroad rather than by means of foreign ones in London, not just to spare the Foreign Office but because it was thought likely that a British embassy would be a more reliable point of contact with a foreign government.

It is true that the Mosul negotiation in 1926 was probably the high water-mark of embassy responsibility for bilateral negotiations, and that in the middle of the 1930s it began to diminish. This was chiefly because the unusually complex commercial and financial questions which began to colour Anglo-Turkish relations in the 1930s, and which continued to do so for the rest of the century, led both states—from time to time—to see advantage in sending out home-based specialists to lead negotiations. However, by the late 1940s the decline had stopped before it had gone very far. This was partly because by this time the super-complexity of trade and payments arrangements induced by the war had been somewhat reduced, but also because the embassy still had to be relied on to prepare the ground for a bilateral negotiation in Ankara led by a specialist sent from home. This usually influenced the atmosphere in which the negotiation proper was conducted and even shaped its content. For example, in conducting the prenegotiations for the International Road Transport Agreement of September 1977 the embassy's commercial counsellor negotiated an important interim agreement in February 1976, an extension of this in March 1977, and several other points of substance shortly after that. Embassy staff were also routinely required to support a visiting specialist team during a negotiation, which usually meant sharing seats at the table as well as providing bed and breakfast; and they had virtually exclusive responsibility for the all-important task of following up any agreement reached with the Turkish government.

The great majority of the 81 important bilateral agreements signed by Britain and Turkey between 1945 and 2000 (see Appendix 8) were negotiated either in this way or, if the subject was uncontroversial and relatively uncomplicated, left entirely to the embassy to negotiate under instructions. What made it the better equipped to make this sort

of contribution was that since the late nineteenth century it had been acquiring its own specialist sections: first military and commercial, later cultural, and later still drugs and immigration. When in the 1970s the commercial counsellor signed a letter to the DoE 'Counsellor (Road Haulage)' he was only half joking about his acquired expertise. By September 1977 he could probably have conducted the negotiation on the road haulage agreement on his own; as it was, the specialist team from the Department of Transport was only in Turkey for a few days. It was not possible to investigate any of these in the course of writing this book, but it is easy to imagine the important contribution that would have been made by the defence section to the many agreements on Turkey's purchase of British armaments, for example, or by the consular section to the numerous agreements on visa questions.

As for general lobbying of the Turkish government and propaganda in Turkey, the embassy had still fewer serious rivals, for even the staff of the British Council were attached to it. Whether it was promoting the British point of view on an international question affecting Turkey, maximising Britain's achievements and minimising its failures, or making the most of events such as the royal visits in 1971 and 2008, the embassy was particularly well placed to be effective. Its senior staff invariably had regular access to the highest levels of government, and press work was always taken seriously by the embassy. Indeed, the fact that the major Turkish newspapers were based in Istanbul was one reason why importance continued to be attached to maintaining a major presence at Pera House after the capital was switched to Ankara. Despite this, the Foreign Office seems to have been slow to exploit the (admittedly limited) propaganda possibilities of the British Section in the American Embassy in the first months of the First World War, while Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen was probably too complacent about propaganda in the first years of the Second World War.

Promoting the British point of view was an especially delicate task when the Turks did not like it, whether it was trying to get them to do something to which they were resolutely opposed, such as committing national suicide in the first years of the Second World War by joining the war against Germany while unprepared; trying to prevent them from doing something to which they were resolutely committed, such as joining NATO; or trying to get them to reform some unsavoury aspect of their domestic conduct, most recently in order to strengthen their credentials for admission to the European Union. Any such British posture could easily provoke coldness on the part of Turkish ministers

and officials, and outright fury in the Turkish press, as well as rebound adversely on British interests in other areas. The embassy was not always successful in preventing this: it was sometimes on a hiding to nothing. In such circumstances, it served the relationship by simply absorbing Turkish anger, as when Sir Noel Charles faced the press in Istanbul in June 1951 after the news had leaked that the United States had dropped its opposition to Turkish membership of NATO while Britain nevertheless remained opposed. But usually the embassy was able to keep the temperature lower than this: often by showing genuine sympathy for the Turkish point of view, as Knatchbull-Hugessen so emphatically did in regard to Turkish neutrality during the Second World War; and always by being able to draw on professional respect and even personal friendships built up by long acquaintance, most famously in the case of Atatürk and Sir Percy Loraine.

When Lord Strang produced his account of the workload of the typical British embassy in 1955 there was one subject on which he was silent. This was the cover that it sometimes provided to secret service officers working for quite separate bodies. (Until separate secret intelligence organizations were created around the end of the nineteenth century, ambassadors had been given a 'secret service' fund to hire their own agents.) In Turkey the British Embassy had always attached great importance to secret intelligence and in the twentieth century more so than ever. It is in this same tradition that the embassy has recently demonstrated its value by providing cover for drugs and immigration 'liaison officers' as well—or in modern parlance by providing a 'platform' for them. In the Second World War the embassy and its satellite consulates even provided—albeit with great reluctance—cover for the men and munitions of the saboteurs of SOE. If ever a skilfully managed resident embassy was needed it was in a situation such as this.

In providing information and advice on policy and tactics, negotiating bilateral agreements, promoting British views, preparing the way for and smoothing ministerial visits, providing a platform for officers from other departments engaged in delicate and sometimes dangerous work, and doing a host of other things, the embassy has used its resources and drawn on its local knowledge and contacts to advance British interests more effectively than was possible by alternative means. It has not always succeeded, sometimes perhaps because close and prolonged personal contact with its Turkish interlocutors, with whom good relations are professionally valuable, has led to occasional bouts

of localitis. But this is an inevitable risk of resident diplomacy, and it is a risk that has to be run; it is also one that modern communications and transport have rendered less likely by making it easy to preserve contact with home. The recent history of the British Embassy in Turkey shows that resident diplomacy is alive and well, and needs to be kept in this condition.

APPENDIX ONE

BRITISH AMBASSADORS TO TURKEY¹ 1583–2008

Harborne, William*	1583–8
Barton, Edward ^{2*}	1588–97
Lello, Henry ³	1597–1607
Glover, Sir Thomas ⁴	1606–11
Pindar, Paul*	1611–20
Eyre, Sir John	1620–22
Roe, Sir Thomas*	1621–8
Wyche, Sir Peter*	1628–39
Crowe, Sir Sackville*	1638–48
Bendish, Sir Thomas*	1647–61
<i>Lawrence, Richard</i> ⁵	1653–6
Finch, Heneage, 3rd Earl of Winchilsea*	1661–9
Harvey, Sir Daniel	1668–72
Finch, Sir John*	1674–81
Brydges, James, 8th Baron Chandos of Sudeley	1681–7

¹ I have, where possible, dated the commencement of ambassadorships from the year of first arrival in the Ottoman or Turkish capital (usually the year of presentation of credentials), rather than from the often misleading year of formal appointment by the English/British government. (For example, Sir Sackville Crowe was appointed in 1633 but did not arrive in Constantinople for another five years, while Robert Sutton was appointed in December 1700 but did not arrive until early 1702.) I have also dated the termination of the posting from the year of departure from Turkey rather than from the formal ending of the appointment. (For example, Fawkener left Constantinople in 1742 but was not formally deprived of the embassy until September 1746.) Purists may wish to consult Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509–1688* (pp. 6–7) on the difficulties of establishing the beginning and ending of missions. The list excludes the names of chargé d'affaires except in the remarkable case of Aspinwall (1742–7). All heads of mission had the rank and style of 'Ambassador' unless otherwise indicated. Those marked with an *asterisk appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

² Agent to 1593.

³ Agent to 1599.

⁴ Agent.

⁵ Lawrence was given a commission as an agent to secure Bendish's recall and act until the new ambassador, Major Richard Salway, should arrive. In the event, Salway withdrew and Lawrence refused to return until finally outwitted by Bendish, Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 185–90.

Trumbull, Sir William*	1687–91
Hussey, Sir William*	1691
<i>Harbord, William</i> ⁶	1691–2
Paget, William, seventh Baron Paget*	1693–1702
Sutton, Sir Robert*	1702–17
Wortley-Montagu, Edward	1717–18
Stanyan, Abraham*	1718–30
Hay, George, eighth Earl of Kinoull*	1730–6
Fawkener, Sir Everard*	1735–42
Aspinwall, Stanhope (agent)	1742–7
Porter, James*	1747–62
Grenville, Hon. Henry	1762–5
Murray, John*	1766–75
Ainslie, Sir Robert Sharpe*	1776–94
Liston, Robert*	1794–5
Smith, John Spencer ⁷	1795–8
Smith, Adm. Sir (William) Sydney ⁸	1798–9
Bruce, Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin*	1799–1803
Drummond, William*	1803
Arbuthnot, Rt. Hon. Charles*	1805–7

Diplomatic Relations Suspended 1807–8

<i>Paget, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur</i> ⁹	1807–9
Adair, Robert*	1808–10
Canning, Stratford*	1810–12
Liston, Sir Robert*	1812–20
Smythe, P. C. S., sixth Viscount Strangford*	1821–4
Canning, Stratford*	1826–7

⁶ Harbord never reached Constantinople, dying at Belgrade on 31 July 1692.

⁷ Secretary in charge of affairs, 1795–8; secretary of legation, 1798; secretary of embassy and minister plenipotentiary *ad interim*, 1798–1801.

⁸ Joint plenipotentiary with his brother, John Spencer Smith.

⁹ Paget was 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on a Special Mission', July–October 1807.

Diplomatic Relations Suspended 1827–9

Gordon, Sir Robert*	1829–31
Canning, Sir Stratford*	1832
Ponsonby, John, Viscount Ponsonby*	1833–41
Canning, Sir S. (later Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe)	1842–58
Bulwer, Sir Henry*	1858–65
Lyons (Rt. Hon. Richard Bickerton Pemell), Lord*	1865–7
Elliot, Sir Henry*	1867–77
Layard, Sir (Austen) Henry*	1877–80
Dufferin, Earl of*	1881–4
Thornton, Sir Edward* ¹⁰	1886
White, Sir William*	1886–91
Ford, Sir Clare*	1892–3
Currie, Sir Philip*	1893–8
O’Conor, Sir Nicholas*	1898–1908
Lowther, Sir Gerard*	1908–13
Mallet, Sir Louis	1913–14

Diplomatic Relations Suspended 1914–25

Calthorpe, Admiral Sir Somerset* ¹¹	1918–19
De Robeck, Admiral Sir John* ¹²	1919–20
Rumbold, Sir Horace* ¹³	1920–4
Lindsay, Sir Ronald* ¹⁴	1924–6
Clerk, Sir George*	1926–33
Lorraine, Sir Percy*	1934–9

¹⁰ Appointed December 1884 but the FO did not allow him to proceed to Constantinople until February 1886, as was pointed out by his daughter in a correction to his obituary in *The Times*, 6 Feb. 1906. (The obituary appeared in the edition of 27 January.) At the end of 1886 he retired.

¹¹ High Commissioner.

¹² High Commissioner.

¹³ High Commissioner to Oct. 1923, then Representative; personal rank of Ambassador throughout.

¹⁴ Representative to 1 March 1925, when, following Turkish ratification of the peace treaty (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923), he was promoted—and styled—‘Ambassador’. He was knighted on 1 Jan. 1925.

Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe*	1939–44
Peterson, Sir Maurice*	1944–6
Kelly, Sir David*	1946–9
Charles, Sir Noel Hughes Havelock	1949–51
Helm, Sir Alexander Knox ¹⁵	1951–4
Bowker, Sir (Reginald) James	1954–8
Burrows, Sir Bernard	1958–62
Allen, Sir Denis	1963–7
Allen, Sir Roger	1967–9
Sarell, Sir Roderick	1969–73
Phillips, Sir Horace	1973–77
Dodson, Sir Derek S. L.	1977–80
Laurence, Sir Peter H.	1980–3
Russell, Sir (Robert) Mark	1983–6
Daunt, Sir Timothy L. A.	1986–92
Goulden, Peter John	1992–5
Prendergast, Sir Kieran	1995–7
Logan, Sir David	1997–2001
Westmacott, Sir Peter	2002–6
Baird, Nicholas G. F.	2007–

Sources: various but especially Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, App. I; ODNB; *FO List*; *DS List*; Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509–1688*; Horn (ed.), *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689–1789*; Bindoff et al. (eds.), *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1789–1852*.

¹⁵ Presented his credentials on 13 December 1951.

APPENDIX TWO

TURKISH AMBASSADORS TO BRITAIN
1793–2008, DATE OF APPOINTMENT

Yusuf Agah Efendi	1793
Ismail Ferruh Efendi	1796
Sidki Efendi (c. d'a.)	1806
Ramadani Efendi (c. d'a.)	1811–21
Namik Pasha ¹	1834
Nuri Efendi ²	1834
Mustafa Reşid Bey	1836
İbrahim Sarim Efendi	1838
Şekip Efendi	1840
Âli Efendi	1842
İbrahim Sarim Efendi	1844
Şekip Efendi	1845
Kalimaki Bey	1846
Mehmed Emin Pasha	1848
Costaki Musurus Pasha	1851
Rustem Pasha	1885
Costaki Anthopoulos Pasha	1896
Stephen Musurus Pasha ³	1903
Rifaat Pasha ⁴	1908
Tewfik Pasha	1909–14
Mustafa Reşid Pasha ⁵	1920–22

¹ When the Ottoman government re-established a mission in London in 1834 it did so at legation level. Namik Pasha presented his credentials as 'Turkish Minister' on 8 October 1834 and took his leave in May 1835, *The Times*, 9 Oct. 1834 and 16 May 1835. A few later heads of mission had the lower status of minister, for example Kalimaki Bey and Costaki Musurus Pasha until 1 January 1856, but generally they all had ambassadorial rank.

² Presented his credentials on 14 May 1835, *The Times*, 16 May 1835.

³ Stephen Musurus Pasha was the son of Costaki Musurus Pasha, who had been for many years *doyen* of the London diplomatic corps, *The Times*, 23 Dec. 1907.

⁴ Rifaat Pasha was the first Muslim ambassador appointed by the Ottoman government to London since Mehmed Emin Pasha.

⁵ Usually described as 'the last Ottoman ambassador to London', technically Reşid Pasha was only a 'Representative'.

Zekiai Bey ⁶	1924
Ahmed Ferid Bey ⁷	1925
Mehmet Munir Bey	1932
Bay Fethi Okyar	1934
Dr Tevfik Rüstü Aras	1939
Huseyin Rauf Orbay	1942
Rusen Esref Unaydin	1944
Açıkalin, Cevat	1945
Baydur, Hüseyin Ragip	1952
Ürgüplü, Suad Hayri	1955
Birgi, Muharrem Nuri	1957
Erkin, Feridun Cemal	1960
Kavur, Kemal Nejat	1962
Kuneralp, Zeki	1964
Ümit Haluk Bayülken	1966
Kuneralp, Zeki	1969
Turgut Menemencioğlu	1972
Vahap Asiroglu	1978
Rahmi Gümrükçüoğlu	1981
Nurver Nures	1989
Candemir Önhon	1991
Özdem Sanberk	1995
Korkmaz Haktanir	2000
Akin Alptuna	2003
Mehmet Yiğit Alpogan	2007

Sources: FO List; DS List; The Times; Annuaire Diplomatique et Consulaire des Etats des Deux Mondes, Supplément à l'Almanach de Gotha, 1882; Yalçinkaya, 'Mahmud Raif Efendi'.

⁶ Presented credentials on 16 October.

⁷ Presented credentials on 4 July.

APPENDIX THREE

ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS TO LORD CHANDOS
29 DECEMBER 1680

Charles R. Instructions for our Rt trusty and well beloved James Lord Chandos going in quality of our Ambassador to Reside at ye Court of ye Grand Signior given at our Court at Whitehall, ye 29th Day of December 1680 in ye Two and Thirtieth year of our Reigne.

1. You shall Embark yourself upon ye Ship designed to carry you, and dispose of her according to ye Instructions of our Comission for Executing ye office of Lord High Admiral of England.
2. Being arrived at Constantinople you shall informe yourself from Sir John Finch our present Ambassador and ye English Merchants There in what state Things now are, and instruct yourself in ye Manner of making your Addresses with our Credentials to ye Grand Signior, and Grand Vizier, according to ye accustomed Stiles used by those invested with your Character, remembering alwaies (as farre as may be consistent with ye Good and safety of Our Subjects, and their Trade) not to suffer it to be prejudic'd or violated in any Circumstances either by yt[that] Court, or any forreigne Ministers residing There.
3. In ye Addresses to the Grand Signior and Vizier you shall expresse ye great value we have for their Persons, and satisfaccon in ye Observance of the peace, and Correspondence towards our Subjects in their Trade and Commerce which is soe beneficiall to those parts above any other Nation.
4. In all ye Time of ye Residence there you must be carefull to maintaine a Good Correspondence with all ye Ambassadors and Agents of Christian Princes, Especially with those that shall be in a nearer Degree of amity and Alliance with Us but not forgetting it towards those yt[that] are soe to protect their Persons, and render yoursefe usefull to ym[them] with all good offices, employing them likewise towards ye good of all Christians in Generall, of which Degree, quality, Sect or Opinion soever They be, Giving ye preference therin still to those of our owne profession in Religion, and to those of ye Greek Church in procuring them Justice and favour in all things.
5. You shall make it your particular care and endeavour to be truly inform'd of all ye negotiacons and practises in yt[that] Court, which may disturbe ye peace of Christendome, in any part of it, and informe Us thereof of under ye surest, and most speedy conveyance you can, by ye hands of one of our Principal

Secretaries of State, with whom you are also constantly to Correspond, and from whom you will receive such further Directions, and Instructions as we shall from time to time, and upon all Emergencies think fit to send you, and Likewise all such Advices from hence, as may be of Use to you there.

6. When you are upon ye place, you must in ye best manner you can learn, proceed towards ye Protection of all ye Priviledges, and Imunities of our Subjects of ye Turkey Company for whose good and benefit you are most especially to reside There, by preserving firme and inviolate to them, ye Capitulacons, that are already in being with ye Grand Signior and by soliciting and procuring such further additionall ones, as time and other Circumstances may make usefull for ym[them] to have, and in ye prosecucon thereof, if any attempts be at any time made to violate or infringe ye Capitulacons, or any part thereof you are to appeare in person before ye Vizier in Defence of them.

7. And whereas Representacons have formerly bin made to Us by ye Turkey Company of ye great mischeifs, yt[that] have bin occasion'd in Trade by ye permitting of false or faulty Money to be imported, or passed in payment in Turkey, if any such false moneys shall be againe introduced into ye Empyre you shall take some fit opportunity to intimate to ye Grande Signior or Vizier ye mischeifs and ill Consequences of yt[that] abuse, and shall in some Publiq way (such as you shall find most fitt) disowne ye same in Relacon to ye English. And in case any English factors shall transgresse therin either in importing such mon'ys, or colouring ym[them], or in receiving them by Consignation from others, We doe with ye Advice of our Privy Councell hereby give you Power, and Authority to punish such Offenders.

8. In matters relating to Trade you are to comply and put in execucion such Rules and Directions as you shall from time to time receive from ye Turkey Company and not be wanting in any Thing to perform all good Offices towards Them, to their Entire satisfaction.

9. And whereas ye Persons of ye Turkey Companies factors have of late bin imprisoned, and great sums of mony forcebly extorted from ym[them] as well as ye Company contrary to ye Capitulacons, and to all Right and Justice (The particulars thereof are contain'd in a Narrative wch will be deliver'd to you by ye Company.) If you find any probability of Good Successe, you are to presse for Reparacon of the said Injuries, and Restitucon of ye mony soe wrongfully taken away. And though there appear noe hopes of such successe, you shall yet make such prudent and modest resentments of those wrongs as may ye vizier [be] sensible thereof in such manner as may prevent ye like in future.

10. Upon occasion of any Publiq Grievances you are to be ready to join with other Christian Ministers in making complaint thereof, and endeavouring to procure a redresse soe far as you find it to consist with ye Charges trust repos'd in you.

11. And whereas We have thought it fitt to give you 2 diferent Letters of Credence as well to ye Grand Signior, as to ye Vizier Azem, our Pleasure is yt[that] when you are arrived at Constantinople you advise and Council with such of ye Turkey Company as you shall find there which of ye Letters are fittest in ye present Junction of affaires to be Deliver'd at ye audience and accordingly you are to deliver those which you and they shall agree upon as best and most likely to conduce to ye good and advantage of Our Subjects and particularly ye said Company.

Additional Instructions

Whereas we are given to Understand by ye Company of Merchants of England Trading into ye Levant Seas, yt[that] they are Laboring under Insupportable hardships from the Turkish Ministry, in case thereof those diferences be not ended at your Arrivall at Constantinople and ye Vizier doth persist in his great oppressions upon our Subjects, We doe hereby direct you to acquaint ye Vizier, and ye Grand Signior if need be, that you will Remain at ye Port until you shall have acquainted Us fully with ye Buisnes depending and shall Receive our Comands how to dispose of Our Subjects and Their Trade for ye Future.

Source: TNA, SP105/145.

APPENDIX FOUR

BRITISH CONSULAR POSTS AND CONSULAR OFFICERS IN
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 1852

Residence	Rank	Name
<i>Turkey</i>		
Belgrade	Consul-General	T. de G. de Fonblanque
Bucarest	Agent & Consul-General	R. G. Colquhoun
Jassy	Consul	Samuel Gardner
Galatz and Ibraila	Vice-Consul	C. Cunningham*
Constantinople	Consul-General	A. C. Cumber batch
	Vice-Consul-Cancellier	Jonathan Hardy
	2nd Vice-Consul	J. H. Skene
Dardanelles	Consul	F. W. Calvert*
Enos	Consular Agent	Nicolas Rossy (F)* G. A. Zitzvick (F) ¹
Salonica	Consul	Charles Blunt*
Adrianople ²	Consul	Wm. Willshire*
Monastir ³	Consul	J. A. Longworth*
Janina	Consul	Sidney S. Saunders
	Vice-Consul-Cancellier	T. Damaschino* (I)
Prevesa	Vice-Consul	J. S. Hutton*
Scutari	Vice-Consul	S. Bonati* (I)
Varna	Consul	E. St. John Neale*
Brussa	Consul	D. Sandison*
Smyrna	Consul	R. W. Brant
	Vice-Consul-Cancellier	John Charnaud*
Adalia	Vice-Consul	J. Purdie*
Macri	Vice-Consul	Chas. Bigliotti* (F)

¹ Zitzvick was presumably a trading consul as well but this is unclear from the source. The same applies to Newton in Mytilene.

² Abolished in January 1852.

³ Established in October 1851.

Rhodes	Consul	Niven Kerr
Scio	Vice-Consul	G. D. Vedova* (F)
Mytilene	Vice-Consul	F. H. S. Werry*
	C. T. Newton	
Crete	Consul	Henry Sarell Ongley*
Erzeroum	Consul	James Brant*
Trebizond	Vice-Consul	Francis I. Stevens*
Batoom	Vice-Consul	W. R. Holmes*
Kaiseriah ⁴	Consul	H. Suter*
Diarbekir ⁵	Consul	W. R. Holmes*
Samsoon	Vice-Consul	F. Guarracino* (I)
Tarsous	Vice-Consul	John Clapperton*
Bagdad	Consul-General	Lieut. Col. Rawlinson
Mosul	Vice-Consul	Christian Rassam* (F)
Syria ⁶	Consul-General	Colonel Rose
Damascus	Consul	Richard Wood
Aleppo	Consul	N. W. Werry*
Alexandretta	Vice-Consul	Wm. B. Neale*
Beirout	Consul	Niven Moore
Cyprus ⁷	Consul	Niven Kerr
Jerusalem	Consul	James Finn
Jaffa	Consul	Assad J. Kayat*
Jedda ⁸	Vice-Consul	C. J. D. Cole*
<i>(Egypt)</i>		
Egypt	Agent & Consul-General	Hon. C. A. Murray
Alexandria	Consul	F. H. Gilbert
	Vice-Consul-Cancellier	G. Chasseaud*
Cairo	Consul	Alfred S. Walne
Damietta	Vice-Consul	M. Surur * (F)
Suez ⁹	Vice-Consul	George West*

⁴ Abolished in June 1852.

⁵ Established in November 1852.

⁶ Abolished in January 1851.

⁷ Removed to Rhodes in 1850.

⁸ Established in 1852.

⁹ Established in February 1853.

<i>(Tripoli)</i>		
Tripoli ¹⁰	Agent & Consul-General Consul	G. W. Crowe Major G. F. Herman
	Vice-Consul	Richard Reade*
Bengazi	Vice-Consul	Major G. F. Herman F. S. H. Werry
Moorzook	Vice-Consul	C. B. Gagliuffi*
Ghadames	Vice-Consul	Chas. H. Dixon*
<i>(Tunis)</i>		
Tunis	Agent & Consul-General Vice-Consul	Sir Edwd. Baynes Lewis Ferriere
Susa	Vice-Consul	W. Crowe*

Key: * trading Consulate; (F) 'Foreigner'; (I) Ionian

Source: Adapted from: Consuls. Return of all Consuls-General, Consuls, and salaried Vice-Consuls, with the amount of their Salaries; of the Fees received by them in the Years 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1852 respectively, and of any other Salary or Emolument; specifying whether the Consulate is a trading Consulate or not, and the Country of which each actual Consul is a native. Cd. 181, 12 April 1853.

¹⁰ Reduced to a Consulship in January 1852.

APPENDIX FIVE

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES
OF HM EMBASSY AT CONSTANTINOPLE 1857-69, £ STERLING

	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869
Salaries, wages and allowances	3851	4416	4602	5420	5073	5154	5344	5344	5790	5708	5687	6373	6324
Journeys and extra couriers	-	1070	1627	1363	1828	473	666	841	405	67	34	26	60
Telegrams	1433	2492	2234	1717	1825	1462	1071	514	527	391	396	345	572
Stationery and printing	68	128	12	31	83	215	76	84	50	50	50	50	81
Postage	497	567	694	773	697	661	570	440	321	349	387	435	335
Horse and boat hire	1045	1204	1500	1389	1067	1056	1175	1180	1046	1031	937	887	896
Gas	-	86	38	76	173	205	185	156	179	227	211	237	186
Embassy gardens	58	104	199	322	239	311	265	264	242	350	361	348	316
Newspapers	26	28	47	45	42	33	14	56	25	67	47	50	31
Water	-	8	14	27	15	32	37	64	35	55	74	64	51
Customary presents and official fees	142	196	290	316	240	227	238	135	145	91	178	127	121
Liveries for cavasses and porters	46	65	-	-	-	100	-	212	141	163	299	168	195
Agio, commission, loss by exchange	248	358	633	176	593	416	140	384	496	382	435	532	408
Miscellaneous	833	271	794	265	173	2169	720	900	601	574	138	252	102
Amounts in each year	8247	10993	12684	11920	12048	12514	10501	10574	10003	9505	9234	9894	9608

Source: HCPP (382), 25 July 1870: Appendix No. 4, p. 434

APPENDIX SIX

CUMBERBATCH'S LETTER TO WAUGH FROM THE US
EMBASSY IN CONSTANTINOPLE

My dear Waugh,

Constantinople, March 6, 1915.

YOURS of the 17th February reached me yesterday.

I told you in my last letter that the Government was preparing to move to Konia in case of necessity. Since then the archives of all the Ministries have been sent there by special train together with large sums in specie both from the German banks and from the O.B., which, I am informed, has been forced into a loan of over a million. Six thousand bales of wool have been seized in the depôts of the different banks here, and have been conveyed to Konia. Many well-to-do Turkish families have left and are still leaving for Konia, Angora, Brussa, and many of those who cannot get away are asking their European friends for protection in the event of an eventual occupation or bombardment of the city. Many German families are also leaving for Germany, and the Austrian Ambassador has requested Embassy ladies to leave. The German Ambassador is reported to have declared that he will leave for Berlin should the Dardanelles be forced. During the past week a large number of guns and a large consignment of ammunition of all sorts has arrived here from Germany via Roumania and Bulgaria. The guns mounted on the Princes Islands have just lately been withdrawn, as also the troops. An order was issued last Sunday that no civilian should remain in the islands, and a regular stampede took place. On Tuesday people were told they could return. Many, however, have preferred to stay away.

The city is now being patrolled by fedai in addition to the ordinary police. They are ostensibly acting as a "garde civique," but are really intended to assist in the suppression of any attempt at a movement against the Government. The "Goeben" has apparently completed repairs at Stenia and is now under steam. Apparently the crew are not allowed ashore—for the past three days I have seen no sailors in the streets. I do not imagine for one moment that the intention is to have a smack at the Russian ships in the Black Sea, but rather that in the

event of the Dardanelles being forced, the “Goeben,” and perhaps the “Breslau” as well, would make a dash either for Varna or Kustendjé. I know that the “Goebens” have deposited all their valuables at the German Embassy and had Holy Communion administered to them before they were confined to the ship. The “Breslau” is still in the Golden Horn. Two torpedo-boats are continually patrolling off Haidar Pasha and San Stefano, apparently on the look out for submarines.

The authorities have changed their mind about Mizzi, he is not allowed to leave, to his great delight. I have reason to believe that both Mizzi and the “Stamboul” people are making arrangements to start work at a moment’s notice. Churchill is still at Cesarea—so far we have not heard what his fate is to be. The Embassy is working hard to get vesika[^] for Amat and Gilbertson—it has been hard work making the latter consent to go. Hardly a day passes without the arrest of some unfortunate Maltese on suspicion—very few are released as a result of the “istinah,” in spite of Judelssohn’s untiring efforts.

Einstein arrived with his wife on Friday and is installed in Schma-vonian’s room. Huser has been appointed to Trebizond, and a young Leavitt is to replace him at the consulate here.

I remain, &c.

CYRIL CUMBERBATCH.”

*Proprietor of the “Levant Herald”

[^]Permits to leave the country

Source: TNA, CAB37 125/23.

APPENDIX SEVEN

NON-CAREER STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL ISTANBUL, 1946

Charles Hamilton Page MBE (consul): born in England; nationality British; languages Turkish, French; appointed 1920; formerly Indian Army

Charles Taylor Bennett (pro-consul): born in England; nationality British; languages French only; appointed 1940; formerly shipping agent in Istanbul

Richard Marinitch (general office clerk): born in Istanbul; nationality British; languages Turkish, French, Italian, Greek; appointed 1919; formerly head of the British Section of the Netherlands Legation, 1917–19

John Alfred Rizzo (clerical assistant): born in Istanbul (probably the son of the former consulate-general employee, the Maltese/British Edgar Vincent Rizzo, and his Turkish wife); nationality British; languages Turkish, French, German, Italian, Greek; appointed 1942; formerly a printer

Roland Michael Cassar (assistant shipping clerk): born in Istanbul; nationality British; languages Turkish, French, Greek; appointed from school 1944

Mary Hall (secretary-typist): born in Istanbul; nationality British; languages Turkish, French, Greek, German, Italian; appointed 1920

Winifred Gwendolen Lyne (secretary-typist): born in Istanbul; nationality British; languages Turkish, French, German; appointed 1943; formerly a teacher at the American College for Girls, Istanbul

Winifred Alice Baxter (archivist-typist): born in England; nationality British; languages French, German; appointed 1940; formerly a secretary to various commercial concerns

Source: TNA, Consulate-General, Istanbul to FO, 13 Apr. 1946, FO366/2118; Urquhart to FO, 27 July 1940 (Inspection Report. Istanbul Consulate-General), FO369/2559.

APPENDIX EIGHT

BRITISH CONSULS-GENERAL AT ISTANBUL 1806–2008

1806	Isaac Morier ¹
1819	John Cartwright
1845	Abraham Carlton Cumberbatch
1864	Donald Malcolm Logie
1867	Philip Francis
1877–93	John Henry Fawcett
1879–96	William Henry Wrench ²
1896–1914	Harry Eyres ^{*3}
1920	Alexander Telford Waugh [*]
1930	James Morgan [*]
1930	William Hough [*]
1937	George Pearson Paton ⁴
1942	Leonard Henry Hurst [*]
1947	Richard Geoffrey Meade [°]
1949	Albert Williamson-Napier ^{*°^}
1952	Leslie Pott [*]
1955	Philip Broad ^{°^}
1960	Gordon C. Whitteridge [°]
1962	Michael Warr [°]
1967	Reginald A. Burrows [°]
1970	Alan B. Horn ^{°^}
1973	James Bourn ^{°^}
1975	John D. Blakeway ^{°^}
1978	Clive C. Clemens [°]
1981	Timothy H. Gee [°]
1985	James R. Paterson [°]
1988	Michael B. Collins ^{°^}

Notes

¹ Consul.

² Consul, 1879; died at his post, 1896.

³ Consul, 1896; Consul-General, 1905.

⁴ Far Eastern Service.

Symbols

* Member of the Levant Service.

° No Turkish experience prior to this posting.

^ Last appointment before retirement.

1992	Michael E. Cook ^o
1997	Peter L. Hunt ^o
2001	Roger Short
2004	Barbara L. Hay ^o
2008	Jessica Hand ^o

APPENDIX NINE

ANGLO-TURKISH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS (WITH PLACE OF SIGNING) PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1945–2000

The following list contains only those bilateral agreements presented as ‘Command Papers’ to the House of Commons. It is tempting to call them the ‘major’ Anglo-Turkish bilateral agreements of the period and roughly speaking this would be true. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that this would be to accept the British government’s judgement on the point. Many Anglo-Turkish bilateral agreements were not presented to the House of Commons, presumably in the main because they were believed by the government of the day to be insufficiently important. These included interim agreements such as those negotiated on road haulage by Arthur Ball prior to conclusion of the main ‘Agreement concerning International Road Transport’ of 9 September 1977 (see p. 249 above); and those amending the substance or extending the duration of existing agreements, particularly on trade and payments and programme loans (i.e. those not tied to specific projects). This list is therefore by no means a complete list of all of the bilateral agreements formally entered into between Britain and Turkey over this period, and does not necessarily include all important ones. Some but by no means all of the agreements omitted from this list appear in TNA, Protocols of Treaties (Turkey), FO93/110.

Trade and Payments Agreement (with Protocol). Signed in London, 4 May 1945.

Agreement for Air Services between the United Kingdom and Turkey. Signed in Ankara, 12 Feb. 1946.

Exchange of Notes amending the Air Services Agreement of 12th February 1946. Signed in Ankara, 29 Mar. and 1 Apr. 1948.

Agreement to establish Drawing Rights in favour of Turkey for the purpose of the European Payments Agreement of 16th Oct. 1946 (with Exchange of Notes). Signed in Ankara, 25 Jan. 1949.

Exchange of Notes constituting an Agreement for the Abolition of Visas. Signed in Ankara, 9 Oct. 1952.

Exchange of Notes constituting an agreement regarding the repayment of certain credits granted to Turkey relating to armaments. Signed in Ankara, 11 Feb. 1954.

Agreement relating to certain Sterling Payments to be made to United Kingdom Exporters or Merchants. Signed in London, 17 Jan. 1955.

Cultural Agreement. Signed in Ankara, 12 Mar. 1956.

Protocol modifying the Agreement of January 17, 1955, regarding certain Financial Matters (with Exchange of Notes). Signed in Ankara, 28 Feb. 1957.

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