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Lost in translation or transformation? The impact of American aid on the Turkish military, 1947–60

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ABSTRACT



US–Turkish relations were marked by the primacy of military actors during the Cold War. This is considered to be the consequence of the so-called special relationship between the US and Turkish militaries based on mutual trust. However, historical record suggests that the two militaries clashed over a number of institutional, strategic and cultural matters from the onset. The US military assistance did not result in Turkish military's transformation along the US military system. Nevertheless, it precipitated a long overdue generational change within a decade. The US-trained young officers purged the Prussian/German-trained old guard from the ranks.

KEYWORDS

US-Turkey Relations; NATO; Turkish military; Military transformation; Foreign military assistance; US Foreign relations

The transformative impact of US military assistance on the Turkish Army during the Cold War is a relatively understudied topic. The literature is limited to a few articles that deal with the Cold War US military presence in general,¹ the reorganisation of Turkish air power,² the origins of US–Turkish military relations³ and US arms transfers to Turkey.⁴ In the last decade, the issue has been addressed in a number of graduate theses and dissertations.⁵

This article aims to fill this gap in the literature. It is organised into three parts. The first part provides a brief history of the Ottoman/Turkish attempts at military reform since the late nineteenth century. The second part addresses the context and the drivers for the US decision to extend military aid to Turkey. The third part focuses on three contentious dimensions of the military transformation: training;

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¹Nur Bilge Criss, 'U.S. Forces in Turkey', in *U.S. Military Forces in Europe: The Early Years, 1945–1970*, ed. Simon W. Duke and Wolfgang Krieger (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 339–50; and Nur Bilge Criss, 'U.S. Military Presence in Turkey Revisited' (paper presented at NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme, Political and Social Impact of Military Bases: Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Challenges Conference, Joint War College, Lisbon, Portugal, 13–15 December 2007).

²Craig Livingstone, '“One Thousand Wings”: the United States Air Force Group and the American Mission for Aid to Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 30 (1994): 778–825.

³Howard A. Munson, 'The Joint American Military Mission to Aid Turkey: Implementing Truman Doctrine and Transforming US Foreign Policy, 1947–1954' (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 2012); and Robert Cassaboom and Gary Leiser, 'Adana Station 1943–45: Prelude to the Post-war American Military Presence in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (1998): 73–86.

⁴Sezai Orkunt, *Türkiye-ABD Askeri İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1978).

⁵Barış Celep, *Türkiye'ye Amerikan Askeri Yardım Kurulu (JAMMAT) ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2020); Erdal Akkaya, 'Türk Ordusundaki Stratejik ve Doktriner Değişiklikler (1923–1960)' (Master's thesis, University of Ankara, 2006), 206–62; İskender Tunaboğlu, 'Deniz Kuvvetlerinde Sistem Değişikliği' (Ph.D. diss., 9 September University, 2008), 65–88; and Recep Bülent Şenses, 'The Transformation of the Ottoman and the Republican Army 1883–1960: Impact on Turkey's Political Life' (Ph.D. diss., Yeditepe University, 2016).

organisation; and generational change during the early Cold War era. This study draws mainly on the Joint United States Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JUSMMAT) documents available in the National Archives and Record Administration in College Park (NACP).⁶

While the initial public reception of US military involvement in Turkey was extremely positive, this was replaced by a more critical stand within a decade. By the 1960s, the Turkish public was increasingly convinced – especially after some very impactful court cases – that the Americans had taken advantage of the Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) *bona fide* commitment to adopt the new Western military paradigm under US tutelage.⁷ The primary sources consulted for this paper, on the other hand, paint a more nuanced picture. The Turkish military authorities were not as obedient in their dealings with the US military mission as the conventional account that emerged after the 1960 coup asserted. From the onset, the resistance to reform and reorganisation along the lines of the American model had been strong.⁸ The transformative impact of US military aid was thus mitigated by the Turkish military's peculiar historical, institutional and societal experiences for much of the Cold War.

Military reform attempts before the Cold War

The Prussian Army, which proved its superiority in the 1870–71 war against the French, became the single most important source of inspiration and model around which the Ottoman Army was trained, organised and conceptualised after the 1877–8 Russo-Ottoman War.⁹ In the process, a Prussian officer, later Marshal, Colmar von der Goltz left a lasting legacy on Turkish military thinking. He and his disciples were instrumental in transferring Prussian/German ideas and institutions into the Ottoman military. Among the Ottoman military personnel, Mustafa Zeki Pasha figures prominently as the superintendent of the Military Academy between 1883 and 1908. His 25-year tenure at the Academy ensured consistency in educating and training successive generations of the Ottoman officer corps in von der Goltz's tradition.¹⁰

Goltz's 'nation in arms' struck a chord, particularly with the young Ottoman officers.¹¹ The notion of a 'nation in arms' pointed to a tendency to accord primacy to the military over politics and favoured the mobilisation of the entire country to fight a total war. The

⁶The Mission was originally called the American Mission for Aid to Turkey (AMAT) and shortly afterwards renamed as the Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JAMMAT), which was also subsequently changed to the Joint United States Military Mission for Aid to Turkey. For the purposes of this paper, JUSMMAT is preferred.

⁷¹¹ Eri Çiğneyen Amerikalı Yarbay Serbest Bırakıldı', *Milliyet*, 7 November 1959, 'Morrison 1200 Dolara Mahkum', *Milliyet*, 17 March 1960; and Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni: Dün, Bugün, Yarın*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1982), 553.

⁸From Maj. Gen. H.L. McBride to the Minister of National Defense', 22 May 1950, JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General's Section Decimal File, 256/84, Records of Interservice Agencies, RG 334, The National Archives (College Park, Maryland).

⁹Mesut Uyar and Edward Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2009), 142, 202–8; and David. B. Ralston, *Importing the European Army: The Introduction of European Military Techniques and Institutions into Extra-European World (1600-1914)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 67–71.

¹⁰Pertev Demirhan, *Generalfeldmarschall Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz* (Göttingen: Göttinger Verlagsanstalt, 1960); F. A.K. Yasamee, 'Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz and the Rebirth of the Ottoman Empire', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 9, no. 2 (1998): 98–119; and Şenses, 'The Transformation of the Ottoman', 14–15.

¹¹Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's views on war and nation bear striking resemblances to Goltz's work. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of Military Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 14–17; and M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 31–47.

Prussian paradigm was associated with discipline and a culture of submission at the strategic level, but initiative at the operational and tactical levels. Another salient feature was the presence of an omnipotent general staff without political oversight and restraints. This institution nearly monopolised military decision-making. The general staff's centrality gave rise to a privileged general staff corps which evolved into a kind of sacred brotherhood. Its members were placed on a fast track career path for higher positions in the military hierarchy.¹² A premium was placed on operational manoeuvres involving large units for swift and decisive victories on land.¹³ This approach emphasised mission command that gave commanders a great deal of discretion in executing an order in combat. Finally, military education also required immersion in liberal arts.¹⁴

The end of the Balkan Wars in 1913 – another disastrous defeat – strengthened the Prussian/German military paradigm's traction in Ottoman/Turkish military organisation and thinking.¹⁵ The Ottoman Army initiated its most radical reform package after the defeat. Old incompetent officers were removed from their military posts, including two field marshals, 68 generals and hundreds of colonels. The bulk of *alaylı* (literally from the regiment, or ranker) officers who did not have formal military education and proved inept in the art of war were also purged from the Ottoman Army. The Prussian/German-trained young officers rose to command and staff positions way above their nominal ranks.¹⁶ They also invited a new German military advisory mission. This time German officers were assigned in command positions and accorded with extraordinary powers, including placing strategic military decision-making under German control.¹⁷

This peacetime arrangement laid the groundwork for the Ottoman military's subsequent subordination to the German High Command until the end of the First World War. While German military potential remained under extremely tight restrictions until 1933, the Turkish nationalists waged a successful war of liberation. The republic that emerged from the ruins of the empire inherited part of the Ottoman military legacy, including its Prussian/German connection. Despite the bitter memories of wartime German domination of the Ottoman state, the German military/naval advisors were favoured over others by the republican political and military elite for a number of reasons. First, they were cheaper to hire due to the availability of retired and discharged German officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in large numbers. Second, they were familiar with the military system the Republic had inherited. Finally, the former German military personnel were willing to offer their services on the basis of individual contracts as civilians rather than as members of an official military/naval mission. This arrangement suited the sovereignty-minded Turkish decision-makers.¹⁸

¹²Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff 1657–1945*, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995), 31–4, 96–7; and Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State 1650–1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 73–94.

¹³Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 306–7.

¹⁴Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps*, 80–1, 88–91.

¹⁵Uyar, Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans*, 237, 240–2; and Gencer Özcan, 'Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi Orduşunda Prusya Etkisi', *İdea: İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi* 1, (2009): 15–69.

¹⁶Handan Nezir-Akmeşe, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 115–17, 131–2; and Uyar, Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans*, 221, 241.

¹⁷Naim Turfan, 'Reporting Him and His Cause Aright: Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Liman von Sanders Mission', *Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée Orientale et la Monde Turco-Iranien* 12 (1991): 3–11, 29–33.

¹⁸Dilek Barlas and Serhat Güvenç, *Turkey in the Mediterranean during the Interwar Era: The Paradox of Middle Power Diplomacy and Minor Power Naval Policy* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 2011), 69–72, 99–100.

Although they were denied command positions and they were present in relatively modest numbers, the German advisors and instructors consolidated the work of their predecessors in shaping the military mind of the republican officers corps.¹⁹ Published memoirs of Turkish officers suggest that these small cadres of German instructors in the war colleges also provided the link between pre-mechanisation-era German operational arts and the future blitzkrieg.²⁰

From Lend-Lease to the Truman Doctrine

In the interwar era, Turkey bought military aircraft from the United States.²¹ Later, when Ankara requested a technical advisor from Washington to train the Turkish aviators on the US-built aircraft, Washington turned this down, for the scope of political relations with Turkey did not yet justify such an assignment.²² The British were equally reluctant to provide Turkey with instructors. In 1937, after a series of refusals, the British finally agreed to send two military instructors to the newly founded Turkish Air Staff College.²³

Shortly after the Second World War broke out, Britain sent Major General Stephen S. Butler as the head of the unofficial British Military Advisory Mission. Its members arrived in the guise of diplomats or administrative personnel of the embassy in Ankara. Additionally, the Turkish leadership did not want any foreign military advisors in command and critical decision-making positions. Ankara also preferred to make individual contracts to stay away from the dreaded term 'mission'. London hoped its unofficial mission would expedite Turkey's entry to the war against Germany. However, Turkey expected financial support, advisors, modern weapon systems and comprehensive training from Britain to place its military on a war footing. The British eventually provided some advisors for the Air Force, coastal and air defence, engineering and anti-tank units. Some airfields were constructed; others were improved. Against the high expectations, however, the British military assistance turned out to be a fiasco for both sides. Turkey did not enter the war until 1945 and Britain could deliver on only a fraction of its promises.²⁴

The United States for its part, let Turkey receive US equipment from its Lend-Lease programme in 1942. Lend-Lease shipments to Turkey were not made directly, but through Britain.²⁵ This was the common US practice in the case of countries of special interest to Britain in the Middle East. The only exception was Saudi Arabia.²⁶ In some instances, Turkey received British-built tanks, trucks, guns and aircraft instead of the US samples. Training on the use of US weapons and equipment was also provided by the

¹⁹A total of 24 army and 12 navy officers served at various Turkish senior military education institutions between 1925 and 1939. *Deutsche Offiziere in der Türkei* (Berlin: Reichsarchiv, 1940).

²⁰Afif Büyüktuğrul, *Cumhuriyet Donanmasının Kuruluşu Sırasında 60 Yıl Hizmet (1918–1977)*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Deniz Basımevi Müdürlüğü, 2005), 388.

²¹Turkey: Annual Report 1932; 17 January 1933, FO 371-16983, The National Archives, Kew (TNA).

²²Gül İnanc Barkay, *ABD Diplomasisinde Türkiye: 1940–1943* (İstanbul: Buke Yayınları, 2001), 21.

²³Brock Millman, *The Ill-made Alliance: Anglo-Turkish Relations 1939–1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queens's University Press, 1998), 12, 30–2, 136–7; and Arthur S. Gould Lee, *Special Duties: Reminiscences of a Royal Air Force Staff Officer in the Balkans, Turkey and the Middle East* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1946), 9, 13, 25, 38–43.

²⁴Millman, *The Ill-made Alliance*, 262, 268–70, 312.

²⁵'From Foreign Office to Angora', 12 July 1943, FO 371-37519, TNA.

²⁶James Barr, *Lords of the Desert: Britain's Struggle with America to Dominate the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 34–5.

British instructors whose salaries were covered by Turkey.²⁷ It was also during the war that three US officers were assigned to teach in the Air Staff College for the first time.²⁸

Turkey was not happy with the amount and quality of the military aid it had received or the British agency and control of its relations with the United States. According to Turkish calculations, the British were not able or willing to meet Turkish security needs. The Turkish leaders, instead, strove to establish direct military relations with the Americans. They hoped these relations would result in formal US security guarantees. However, the Americans were apprehensive of Turkish-German relations and preferred to rely on the British agency.²⁹

At the end of the Second World War, Turkey was diplomatically isolated and faced a bleak future in the face of Soviet demands for territorial concessions in Eastern Anatolia and joint control of the Turkish Straits. It needed to convince the American leadership to expand its security umbrella and provide urgent military and economic aid. In April 1946, the battleship *USS Missouri* brought to Istanbul the remains of Turkish Ambassador Münir Ertegün. This port call was taken as a sign of the US intention to extend support to Turkey against the Soviets.³⁰ To mark the occasion, a ceremony was held in Taksim Square. There, Turkish soldiers and US sailors marched on parade. However, the Turkish officers were disappointed by the US sailors' undisciplined parade march on the streets of Istanbul. The unimpressive performance by the crew of the *USS Missouri* prompted scepticism about the soldiering and fighting skills of the US troops in Turkey.³¹

According to US estimates, Turkey was the only country in the Middle East with serious military potential and political will to stand up to the Soviets with foreign military and economic support. Its geographic proximity to the Soviet Union prompted US military planners to contemplate even active military roles for Turkey in the US strategy. They considered a variety of options, some of them offensive. For them, Turkey could be useful in launching raids on Soviet oil installations, slowing down Soviet advances towards the Suez Canal and North Africa, providing fighter cover for US bombers targeting Moscow, bottling up Soviet submarines in the Black Sea, destroying Soviet troop transports, and even launching an assault into Soviet territory. Based on such an overly optimistic assessment of Turkey's potential, the US military fully embraced the

²⁷ Britain also provided training in Egypt and Britain. 'From Angora to Foreign Office', 11 January 1944; 17 April 1944; 19 May 1944; 18 September 1944, FO 371-44141, TNA.

²⁸ Colonel Valentine (US Army), Captain Morgan and Lieutenant Shelmidine (US Navy) were assigned as instructors to the staff colleges in Istanbul to teach air and naval-air warfare in 1943. Turkish Chief of General Staff, 9th Section, File no. 44416, 31 July 1944, Lalahan Deniz Genel Arşivi Müdürlüğü (LDGAM, Lalahan, Ankara). Lecture Notes by Colonel Valentine were subsequently turned into a textbook by the Air War College. F.B. Valentine and Celal Erikan, *İ. Sınıf Hava Tabiyesi Notları* (Ankara: Harp Akademisi Matbaası, 1945). When Colonel Valentine's contract expired at war's end, Turkey requested a replacement from Washington. Though the State Department found meeting the Turkish request politically desirable, due to demobilisation in the US, officer availability was a problem. Lack of an institutional framework governing military relations between the two was the primary reason for US procrastination in designating a replacement for Colonel Valentine. 'American Officer to Teach in Turkish Military Academy', Department of State, Division of Near Eastern Affairs, 10 September 1945, 867.20/9-1045, 'Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1945-49, 867/11, National Archives Microfilm Publications M1292, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

²⁹ Haluk Ülman, *Türk-Amerikan Diplomatik Münasebetleri 1939-1947* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1961), 16-36; and Robin Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 17-80.

³⁰ Ambassador Ertegün died in Washington during the war and was buried in Arlington. His remains were to be repatriated after the war. Gül İnanc and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, 'Gunboat Diplomacy: Turkey, the US and the Advent of the Cold War', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48 (2012): 401-11.

³¹ İbrahim Yurtsever (Ret. Colonel, Turkish Army), interviewed by authors, Ferahevler, İstanbul, 17 August 2006.

idea of military assistance to Turkey.³² Moreover, the long history of Turkish-Russian rivalry sharpened the anti-Soviet feelings of the Turks. The Americans found in Turkey a nation and a military establishment that did not need any ideological conditioning against the Soviets.³³

President Truman declared his intention to provide military and economic assistance to Greece and Turkey on 12 March 1947. As far as Truman was concerned, 'Russia's ambitions would not be halted by friendly reminders of promises made'. Although Turkey was ready to face the might of the Red Army with or without foreign aid, its army 'was poorly equipped and would have been no match for the battle-tested divisions of the Kremlin'. To make matters worse, because Turkey kept its army fully mobilised, it plunged into an economic crisis.³⁴

Two months later, the first group of American military advisors led by Major General Lunsford E. Oliver arrived in Turkey with a low-key reception.³⁵ His was essentially a small fact-finding mission (21 officers and three civilian economists). It was tasked with transforming the TAF and determining the most cost-effective way to deter the Soviets. Before the Turkish press, General Oliver stated that if properly equipped, the Turkish Army could fare even better than the German Army.³⁶

In June 1947, the mission handed over its report.³⁷ First of all, according to their estimates, it would cost US\$1.8 billion to turn the TAF into a modern fighting force. Therefore, the US\$100 million allocated to Turkey under the Truman Doctrine seemed like the proverbial drop in the ocean. Their second finding was also problematic. American politicians had approved short-term military aid. The situation on the ground required a larger and longer-term American commitment. Thirdly, they had discovered that the Turkish government was unsure about the Turkish people's possible reaction to the presence of an independent foreign military mission. The public might see the whole affair as a revival of the foreign domination of the Ottoman era. Besides, the TGS was not interested in either an American von der Goltz or an American von Sanders.³⁸

The Turkish military leaders actually expected to modernise the armed forces without substantially changing its structure, thinking and doctrine.³⁹ However, Turkish officer corps did not present a coherent group, either. Field and company level officers were

³²Turkey (1950), Memorandum to Maj Gen Verne D. Mudge (Ret.), Senate Armed Services Committee from Maj Gen L.L. Lemnitzer, Director, Office of Military Assistance', 20 June 1950, 18/78, 001-1219, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defence, RG 330, NA; *Selected Executive Session Hearing of the Committee, 1943-50: Military Assistance Programs Part 2*, vol. 6 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), 307-10, 322-3, 357-62; and Melvyn P. Leffler, 'Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey and NATO, 1945-1952', *The Journal of American History* 71 (1985): 815.

³³'Transcript of Military Hearings for Bonner Sub-Committee', 27 March 1952, Reports 250/3, RG 334, NA.

³⁴Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956), 95-8, 103, 108.

³⁵'Communications First Task', *New York Times*, 18 May 1947.

³⁶'Turks Agree - Turkey's Army can be Great!', *Chicago Tribune*, 13 June 1947. Normally, a US General would not be expected to pick on the defeated German Army as a yardstick to measure the potential effectiveness of a recipient of the US military assistance. General Oliver was probably aware that Turkish admiration of German military tradition survived the Second World War almost intact.

³⁷'Notes on a Meeting on Aid to Turkey on April 11, 14 April 1947, 867.24/4-1447, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1945 49, 867/11, National Archives Microfilm Publications M1292.

³⁸'Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of State and the Department of War Regarding the Turkish Aid Program', JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General's Section Decimal File, 256/83, RG 334, NA; *1st Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey* (Washington DC: Division of Publications Office of Public Affairs, 1947), 17-19; Norman, 'Arming Turks'; *Selected Executive Session Hearing of the Committee, 1943-50*, 391-2; and George McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 40-1.

³⁹*Kara Ordusu'nun II. ve III. Safha Eğitimi için Direktifler* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1947).

completely dissatisfied with their flag officers. The former saw the latter as relics of the Turkish War of Liberation (1919–22), who should have no place in the ranks of a modern army. For many Turkish officers, the Second World War was a time of serious material shortages and misery. The end of the war had little effect on the military situation. The looming Soviet threat ruled out large-scale demobilisation and led to further deterioration of the conditions of the troops in the frontline units. The burden of keeping a large number of men and material mobilised strained the country's resources. Ankara's neutrality during the war spared Turkey from destruction; however, for some officers, this was regrettable because its absence from the war caused the Turkish Army to miss the technological and technical progress that took place during the war.⁴⁰

The Republican military had not seen combat since the end of the War of Liberation, except for a number of counter-insurgency campaigns in the Kurdish-populated provinces of Anatolia in the 1920s and 1930s. Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, who was the Chief of the General Staff between 1920 and 1944, loyally served under both presidents, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, and supported their ambitious political, economic and socio-cultural reforms. In order to establish loyalty, deference and obedience, Çakmak assigned veterans of the War of Liberation to key command and staff positions for extremely long tenures.⁴¹ His heavy-handed approach produced a military culture which was not conducive to frank and open deliberation. By limiting promotion opportunities for younger generations and isolating himself from them, Çakmak drove a wedge between the senior and junior ranks.⁴²

Institutional inertia and individual alienation were the inevitable outcomes. Bahtiyar Yalta, who as a fresh lieutenant volunteered to serve with the first Turkish Brigade in Korea, described the situation thus:

Officers were complaining about lack of appreciation in peace time. They were frustrated with a slow-moving promotion ladder that put literally everyone on the same career path at the same pace with no regard to merit or individual performance. Among the disgruntled officers, those who were self-confident decided to volunteer for combat service in order to break out of [a] *one-size-fits-all promotion system*.⁴³

Therefore, the need to transform the Turkish military began to be voiced, though not very loudly, by the young officers when US military aid started. For instance, in a 1950 study dealing with the Soviet threat, it was stated that General Staff Major Hamza Gürgüç said that 'new conditions are compelling us to reconsider our views, ways of thinking and behavior in various realms as a nation. Some of those realms have a bearing on the military profession as well'.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Major General Horace L. McBride succeeded Major General Oliver as the head of the mission. JUSMMAT consisted of four major groups; the Turkey–US Army

⁴⁰Nurettin Türsan, *Anılar* (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2009), 52–64; Adnan Çelikoğlu, *Bir Darbeci Subayın Anıları: 27 Mayıs Öncesi ve Sonrası*, ed. Ergin Konuksever (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 50–5; and Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam* (İstanbul: Nurettin Uyçan Matbaası, 1966), 9.

⁴¹For example, General Fahrettin Altay, the legendary commander of the Turkish cavalry corps in the War of Liberation remained in command of the Second Field Army from 1924 to 1933. *2nci Ordu Tarihçesi* (Konya: 2nci Ordu Komutanlığı, 1977), 165–8.

⁴²Şevket S. Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999), 21–2, 130, 143, 450–3; and Türsan, *Anılar*, 46–64, 89–90.

⁴³Bahtiyar Yalta, *Kunu-ri Muharebeleri ve Geri Çekilmeler* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2005), 40–1.

⁴⁴Hamza Gürgüç, *Rusya, Dünya Meselesidir: Rus Meselesi Karşısında Türkiye* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1950), 60.

Group (TUSAG); the Turkey–US Air Force Group (TUSAFG); the Turkey–US Navy Group (TUSNG); and the Public Roads Administration (PRA). These were tasked with transforming the TAF into a modern military which would be able ‘to deter the Soviets from aggression; and in the event of aggression to enable the Turks to inflict maximum casualties and delay the attacking forces’ for the American and British air forces to hit the advancing Soviet columns and perform ‘effective air strikes deep into the heart of the Russian Industrial Regions’. Consequently, American military aid was designed to make Turkey an effective ‘speed bump’ which had to be raised in less than two years.⁴⁵

These parameters entailed focusing on rearmament, re-equipment and quick impact training programmes rather than the long-term programmes for which the Turks had been asking. However, investing in training centres which offered short-term courses to officers and other ranks would produce results almost immediately. The weapon systems, vehicles and equipment that the United States would provide, first of all, needed operators and maintenance crew. Tactical and technical leadership that would be acquired in such a relatively short time was seen as enough at this stage.⁴⁶

JUSMMAT started new training programmes in the service (branch) schools as of spring 1948. Initially, the training programmes’ scope was limited to tactical employment and maintenance of the US equipment. However, it soon transpired that turning the Turkish military into a modern fighting force would require a greater effort. Then, the mission grew in order to undertake the complete reorganisation of the Turkish military, which meant the assignment of US servicemen in numbers far greater than originally anticipated.⁴⁷

Within three years, JUSMMAT’s strength grew to 459.⁴⁸ The mission attracted highly qualified and bright officers with combat experience. A case in point was Lieutenant Colonel M. François d’Eliscu, the top unconventional war and martial arts specialist of the time, who ran the first ever guerrilla warfare course in Turkey in 1949.⁴⁹ For three years after the Truman Doctrine, Korea, Greece and Turkey were the only three countries that hosted the US Military Advisory Missions in the early Cold War period. As such, Turkey and Greece were among the few attractive post-war overseas posts.⁵⁰

Although the US military mission in Turkey expanded beyond initial expectations, it took time for the TGS to align itself with US priorities and expectations. The TGS’s primary objective was to achieve self-sufficiency in the defence of the country.⁵¹ For the Americans, this was not a realistic objective in the short run. Supply of US military

⁴⁵‘JAMMAT Monthly Progress Report’, January 1948, Adjutant General Section Central Files Unit 251a/13 RG 334, NA; ‘Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of State and the Department of War Regarding the Turkish Aid Program’, JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General’s Section Decimal File, 256/83, RG 334, NA; ‘Analysis of Military Aid Program to Turkey: Final Report’, 1950, JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General’s Section Decimal File, 256/106, RG 334, NA.

⁴⁶‘From Turkish Embassy Washington DC to the Acting Secretary of State’, 16 January 1947, 867.24/1-1647; ‘From the Department of State to American Embassy, Ankara’, 20 August 1947, 867.24/8-2047, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1945–49, National Archives Microfilm Publications M1292; and Munson, *The Joint American Military Mission to Aid Turkey*, 90–3.

⁴⁷‘Histories’, 9 March 1950, 250/3; ‘JAMMAT Monthly Progress Report’, February 1948, JAMMAT Adjutant General Section Central Files Unit 251a/13, RG 334, NA.

⁴⁸‘U.S. Mission Protests: Military Group in Turkey Says Allowance Slash is Onerous’, *New York Times*, 6 March 1949.

⁴⁹‘U.S. Arms Aid Shown at Turkish Festival’, *New York Times*, 30 October 1949. In addition to his duty in the Infantry School, Lt. Col. d’Eliscu acted briefly as the chief instructor in orientation training of the conscripts of the Turkish Brigade earmarked for Korea in 1950. However, it was a very short-lived assignment due to his harsh treatment of the Turkish troops. Mesut Uyar and Serhat Güvenc, ‘One Battle, Two Accounts: The Turkish Brigade in Kunu-ri in November 1950’, *The Journal of Military History* 80 (2016): 1130.

⁵⁰‘MAP – Military Missions’, 18 February 1958, 18/79/11, FY 1951 Turkey, RG 330, NA.

⁵¹‘Memorandum to Maj Gen Bolte from Lt Gen Egeli’, 20 October 1950, 18/78/001-121, Turkey 1950, RG 330, NA.

hardware alone would not suffice to turn the Turkish Army into a formidable military machine. The country's poor transportation network was a fundamental obstacle to Turkey's ability to absorb modern US military equipment. The low rate of literacy among Turkish conscripts was shortly identified as another serious problem.

As a matter of fact, the Turkish military's involvement in transportation and literacy matters predated the Truman Doctrine.⁵² This time, improving the literacy of the conscripts became a prerequisite for properly advising and training Turkish soldiers on the tactical use and technical maintenance of the US-supplied equipment. Expanding Turkey's road network, on the other hand, was crucial in improving the mobility of the Turkish Army as a remedy to the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Red Army.⁵³

Educating and training the military mind

The training of conscripts as the primary operators of advanced US weapons and equipment posed two types of challenges for the US instructors. The first was the basic training of new inductees, which had long been shouldered by the frontline units. According to the US advisors' view, Turkish training practices produced suboptimal results in terms of both the combat readiness of frontline units and the effectiveness of basic training.⁵⁴ As for the Turkish officers, some echoed the Americans' view about its shortcomings.⁵⁵ Others were convinced that posting conscripts directly to the frontline units produced better results in terms of unit coherence and discipline. The officers would thus personally know the strengths and weaknesses of each soldier in their units.⁵⁶

JUSMMAT made a proposal to enhance the efficiency of both the training and combat readiness of the Turkish Army. It called for the transfer of all non-combat training responsibility from the frontline units to the Replacement Training Centres (RTC) that were to be established. The proposal was rejected flat out by the Chief of Staff General Nuri Yamut. He argued that the frontline units would be stretched thin, as they would lose a substantial number of their officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to fill the billets in the new RTCs. His opposition to the idea delayed its implementation until he was succeeded by General Nurettin Baransel.⁵⁷ Then, three training divisions were activated exclusively for conscript training in 1954.⁵⁸

New training outfits provided a much-needed institutional framework to address the issue of literacy, which affected the Turkish Army more seriously than any other service. This was the result of the mismatch between Turkish conscription practices and US military assistance priorities. US Ambassador George McGhee in Ankara described the situation as follows:

⁵²Kocatürk, *Bir Subayın Anıları*, 104.

⁵³Nurettin Koç, 'Atatürk'ten Bu Yana Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerinde Okuma Yazma Öğretimi', in *Türkiye'de İşlevsel Okur Yazarlığın Yaygınlaştırılması* (Ankara: MEB Yaygın Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü, 1981), 68–76.

⁵⁴'Report on Effectiveness of Forces as of 31 December 1953', 3/20, Turkey, RG 330, NA; 'Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950 on the Turkish Army', 5 January 1951, FO 371-95295, TNA.

⁵⁵İsmail Hakkı Oğuz, *Ağla Yüreğim: Anadolu Devrimcisinin Not Defterinden* (İstanbul: Gita Yayınları, 2007), 333–4.

⁵⁶Yurtsever, interview.

⁵⁷Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990); and Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, 34.

⁵⁸Kenan Kocatürk, *Bir Subayın Anıları: 1909–1999* (İstanbul: Kastaş Yayınları, 1999), 434.

When I came to Turkey as ambassador in 1952, I discovered that the Gendarmerie, essentially a police force, had a call on the first 40,000 school graduates among those inducted into the Turkish armed forces each year (approximately 135,000 many of whom had not finished school), the Navy 16,000, the Air Force 20,000 with the Army taking what was left.⁵⁹

The modernisation and mechanisation of the Turkish Army required skill sets that most average Turkish conscripts seriously lacked. Consequently, literacy training was incorporated into the agenda of US military aid to Turkey. Under Law No. 97, 16 literacy training schools were formed for the conscripts in 1958. Until 1975, 532,266 conscripts were admitted to these schools, 392,777 of whom successfully completed their education.⁶⁰ The US provided funding for building these schools and supplied technical and academic support for developing teaching materials for the literacy courses.⁶¹ By the 1970s, the conscripts' literacy training schools stood out as arguably the most successful aspect of US military assistance to Turkey during the Cold War.⁶²

In a similar frame of mind, increasing the number of NCOs in the ranks of the Turkish Army remained a constant preoccupation for the US advisors. In 1950, they proposed recruiting 30,700 additional NCOs. For the US advisors, conscripts (corporals and sergeants) could be encouraged to become career (or professional) NCOs. This would provide a quick-fix remedy for the shortage of skilled operators and trainers for US equipment and weapons.⁶³ However, the officer corps resisted the idea that with the new training system, large numbers of NCOs and specialists would threaten their command status and privileges.⁶⁴

The officer and NCO training was a challenge of a different magnitude in two respects. The first was related to the short-term courses designed to instruct them on the techniques and doctrines of employing US weapons and equipment effectively. Yet the fact that US-trained Turkish junior officers taught technical, tactical and doctrine courses to senior officers did not cause major problems. This practice was unprecedented in the Turkish military, which had stuck to the principle that a junior could not instruct a senior.⁶⁵

With the changes in the officer/NCO training re-organised along the lines of the US model, JUSMMAT observed an overall improvement in the quality of junior officers. However, there was also reluctance to assign these officers to certain staff positions or allow them to pass their knowledge on to others. According to the US advisors, another factor that negated the effectiveness of the US military assistance was the assignment

⁵⁹McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection*, 45.

⁶⁰Koç, 'Atatürk'ten Bu Yana', 70–2.

⁶¹Dr Paul Lubke's email of 17 January 2007 to the authors. Dr Lubke provided technical and academic support to the preparation of textbooks and supplements used in literacy training. The training syllabus included civic education as well. Mehmet Tuğrul and Hamdi Olcay, *Yurt ve Yaşama Bilgisi* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1959).

⁶²Yurtsever, interview; 'Congressional Record – Senate', May 1981, CIA-RDP90T0078R0010060001-7, 10642, NA.

⁶³'Analysis of Military Aid Program to Turkey: Final Report', 1950, JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General's Section Decimal File, 256/106, RG 334, NA; 'Memorandum of Conversation: Non-Commissioned Officer Corps for Turkey', 14 November 1950, 18/79, 111 FY 1951, Turkey, RG 330, NA.

⁶⁴Çelikoğlu, *Bir Darbeci Subayın Anıları*, 70. See also Suphi Karaman, 'Devrimci, Bağımsız, Türkiyeci Milli Savunma Stratejisi Nasıl Olmalıdır?', in *Türkiye'nin Milli Savunma Stratejisi ve Dış Politika Sorunları* (Ankara: Ulusal Basımevi, 1965), 17.

⁶⁵JUSMMAT was ready to push the established rank boundaries even further. For instance, a G-3 report reads: 'We would like to change the Turkish concept that a junior cannot inspect a senior, even though the junior represents a higher organization. We should push this so that soon there will be something out on a staff inspection system'. 'Record of Army Team Chiefs Conference, 24–26 February 1954', 31 March 1954, 255/81, G-3 Section Reports, Conferences, TUSAG Staff, 1954, RG 334, NA.

patterns of the Turkish military. The TGS continued to make assignments based on the traditional troop-staff or East-West cycles regardless of the specialised training the officers received.⁶⁶

Later, the privileged general staff branch and its selection and education for officers had become a major bone of contention between the two sides.⁶⁷ JUSMMAT proposed a reduction from three to two years for the education of general staff officers from all services. JUSMMAT made another proposal – to establish a national defence academy (modelled on the US National War College) to extend the scope of staff training beyond the field army to the national strategy – as well.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the two sides did not see eye to eye on the content of the proposed national defence academy syllabus. According to the US advisors, the emphasis had to be on the level of national and international politics, whereas their hosts argued for a service-level curriculum.⁶⁹ Such divergences of opinion reflected yet again the wide gap between their understandings of war. In the Turkish context, the US military paradigm first and foremost manifested itself with an ever-stronger emphasis on jointness, in stark contrast to the army-centred Prussian/German paradigm. Secondly, the US military doctrine focused on the tactical and strategic levels of war with scant or no attention paid to the operational level. Third, it presumed the availability of superior resources and a technological edge to sustain long wars of attrition. Fourth, it adhered to the managerial approach to command which required detailed prescriptive manuals in executing combat orders. Fifth, war-fighting capability was based on a relatively small peacetime army, which needed time to mobilise. Therefore, early tactical defeats were absorbed, as terrain could be sacrificed to gain time to mobilise.⁷⁰ Finally, officer training was geared towards applied military science and engineering without much attention paid to liberal academic foundations.

Broadly speaking, the US officers were trained to regard war as an instrument at the disposal of policy (or politics), while the Prussian/German trained Turkish officers subscribed to a view that accorded primacy to war (military strategy) over politics.⁷¹ In other words, war was not an instrument serving policy, but an end in and of itself for a 'nation in arms'. They naturally differed on the list of recommended reading for officers. While *The Napoleonic Campaigns* was the favourite of TGS, JUSMMAT had a hard time getting the former to endorse Patton's *War as I Knew it* as recommended reading for the infantry officers.⁷²

US involvement in Turkish general staff officer education never went deep enough to cancel out the effect of decades of exposure to Prussian/German indoctrination. The US

⁶⁶Memorandum to Chief of Staff from and Maj. Gen. McBride', 29 August 1949, 250A/9, Correspondence TGS, RG 334, NA; 'MAP – Military Missions', 18 February 1951, 18/79/111, FY 1951 Turkey, RG 330, NA.

⁶⁷'Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950 on the Turkish Army', 5 January 1951, FO 371-95295, TNA.

⁶⁸'From Gen. Arnold to Gen. Harold Bull', 28 May 1952; 'Armed Forces Staff College Manuals', 14 August 1952, JAMMAT Adjutant General Section Central Files Unit, 250/7, RG 334, NA.

⁶⁹'Turkish National War College', 15 April 1952; 'Turkish Military Staff College, Armed Forces War College Manuals', 14 August 1952, JAMMAT Adjutant General Section Central Files Unit, 250/7, RG 334, NA.

⁷⁰Richard Lock-Pullan, 'How to Rethink War: Conceptual Innovation and Airland Battle Doctrine', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28 (2005): 679–702.

⁷¹Omar N. Bradley, 'Creating a Sound Military Force', *Military Review* 29, no. 2 (1949): 3–6; and Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Doctrine, 1946–76* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1979), 2–7.

⁷²'Report of Ad Hoc Committee on Turkish Infantry', 2 January 1951, 250/7, 353 INF – Infantry School and Trg 1951, RG 334, NA.

military mission's priority was to train the Turks on the proper use of US-supplied hardware in a very short time so that they could stand up to the Soviets alone. Therefore, the emphasis was on the technical and practical aspects of warfare. This approach inevitably limited US involvement to the field/troop level, whereas an effort to transform Turkish officer education/training would have required a long-term commitment which was beyond the remit of the initial JUSMMAT. Nor did the US have a general staff training establishment of its own to offer as an alternative to the Prussian/German model.⁷³ This inability and unwillingness of JUSMMAT to penetrate Turkish officer education at undergraduate and graduate levels helped the Prussian/German notions of warfare survive even after Germany (its reincarnations both in the East and in the West) completely discarded them after the Second World War.

Military doctrine and organisation

Turkish Army manuals were adaptations of German Army manuals. The Turkish Army manual titled *Muhtelif Sınıfların Birlikte Sevk ve İdaresi (Handling of Combined Arms Formations)* was an adaptation of the German manual *Truppenführung*.⁷⁴ For decades, it was the most widely used manual and defined the concept of war for the Turkish Army.⁷⁵ A very attentive general staff officer, Kenan Kocatürk, observed that under US military assistance, priority had shifted on to *Karargahlarda Teşkilat [ve] Çalışma Usülleri (Staff Organisation and Operations)*, which had no equivalent in the Prussian/German system. He was baffled by the level of detail in which staff duties were described in the new system. For him, this was the most striking difference between the old and new ways of war taught to Turkish officers.⁷⁶ In the process, the Turkish version of the *Truppenführung* was superseded by the *Field Manual for Operations (FM100-5)*. Kocatürk identified major differences between the two military systems in a comparative perspective as follows:

For me, the German system allowed a greater room for initiative. It aimed to secure victory against superior forces with small forces by employing strategy and tactics as a fine art of war. In contrast, the American system prescribed the course of action needed to be taken for every conceivable situation, while operations were supported by the most impressive array of weapons, equipment and vehicles and an infinite supply system. As Napoleon put it, it was all about 'money, money, money'. The German system, on the other hand, was all brains, brains, brains. Historically, the latter suited us better. Many victories in Turkish military history were won with modest forces against overwhelming odds. Each nation has its own unique combat attributes and strengths.⁷⁷

In addition to the field manuals (FMs), the Turkish Army also adapted the US Army Tables of Equipment and Organization (TOEs). The Turkish enthusiasm for adapting the US Army TOEs might have been due to an expectation that they would justify the supply

⁷³See Jörg Muth, *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces 1901–1940, and the Consequences for World War II* (Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2011), 115–47.

⁷⁴*Muhtelif Sınıfların Birlikte Sevk ve Muharebe Talimnamesi*, section 1 (Ankara: Genelkurmay Matbaası, 1936); and *Muhtelif Sınıfların Birlikte Sevk ve Muharebe Talimnamesi*, section 2 (Ankara: Genelkurmay Matbaası, 1937).

⁷⁵James C. Corum argues that the *Truppenführung* 'stands firmly in the tradition of Clausewitz, Moltke and Seeckt as an expression of the German way of war'. 'Introduction', in *On the German Art of War: Truppenführung, German Army Manual for Unit Command in World War II*, ed. Bruce Condell and David T. Zabecki (Pennsylvania: Stockpole Books, 2009), x.

⁷⁶Kocatürk, *Bir Subayın Anıları*, 420–1.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

of required weapons and equipment under the US military assistance programme. In other words, it was probably regarded as a way of securing a sustained flow of military assistance to Turkey. However, even placing the whole Turkish Army at the disposal of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) failed to secure a major increase in such assistance.⁷⁸ A case in point was the Turkish proposal to form six new divisions, which had been rejected outright by JUSMMAT.⁷⁹ Ankara then tried its luck with NATO, which endorsed the Turkish proposal. The supply of weapons and equipment for these six new Turkish divisions remained uncertain for years. 'In essence, it appears as if Turkey intends to use the Annual Review [Questionnaire of SACEUR] as a means of forcing the U.S. to equip units on a magnitude basis, without regard to their quality', the Army Advisory Group concluded.⁸⁰

The US military advisors could never relate to Turkish officers' efforts to spare equipment and ammunition at the expense of training. Plagued by a shortage of supplies for decades, the Turkish officers habitually saved all sorts of ammunition for a rainy day. This exposed yet another unbridgeable gap between the Turkish and American mindsets. The US FMs and TOEs could be translated into Turkish, but the American notion of train-as-you-fight could not. For JUSMMAT, such behaviour compromised the training and combat readiness of Turkish troops.⁸¹ US and Turkish officers frequently conflicted over the use of live rounds and ammunition for training purposes for years to come.⁸²

However, all these disagreements paled in comparison to the US-Turkey rift over the course of action that the Turkish Army would take in the event of a Soviet attack. JUSMMAT concluded that a 'major attack from the East and Southeast, by Soviet Forces, would force the Turkish Army to retire South of the Taurus Mountains by D + 120 day unless external combat and logistical support is provided'.⁸³ The Turkish-US staff meetings began to revolve around a defence plan centred on the so-called Iskenderun pocket as early as 1950.⁸⁴ As for Turkish plans and preparations for the defence of Thrace and Eastern Anatolia, JUSMMAT viewed the units assigned to defend these two theatres as inadequate and suitable only for linear defence, which was rendered obsolete with the German invasion of Poland in 1939.⁸⁵

Hence, JUSMMAT suggested that the units in Thrace not be issued with modern US weapons and equipment. Due to the absence of means of transporting heavy equipment from the European to the Asian side, they were almost certain to fall into the hands of aggressors. Accordingly, the TGS agreed to reduce the strength of forces deployed in Turkish Thrace.⁸⁶ The number of army corps deployed in the region was reduced from five in 1950 to one in 1955.⁸⁷

⁷⁸Memorandum for Director, Office of North Atlantic Treaty Affairs', 2 October 1953, 17/54, RG 330, NA.

⁷⁹'Turkey', 7 October 1951. 320.2, RG 330, NA.

⁸⁰Memorandum for Director, Office of North Atlantic Treaty Affairs', 2 October 1953, 17/54, RG 330, NA.

⁸¹See 'Memorandum for Record: TUSAG Schools Conference, 2-4 February 1954', 15 February 1954, (55/81), Conferences TUSAG 1954, RG 334, NA.

⁸²Büyüktuğrul, *Cumhuriyet Donanmasının*, 945.

⁸³'Report on Effectiveness of Forces as of 31 December 1953', (3/20) Turkey, RG 330, NA.

⁸⁴'Memorandum for Record', 6 December 1950, 250/6, Conferences TGS, RG 334, NA.

⁸⁵'Defence of Thrace Studies', 10 November 1950, 250/6, Conferences TGS, RG 334, NA.

⁸⁶'Memorandum for Record', 6 December 1950, 250/6, Conferences TGS, RG 334, NA.

⁸⁷'Memorandum to Minister of Defense from Maj. Gen. W. H. Arnold', 18 March 1953, 250/6, 320T, Turk Military, RG 334, NA; and Oğuz, *Ağla Yüreğim*, 307.

In the event of a Soviet attack on Turkey, the US plans called for Turkish forces' orderly withdrawal to the İskenderun pocket behind the Taurus Mountains for final defence. However, no one knew how the Turkish units in Thrace and the Eastern borders would perform such a long-haul retreat. The Turkish military had no experience of retreat under enemy fire since the 1921 Battle of Sakarya during the War of Liberation. Indeed, the Turkish Army did not even conduct retreat-based scenarios in exercises. Moreover, in 1946, the Turkish Third Army was pulled back in haste 300 kilometres from the border in anticipation of an imminent Soviet attack. That episode continued to haunt those Turkish officers who witnessed in horror how a full-strength field army disintegrated on its way to Erzurum in peacetime.⁸⁸

Due to resource and time considerations, US assistance had to be configured to cater to the needs of a withdrawing army.⁸⁹ In addition to resource limitations, this defensive plan was very much in tune with the prevailing US military doctrine. Having recognised the trade-off between time and terrain, the US doctrine allowed giving up terrain to gain time strategically, particularly in overseas campaigns.⁹⁰ In contrast, the Turkish officers were trained and conditioned not to abandon terrain without a fight. Moreover, abandoning Thrace in particular would not just mean loss of some territory, but the geographical cornerstone of Turkey's claim to European identity, probably irreversibly.

While the TGS could not openly oppose the US plans, they desperately tried to dilute them. In that frame of mind, the TGS proposed activating new infantry divisions and creating an armoured division by merging two armoured brigades as Turkey's additional commitments to NATO's force goals. Such attempts reflected a desire to rule out or at least delay abandonment of terrain by Turkish forces in the event of a Soviet attack. However, in the end, JUSMMAT prevailed over the TGS. The US plans for the defence of Turkey had political implications, too. While Turkish forces were to hold their position at the Taurus Mountains, a government in exile would be set up in Libya until the country was liberated by US forces.⁹¹

US plans for the defence of Turkey required the improved mobility of Turkish forces, which necessitated the substantial improvement of Turkey's transportation networks. The American journalists who visited Turkey to get to know this new American ally came back with similar views. For instance, Clay Gowran of the *Chicago Tribune* was taken to the Turkish-Soviet border on a US-built military truck in June 1947. He observed that even the best US mechanised vehicles would be of little value if Turkey's roads were not developed.⁹² Despite the herculean effort the new Republic had undertaken to build railways between the two world wars, they were insufficient to meet strategic needs.⁹³ An initial sum of US\$5 million was allocated to the PRA to supervise and build 23,000 kilometres of highway. The primary aim of this programme was to enhance the mobility

⁸⁸M. Sadi Koçaş, *Pentomik Tümen* (Ankara: E.U Basımevi, 1959), 29; Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, 24–8; and Oğuz, *Ağla Yüreğim*, 211–12.

⁸⁹MAP – Military Missions', 18 February 1958, 18/79, 111 FY 1951 Turkey, RG 330, NA.

⁹⁰The situation in Western Europe was no different than in Turkey. 'With only 12 poorly trained and badly deployed divisions in Western Europe', NATO's short-term defence plan was 'designed only to minimise panic and to avoid a repetition of the Dunkirk debacle of 1940, so that outnumbered NATO forces could make an orderly withdrawal in the face of a Soviet attack. The plan identified evacuation routes and assigned U.S. and British ships to rescue as many as possible. At best, the Allied forces might hold at the Pyrenees'. Lawrence S. Kaplan, *A Community of Interests: NATO and Military Assistance Program, 1949–1951* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defence Historical Office, 1980), 85.

⁹¹Ecevit Kılıç, *Özel Harp Dairesi: Türkiye'nin Gizli Tarihi* (İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 2007), 118.

⁹²Clay Gowran, 'Turkey's Prime Need: Railways and Good Roads', *Chicago Tribune*, 19 June 1947.

⁹³See, for instance, Kocatürk, *Bir Subayın Anıları*, 216.

of the border units in the east and west. Understandably, highways connecting Edirne and Erzurum to İskenderun were given high priority.⁹⁴ The idea initially alarmed the Turkish military.⁹⁵ This time American and Turkish officers were set apart over how much highways contributed to defence. Whereas Turkish officers were convinced that a lack of roads strengthened their defences and rendered the country impregnable, the US officers' combat experience showed them otherwise.⁹⁶

The rise of young officers as agents of change

Two years after the Truman Doctrine, the Turkish military went through a substantial reorganisation along the lines of the US model under Law No. 5398 of 30 May 1949 on the Organisation and Duties of the Ministry of Defence. This law was supposed to usher in a new era in both civil-military and inter-service relations. First, the law formally brought the Chief of the General Staff under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence. Second, separate Army, Navy and Air Force commands were formed to end the Chief of the General Staff and army generals' unbearable weight on military matters.⁹⁷ Contrary to US expectations, legal changes to the General Staff's status had little practical impact on its monopoly on military decisions, particularly those related to the army. The reorganisation was the brainchild of the military head of the mission, Major General Horace L. McBride, who proposed a relatively modest General Staff functioning as the office of Joint Chiefs of Staff rather than supreme command.⁹⁸

By 1951, the new law had not been fully implemented.⁹⁹ McBride's successor, Major General William H. Arnold, was frustrated with the General Staff's foot-dragging in relinquishing its command authority over the army. The latter's persistent disregard of the 1949 Law gradually demoted the Commander in Chief of the Army into an inspector general. Arnold argued that this disregard defied both the letter and the spirit of the new law.¹⁰⁰ JUSMMAT was convinced that 'something must be done to transform the TGS into a Real Joint Staff, which will permit the coexistence of Headquarters Ground Forces, not as a figurehead but as a valid authoritative representative of the Army'.¹⁰¹ Arnold might have had a hand in the early retirement of 80 Turkish generals whom he said 'cannot now adapt themselves to new conditions or learn what is to many of them a new and wider trade'.¹⁰² In 1954, the TGS finally relented and notified JUSMMAT of its decision to adopt the joint headquarters organisation along the lines of the US and NATO models.¹⁰³

⁹⁴*Yol Davamız: 9 Yılda 23000 Kilometre* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Matbaası, 1948), 32; and Nazım Berksan, *Yol Davamız Nerede?* (Ankara: Akın Matbaası, 1951), 129–30.

⁹⁵*Anılarla Karayolu Tarihi*, (Ankara: KGM, 2007), 30.

⁹⁶Serhat Güvenç, 'The Cold War Origins of the Turkish Motor Vehicle Industry: The Tuzla Jeep, 1954–1971', *Turkish Studies* 15 (2014): 539–40.

⁹⁷*Düstur*, Band III, vol. 30 (November 1948–October 1949), 1076.

⁹⁸Ekavi Athanassopolou, *Turkey-Anglo-American Security Interests, 1945–1952: The First Enlargement of NATO* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 153.

⁹⁹Memorandum to Chief, JAMMAT from Brig Gen Robert M. Cannon', 9 February 1951, 250/3/322, Turkish Units 1951, RG 334, NA.

¹⁰⁰Memorandum to Chief of Staff from Maj Gen W.H. Arnold', 7 March 1951, 250/6/322, Turkish Units 1951, RG 334, NA.

¹⁰¹Memorandum to Chief, TUSAG from Lt. Colonel Robert W. Malloy', 8 February 1951, 250/6/322, Turkish Units 1951, RG 334, NA.

¹⁰²Annual Report on the Turkish Army for 1951', 11 January 1952, TNA, FO 371-101882.

¹⁰³TUSAG Staff Conference', 22 December 1954, 255/81, G-3 Section Reports, 1954, 337 Conferences TUSAG Staff, RG 334, NA.

The 1950 elections brought to an end almost 30 years of one-party rule in Turkey. The Democrat Party's (DP) election provided General McBride with an opportunity to share his views with the new rulers. The new foreign minister, Fuad Köprülü, invited McBride to hear the latter's view on the Turkish military. McBride's assessment was very short and blunt: 'The conditions in the Turkish Forces could be considered alarming as there were no units in the Turkish Military Forces that were capable of taking the field and making a credible performance in combat'.¹⁰⁴

In 1953, the most significant criticism levelled at the Turkish military was the concentration of authority at the top. This situation, the US advisors argued, hindered initiative (discretion), flexibility and progress. Headquarters were granted minimum authority and functions. Even the simplest decisions needed approval by commanding officers, and even field army commanders lacked the authority to reshuffle officers or NCOs between units under their command.¹⁰⁵

The US advisors' complaints about the denial of initiative to their subordinates by Turkish officers actually mirrored similar complaints by Turkish officers about their US superiors' behaviour on the battlefields of Korea in the 1950s.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, US-Turkish military interaction remained mostly a peacetime activity with the notable exception of the Korean War in the 1950s. The two sides' views on this very early encounter with each other in the battlefield do not necessarily overlap.

A case in point is the Turkish Brigade's first combat assignment at the Battle of Kunu-ri. The Brigade commander, General Yazıcı, used discretion at a number of critical junctures in the battle. His actions thus did not conform to the orders of his American superiors. The latter concluded at the end of this first ordeal that the Turkish Brigade's commander and his staff misunderstood and even deliberately disregarded their orders. From the Turkish perspective, Yazıcı's actions were perfectly legitimate, as he was trained in the Prussian/German art of war, which gave a commander a great degree of autonomy in executing his superiors' orders (*Auftragstaktik*, or mission command). In contrast, the US managerial approach revolved around centralisation and left little initiative to the subordinates.¹⁰⁷ A very bright young officer who served with the First Turkish Brigade in Korea wrote that the US generals in Korea belonged to a military culture that valued winning battles with superior firepower.¹⁰⁸ This way of war was meant to keep casualties down to a minimum without much or any regard for the consequent destruction. In contrast, Brigadier Yazıcı was 'a product of a [military] culture with deep roots that valued maneuver and unit cohesion in deciding the outcome of battles'.¹⁰⁹

Serving in Korea under the US command was a transformative experience in and of itself for many young Turkish officers, although the Prussian/German connection in the Turkish Army was presented in a positive light in evaluating its first battlefield performance. For instance, one of the prominent figures in the 27 May 1960 Coup, Major

¹⁰⁴Record of Conversation between Fuad Koprulu and Maj. Gen. McBride', 28 June 1950, 250A/9, Correspondence TGS, RG334, NA.

¹⁰⁵Report on Effectiveness of Forces as of 31 December 1953', 3/20, Turkey, RG 330, NA.

¹⁰⁶From Maj. Gen. H.L. McBride to the Minister of National Defense', 22 May 1950, JAMMAT Army Group Adjutant General's Section Decimal File, 256/84, Records of Interservice Agencies, RG 334, NA.

¹⁰⁷See Uyar and Güvenc, 'One Battle, Two Accounts', 1141–4.

¹⁰⁸See Muth, *Command Culture*, 3.

¹⁰⁹Yalta, *Kunu-ri Muharebeleri*, 363.

General Cemal Madanoğlu, confided that his alienation from the established military culture in Turkey began when he realised the huge gap between Turkish and American military thinking. In his memoirs, Madanoğlu compared his experiences with each of them. When he was a junior officer who strove to requisition helmets for his unit, he had to go all the way up to Chief of General Staff Marshal Çakmak for approval. Others in the chain of command did not have the authority to approve even such minor requisitions. Later in his career, he was posted in Korea. When he wanted to move his unit to a more defensible position at night, the American duty officer, a major, found his request reasonable and permitted him to do so. He was baffled by the fact that a major would have such authority and would not hesitate to exercise it in combat.¹¹⁰

Therefore, the 'Prussian school' was increasingly identified with the narrow-mindedness and parochialism of the old guard in the discussions raging in peacetime garrisons. To put it differently, the clash of military cultures took place not only between JUSMMAT and the TGS. The older generation Turkish officers, such as Chief of the General Staff Nuri Yamut, were resentful of JUSMMAT's growing influence in Turkish military matters. In contrast, the younger generation officers were more receptive to the American ideas. This emphasised the generational and cultural gap between the top brass and junior officers in the Turkish military. In the process, the latter evolved into proponents and agents of change.

Turkish officers who witnessed the efforts to transform the military under US supervision later linked the prevailing inertia in the Turkish military to the Prussian/German tradition. Therefore, the 'Prussian school' turned into a term that the younger generation officers used to distance themselves from the older generation officers. The adjective 'Prussian' was frequently used as a synonym for narrow-mindedness or hardheadedness. The Prussian/German school took on a uniquely subjective connotation in the Turkish context.¹¹¹

For instance, Colonel Talat Aydemir, who had led two failed coup attempts in the early 1960s, made similar observations. For him, officers who had been trained under the old (Prussian/German) system were largely oblivious to the nation's problems and cared only about their personal well-being and parochial interests, whereas officers who were trained in the US like him were different. However, he had to sit out the military coup of 27 May 1960 because he was assigned to the Turkish Brigade in Korea. He later noted in his diary: 'My ambition is to be in a position to oversee the planning and implementation of a reform and even purge in the Turkish Army'.¹¹²

The American advisors remained optimistic about the impact of generational change on Turkish military power.¹¹³ US military assistance was a catalyst in empowering young and ambitious junior officers professionally. In other words, attempting to transform the Turkish military along the lines of the US model negated the advantage of seniority and rank. Junior and senior officers sat in classrooms together without regard to rank in order to learn a new way of war from the start. Military hierarchy was thus replaced with a professional level playing field.¹¹⁴ Frustrated with the traditional hierarchy and empowered

¹¹⁰Walter F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960–1961: Aspects of Military Politics* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institutions, 1963), 124.

¹¹¹Oğuz, *Ağla Yüreğim*, 260.

¹¹²Talat Aydemir, *Ve Talat Aydemir Konuşuyor* (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1966), 66–7.

¹¹³Report on Effectiveness of Forces as of 31 December 1953', 3/20, Turkey, RG 330, NA.

¹¹⁴M. Hikmet Bayar, *Yarım Asırlık Asker*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Okuyan, 2006), 169–70; and Çelikoğlu, *Bir Darbeci Subayın Anıları*, 56.

by their US training, the younger generations not only eventually overthrew the Menderes government, but also purged the old guard from their ranks in the wake of the 27 May 1960 Coup. It was the second paradigmatic purge of the military in the history of modern Turkey. This time the Prussian/German trained officers were purged by the young officers with US training.¹¹⁵ After the purge, young officers were appointed to command positions way above their nominal ranks, as in 1913.¹¹⁶ In practical terms, US military assistance set in train the long overdue rejuvenation of the Turkish military.¹¹⁷

In both instances, military transformation and paradigmatic purges took place in tandem with state transformation. In 1913, defeat in the Balkan Wars led the military wing of the Young Turks to believe that building a nation-state was the only way out for the multinational Empire. Hence, Goltz's idea of a 'nation-in-arms' provided them with the paradigm around which they could restructure the state, create a nation and reform the military. Moreover, 'nation-in-arms' lent legitimacy to heavy military involvement in the nation's affairs. In 1960, the young Turkish officers were exposed to an equally compelling American idea of national security. For these officers, empowered by their US training, the Turkish Republic had to be restructured as a national security state to tackle the military and ideological threat from the Soviet Union. Like Goltz's idea of a nation-in-arms, the concept of national security also legitimised military involvement, and even interventions, in politics.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

The US military paradigm shaped how the Turkish military was organised, trained and equipped for much of the Cold War. However, their mandate constrained US military advisors to focus on short-term quick-impact projects at the expense of professional military education. Cadets continued to be educated according to the old blend of the Turkish-German system in the Military Academy, but after graduation, they had to switch to the new American system at the branch schools. Then, after spending six to 12 years in their respective units utilising the US weapon systems according to US doctrine, they entered the General Staff College, which operated according to the old German model. Furthermore, the General Staff endured as a 'Prussian' institution and never functioned as true 'Joint Staff'. It jealously preserved its tight grip around the armed services. Consequently, General Staff remained a privileged career track for officers.

Hence, it is tempting to conclude that the Cold War Turkish military was a hybrid institution exhibiting various features of the Prussian/German and US military paradigms. The Turkish military's reluctance or failure to adopt fully the US military paradigm might also be linked to the extremely limited resources it had commanded during the Cold War. The US way of war was beyond the means at Turkey's disposal. Without significant material capabilities, the Turkish military usually focused on lessons

¹¹⁵The purge was not limited to the senior officers. About 7200 officers, including 235 flag officers, were purged after the military coup in 1960. In other words, 90% of all flag officers, 50% of staff officers and 30% of majors were discharged. *EMİNSU'nun Yuvaya Dönüş Davası* (npp, np, 1972), 20.

¹¹⁶For two years after the coup, some divisions were assigned colonels as commanders. 'Orduda Generallerin Sayısı Artırılacak', *Yeni İstanbul*, 22 July 1962.

¹¹⁷Hanson W. Baldwin, 'Turkey's New Soldiers: Role of Junior Officers in Coup is Held a Result of Education and Environment', *New York Times*, 5 June 1960.

¹¹⁸See Gencer Özcan, 'Türkiye'de Millî Güvenlik Kavramının Gelişimi', in *Türkiye'de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, ed. Evren Balta and İsmet Akça (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010), 307–51.

learnt by the weaker side in conflicts where poor nations were pitted against resource-rich superpowers, including the United States.¹¹⁹ Hence, operational arts and irregular warfare were always favoured over complex logistics of a war of attrition in the Turkish military mind throughout the Cold War.¹²⁰

Generational change in the Turkish military could have ended this duality. However, its immediate impact on military-to-military relations was cancelled out by the turn of events following the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. The rejuvenated Turkish military did not question the US decision to abruptly withdraw the Jupiter missiles in Turkey in the aftermath of the Crisis. It was expected that Turkey's compliance would be rewarded with expedited delivery of modern weapons such as the F-104 G Starfighter strike aircraft.¹²¹ They later found out that such modern weapons could not be relied upon for national contingencies, as US President Lyndon Johnson reminded Turkish Prime Minister İnönü in a harshly worded letter during the 1964 Cyprus Crisis.¹²² This situation put young officers in a dilemma. On one level, US military assistance empowered them. On another, the heavy dependence on US arms restricted their government's ability to pursue national objectives in foreign policy. Hence, they had reasons both to appreciate and resent the US military. Such mixed feelings inevitably limited the impact of US assistance on the Turkish military during the Cold War.

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¹¹⁹A case in point is the Korean War. Although the Turkish troops fought alongside the US units under the US command in Korea, Turkish officers found the experiences of the Chinese more relevant to their upcoming conflict with the Soviets, who enjoyed an overwhelming military superiority over Turkey. Major Turgut Sunalp, *Kore Harbi* (Istanbul: Harp Akademileri Basımevi, 1954), 109; and Ahmet Eren, *Kore 1952–1953: Bir Türk Subayının Kore Günlüğü* (Istanbul: Destek Yayınları, 2017), 142.

¹²⁰See Mahmut Boğuşlu, *1960–1978 Olayları: Anılar-Yorumlar* (Istanbul: Kastaş Yayınları, 1995), 138.

¹²¹Phillip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy and Jupiters, 1957–1963* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 164.

¹²²George Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945–1971* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1972), 112.