

CONSTANTINOS SVOLOPOULOS

THE DODECANESE QUESTION
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR
GREECE, TURKEY AND THE ALLIES



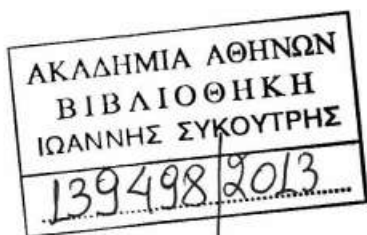
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ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ

ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



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INTRODUCTION

THE DODECANESE ISLANDS have been part of the Hellenic world since ancient times. Despite centuries of foreign domination, the inhabitants' consciousness of their Greek ethnicity remained unimpaired, having been kept alive by traditional local institutions, the Orthodox Church and the native language. 'They are unanimous at this desire' – concluded the Foreign Office in 1941¹. Indeed, after being part of the Byzantine Empire, the Dodecanese were conquered, successively, by the Italian Republics and the Knights Hospitaller, the Ottomans and then, in 1912, by the Italians, who gained full acknowledgment of their sovereignty under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923, when Turkey renounced all rights to the islands². However, at the end of this long period the vast majority of their population – about 87 per cent – declared itself Greek and ardently desired union with Greece, in application of the principle of self determination³. Accordingly, during the Peace Conference in Paris (1919-1920), Italy and Greece reached a bilateral agreement, whereby the former would cede to the latter all the islands except Rhodes, which would provisionally remain autonomous. However, as the Peace Treaty of Sevres, of 10 August 1920, did not come into force, the Italian Government notified that it regarded the Greco-Italian agreement also as null and void, and that the Dodecanese had to remain under the rule of Rome; and this, despite the ethnic character and the wishes of the islands' inhabitants⁴.

Here is, as a consequence, the defining evidence of a pending international issue. It is self-evident that the primary components that defined developments

1. [Public Record Office], Foreign Office [F.O.], 371/37224, The Dodecanese question (most secret). Appendix A', [December, 1941].

2. On the history of Dodecanese, see also, [Public Record Office], War Office [W.O.] 106/3260, History of Dodecanese, April 12, 1943.

3. According to the last Italian statistics [Public Record Office], F.O. 371/33165, Research Department, Foreign Office: Turkey's claim and interests in territories and populations outside her frontiers, October 28, 1944; the same, F.O. 971/44188, June 22, 1944; see also, F.O. 371/48342, Future of the Dodecanese: Note by the Chief Affairs Officer, Middle East, August 15, 1945; W.O. 106/3260, History of Dodecanese, April 12, 1943.

4. On the diplomatic developments, see, among others, D. CACLAMANOS, *The Dodecanese. Past and Future*, London 1943; on the international public law, A. TSAGALAKIS, *Le Dodécanèse. Étude de Droit International*, Alexandrie 1928.

were the Italian authorities in the islands on the one hand, and the subject Greek inhabitants on the other. If, however, the opportune strategic position of this group of islands and the intense competitive trends in the broader geographical area of the Eastern Mediterranean are taken into consideration, and combined with the fact that within close proximity lies Turkey, a powerful regional state, the problems that arise become apparent; it should be noted also that Turkey was the sovereign ruler of the islands until the Italian takeover in 1912. It was only natural that these complications would be exacerbated the moment they became associated with developments in the Second World War. Would the Great Western Powers, especially Great Britain, powerful ruler of the seas, be in a position to maintain their regulating role in regional matters during or after the conclusion of hostilities? What were the corresponding aims of the German Axis? What would be the role of the Soviet Union, traditionally present in this geographically sensitive area? Finally, in what way, and to what extent would it be possible for Turkey to be interpolated in the process of defining the sovereign status of the Dodecanese?

The position of Greece regarding the Dodecanese question, one of the unresolved national problems, remained unchanged for the duration of the war. Initially, and before she was attacked by the Italian forces, Greece was cautious in openly expressing her request for the union of the Dodecanese with Greece. But after her inclusion in the war effort, the projection of Greek views with regard to the Dodecanese became more determined⁵. The appeal for 'union' had, according to Michael Palairot, been one of the 'battle cries' of the Greek army at the Albanian front against the Italians⁶. Early in December 1940, Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas had told the British Minister to Athens that 'he could not contemplate [a] return to alien domination [for] any of these purely Greek islands'; and 'he obviously meant the whole Dodecanese'⁷. At the beginning of 1942, in a conversation with the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, the Prime Minister of the Greek government-in-exile, Emmanuel Tsouderos,

5. [Greek Government in exile to the Foreign Office], Aide-memoire on the Dodecanese, November 17, 1942, in [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece], *The Dodecanese; The Long Road to Union with Greece. Diplomatic Documents from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, researched and edited by L. DIVANI – Ph. CONSTANTOPOULOU, Athens 1997, p. 52.

6. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairot (tel), December 11, 1940.

7. F.O. 371/29932, Palairot to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 5, 1941.

stressed that ‘no retreat whatsoever on our part was possible in the issue of the Islands, even of those which are close to the coast’⁸.

This study aims to trace the course of the Dodecanese question during the Second World War – which paved the way for its final settlement at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. Some days before his death, Ioannis Metaxas himself had said that it was better to leave this problem to be settled by events⁹. Nevertheless, these events were inevitably difficult to predict, and Greece had to seek support and to monitor developments closely, in order to steer the issue to the desired end. After May 1941 the Greek governments-in-exile sought to gain early support from the Allies for their claim to the Dodecanese. Many precedents in the international scene, as well as the Greeks’ experience from the aftermath of the First World War, two decades earlier, had demonstrated clearly the importance of such support. Already, the distinction that accompanied Greece upon her entry into the Second World War was comparatively much stronger. The Greeks’ loyalty to the Allied cause, their contribution to the war effort and their sacrifices in the common struggle, even the special sentimental bonds they had forged especially with the British, also created solid expectations among them that their claims on the Dodecanese would be satisfied. More so, since these claims were based on principles, such as freedom and self-determination, which were repeatedly and publicly confirmed by the Allies, and highly proclaimed by the Atlantic Charter. However, the course of the Dodecanese question was also constantly affected by the traditional trends of power politics. So, there were rumours, as well as certain cases of operational planning, when the Greeks became concerned that the Allies would use the Dodecanese as a lever to lure Turkey to the Allied camp. What would happen if the Turks welcomed, or even if they tried to get, such an Allied proposal for military co-operation in exchange for a claim on the islands? Would the Greek position that ‘no military considerations could justifiably deprive the Dodecanesians of their rights under the Atlantic Charter’ prevail in the end? Finally, to what extent would it be possible for the Greek side to promote her requests through yet another medium of traditional diplomacy?

From then on, and to the present day, the effort to reply to these questions on the basis of general hypotheses, without adequate historical evidence, has

8. E. TSOUDEROS, *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια* [*Diplomatic Backstage*], Athens 1949, p. 180-181.

9. F.O. 371/29932, Palaret to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 21, 1940.

proved incomplete and inconclusive, and has led to inaccurate conclusions. This book is based on research carried out over a period of many years in the archives of Greece, Britain, Italy, Germany, France and the United States. As a result, the charm of simplicity may be lost, but it is feasible to attain the major goal of establishing an accurate picture.



ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ

ΑΘΗΝΑΝ

CHAPTER I

THE INTERNATIONAL CONJUNCTURE AND THE DODECANESE QUESTION AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE DEMISE OF THE VERSAILLES SYSTEM and the onset of a new armed conflict which would spread throughout the European continent, inevitably awoke the ambitions and claims of its peoples, both those that participated in the war and those that remained neutral. In the Dodecanese, if the will of the majority of the indigenous population were to be respected, there could be no solution other than the cession of all these islands to Greece. It is telling that in the aftermath of the First World War the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, had observed that the population of the Dodecanese belonged to Greece, and that their separation from the country could not contribute to the stabilization of the general peace¹⁰. The issue was, however, entangled in the intense competition between, especially, the Great Powers, and the permanent solution to the problem was not found at that time.

At the opening of the Lausanne Peace Conference, the intention of the British and the French government was that the Dodecanese question should be settled between the Allies, after peace had been concluded with Turkey; the Greek side harboured a similar hope. On his part, the Italian Prime Minister, Benito Mussolini, consented to examine the issue once more, in order to reach an agreement between allies; but later on he supported the view that this had been settled already by article 8 of the Treaty of London of 1915, when it had been agreed that Italy should receive 'entire sovereignty' over the Dodecanese. Indeed, the matter was discussed between Poincaré, Lord Curzon and Mussolini on 19 November 1922, but the last seemed deliberately to misunderstand what was said and lost no time in restating his views to the Press. In spite of this, in the Treaty of Lausanne the British and French governments agreed to

10. [House of Commons], *The Parliamentary Debates*, 170, 19.

the cession of all the islands to Italy, without obtaining from Rome any prior specific undertaking regarding their ultimate fate¹¹.

The Dodecanese question came to the forefront again, after the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne, when the Greek government admitted that it had agreed to the terms concerning this area but expressed some reservations, mostly with reference to Italian plans to set up naval bases. In fact, the Greeks tried to internationalize the issue and to provoke the reaction of the other naval powers¹², especially of Britain, which was opposed in principle to the occupation of the islands by another Great Power¹³. Initially, the British government seemed to respond favourably, directly linking the Dodecanese question with the Djubaland issue. In response, Rome expressly refused to link the nationality of the inhabitants with the issue of sovereignty and, more importantly, made reference to the Allies' obligation to grant Italy those colonial territories which they had promised since 1915¹⁴. Finally, the reparations issue and the eruption of the Ruhr crisis forced London to stop putting pressure on Rome, in exchange for a vague promise from the Italians that they would show a similar attitude on the issue of the islands¹⁵. However, having obtained a valid legal title on the Dodecanese, Mussolini declared that he

11. F.O. 371/24963, E.R. Warner (memorandum), August 1940; also, Benaki Museum [A.M.M.], Venizelos Papers: 173/269, H. Nicolson to E. Venizelos, June 2, 1923; for more extensive analysis, *Τὸ ζήτημα τῆς Δωδεκανήσου: μελέτη ὑπὸ τοῦ πρεσβευτοῦ κ. Π. Πιπινέλη* [*The Dodecanese Issue: a Study by Minister P. Pipinelis*], p. 6-14.

12. (France) Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères [A.A.E.], Italie/193, Note du Département: visite du Ministre de Grèce à M. de Peretti, 27-6-1924; Ch. Roux (Rome), August 29, 1924.

13. On this major British attitude, see [Public Record Office]: Admiralty Papers [ADM.] 116/3098, The Islands of the Greek Archipelago (memorandum for First Sea Lord), May 20, 1912; Italian Occupation of Aegean Islands and its effects on Naval Policy (memor., sign: E.T.T.), June 20, 1912: ('It is essential feature of our Naval policy that the islands of the Greek Archipelago shall be in the possession of a weak Naval Power. In the possession of a strong Naval Power, their geographical situation relative to the trade route from the Dardanelles and the ports in Asia Minor and to Egypt and the entrance of the Suez Canal renders them a menace to the large British interests involved in those waters').

14. See, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε. [Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 8/2, Al. Kyrou to Direction of Political Affairs, December 10, 1945. Also, A.A.E., Italie/193, Barrère to Poincaré, January 30, February 29, 1924.

15. A.A.E., Italie/193, Barrère to Poincaré, May 5, 24, 1924; Barrère to Herriot, November 8, 1924. On its part, France appeared from the start more reserved, as it considered that it was bound by the Lausanne decisions.

would not accept any Greek intervention in this matter, and proceeded to fortify the islands and even to try to 'Italianize' the region¹⁶. Rome avoided dealing with the Dodecanese question on a national basis, suggesting instead that securing the islands would guarantee the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Contrary to Britain and France, which were interested in enlarging their empire and imposing their hegemony, in the view of Rome the Italian presence constituted a 'natural right'; according to this interpretation, the conquest of the Dodecanese in 1912 had contributed to the balance of power in the wider area¹⁷.

On the other hand, the Greek arguments were quite strong. As early as December 1918, the government of Eleftherios Venizelos had based its territorial claims on the principle of self-determination, which was expected to form the foundations of the decisions at the Peace Conference¹⁸. According to the statistics of the Italian administration of the islands, the Greek inhabitants formed the increasing majority in a total population of 104,523; similar figures appeared after the next censuses in 1931, 1941 and 1943¹⁹. The official Greek statistics of the year 1941, on the other hand, estimated the population of the islands at 120,325 Greeks, 3,009 Italians and only 2,261 Turks – 1,500 of the latter on Cos and 761 on Rhodes²⁰. According the Turkish Foreign Minister, in the same year in the whole Dodecanese there were 4,000-5,000 Turks²¹. At the end of the war, the British

16. A.A.E., Italie/193, Marcilly (Athènes) to Herriot, November 18, 1924. On the other hand, Italian citizenship had been granted to all inhabitants of the Dodecanese (D. RODOGNO, *La politica d'occupazione dell'Italia fascista nei territori dell'Europa Mediterranea conquistati durante la seconda guerra mondiale*, Genève (thèse dict.) 2001, p. 72.

17. See an indicative projection of these views in a series of articles by the editor of the *Giornale d'Italia*, B. Gayda, on the 'Mediterranean problem' at I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Rome Legation, 1940/2, I. Politis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 19, 20, 1940).

18. See, C. SVOLOPOULOS, *Η ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική, 1900-1945 [Greek Foreign Policy]*, A', Athens 1992, p. 143.

19. Rodos Historical Archive, 1931/455, Governo delle Isole Italiane dell'Egeo: popolazione compressiva del possedimento (censimento dell'anno 1922). See also, D'AGOSTINO ORSINI DI CAMEROTA, *Le Colonie italiane: con appendice sulle Isole Italiane dell'Egeo*, Rome, 1933, p. 277-278. Population: 118,000 (1922), and 130,855 (1931). According to other statistics: Population 1941 (31 August), 129,110, see, I.Δ.Δ./1941/400/ τμ:1/1; 1943 (3 March), 128,809 (I.Δ.Δ./1936-1944/3).

20. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., 26, C. Papageorgopoulos to General Staff of the Army, March 17, 1947.

21. F.O. 371/33165, Research Department, Turkey's claims and interest in territories and populations outside her frontiers (October 23, 1944). F.O. 371/48342, (Middle East Defense Committee) Future of the Dodecanese (note), August 15, 1945.

authorities counted 5,000 Turks in the whole region, 2,700 of them on Rhodes, while at the same time noting the disappearance of the Jews²². Last, as far as citizens of Italian origin are concerned, according to the Italian sources for the same period, these numbered 3,500-4,000 on Rhodes, 2,500 on Cos, 200 on Leros and 50 on Kalymnos²³; at the same time, the British numbered the Italians who remained in the islands as 3,500-4,000 in all²⁴. The overwhelming majority of the population was in favour of 'union with Greece'; together with public opinion in the Greek State, they could exert significant pressure on the Greek government²⁵.

In fact, however, Athens had little choice in the matter. High principles were not always applicable even in Europe. Facing an internal crisis after the defeat in Asia Minor and unable to secure substantial support from abroad, Greece was in no position to react to Rome's refusal to accept any Hellenic intervention in the issue²⁶. Since then and for the rest of the interwar period, the Greek governments focused their attention mostly on the effort to safeguard the national identity of the islands, while at the same time hoping that favourable circumstances for 'Enosis' would arise in the future. This was the policy that Venizelos adopted, following the conclusion of the Greek-Italian Pact of Friendship on 23 September 1928²⁷.

Henceforth, the oppressive Italian measures in the Dodecanese were relaxed somewhat, at least temporarily. In the second half of the 1930s, however, a new wave of pressures on the people of the Dodecanese was inaugurated, which affected the administration, the economic activities and the education of the Greeks, as well as the position of the Orthodox Church in the region²⁸. Rome's

22. W.O. 106/3261, First Report on Dodecanese, July 14, 1945. The Americans counted that the Greeks represented almost 90% on a total of 130.000 inhabitants (Italy-Greece-Turkey; Colonial problems: The Dodecanese, September 2, 1944: National Archives. State Department Records [S.D.R.], RG 59, Box 152, NND 750130).

23. Archivio Storico Diplomatico [A.S.D.], Dodecaneso/Busta 16, Incaricato d' Affari a Ministero degli Affari Esteri, May 7, 1945 (according to 'Comitato Internazionale della Santa Croce').

24. F.O. 371/48342, (Middle East Defense Committee) Future of the Dodecanese (note), August 15, 1945.

25. *Ibidem*.

26. A.A.E., Italie/193, Marcilly (Athens) to Herriot, November 18, 1924.

27. See, C. ΣΥΛΟΡΟΥΛΟΣ, *Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐξωτερικὴ πολιτικὴ μετὰ τὴν Συνθήκην τῆς Λωζάννης: ἡ κρίσιμος καμπή, Ἰούλιος-Δεκέμβριος 1928* [Greek Foreign Policy after the Treaty of Lausanne: the Turning Point], Thessaloniki 1977, p. 45-63.

28. See for more the most recent and comprehensive study: Z. TSIRPANLIS, *Ἰταλοκρατία στὰ Δωδεκάνησα, 1912-1943* [Italian Rule in the Dodecanese], Rhodes 1998, including extensive

reassurances that the appointment in 1936 of Cesare Maria De Vecchi, known for his violent temper and nationalist impulses, as the new governor, 'was based on clearly internal [political] reasons' and not 'predetermined policy', was soon to be refuted²⁹. The condition of the Greek inhabitants was described vividly by the British Consul in Rhodes, C.N. Crisford, on 14 September 1939, replying to a relevant question by the Foreign Office:

Since 1936 local customs have been seriously restricted. Mayors are no longer elected by the population but appointed by the Governor. Police forbid Greek music in houses or in public places.

Since 1937, over 60 Primary and 5 Secondary schools have been seized by the Government. Some were closed and used as barracks, even if privately owned and supported by the Greek community or merchants. No compensation paid for property seized. More than 100 Greek teachers dismissed and replaced by Italian teachers. No Greek allowed to be spoken or taught. Children speaking Greek at school are punished.

As regards religion, the Government desired to form an independent Orthodox Church and, when the Patriarchate of Istanbul refused, the Governor retaliated by prohibiting the appointment of new clergy, and those priests not supporting Italian policy are being surreptitiously removed ... Many churches are without clergy.

Italianisation. All Greek names must be altered to make them appear Italian. Natives are maltreated by the police and their permits to work withdrawn. General policy appears to be intimidation to make life and property untenable and so force emigration³⁰.

bibliographical references on the subject. For contemporary publications on the status of the islands and the policies of the Italian administration see mostly, B. MOSTRAS, *Tò Δωδεκανησιακόν ζήτημα* [*The Dodecanese Question*], p. 25-30; P. PIPINELIS, *op. cit.*, p. 69-74; J. TOMAZOS, *The Dodecanese*, Pretoria 1944, p. 41-58.

29. For relevant declarations by Ciano to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, see, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Ankara Legation, 1938, 2/1, R. Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 13, 1937. For De Vecchi policy, see, Grazzi, *Giornale del mattino* (July 29, 1945).

30. F.O. 371/23825, Crisford (Rhodes), September 14, 1939; Crisford was described in the following terms: '[he] was formerly in the Colonial Service and after being invalidated out had become a successful business man'. Indicatively, the British diplomat referred to the views of C. D.

Classified information relayed by the French corroborated the British consul's remarks: the French embassy in Athens had received documents denouncing the 'arbitrary measures' of the Italian authorities, as well as the 'pressure' put upon the indigenous population to abandon their language and join fascist groupings³¹. Moreover, after steadily fortifying the islands³², in the aftermath of the Abyssinian crisis, 'the informer system was rampant, secret police were ubiquitous, the population was cut off from the outside world, as no foreign broadcasts could be listened to, and the old Greek merchant class was being ruined owing to the official encouragement given to Italian and Jewish merchants'³³.

During this period, the Greek government did not possess the power necessary to raise the Dodecanese question, even after the pre-war balances had been disturbed. However, more than likely, the issue would be examined on a new basis, and it would be decided by the outcome of the new world conflict and the inevitable restructuring of the international system. Initially, in a first phase which lasted until June 1940, Italy had not yet entered the war and so not only faced no pressures on the issue but, on the contrary, had considerable room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the warring parties. In this context the position of Athens did not change, even after the collapse of the negotiations for the renewal of the 1928 Pact with Italy, which expired in September 1939³⁴. It should be borne in mind that prior to the period of escalating tension between Greece and Italy, the two countries had maintained friendly relations, a situation that was shared by Italy and the Western Powers³⁵. A few days before

and I. B. BOOTH, *Italy's Aegean Possessions*, London 1928 (part II, chapters IV-V), noting: 'Present conditions are much worse'. Similar observations can be found in F.O. 371/48342, Future of the Dodecanese: Note by the Chief Affairs Officer, Middle East, August 15, 1945. Also see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., 8/9.

31. A.A.E., Europe 1930-1940, Italie/362, Maugras (Athens) to Bonnet, April 4, 1939.

32. According to Crisford, apart from Leros, Rhodes itself was 'held to as a military camp' (F.O. 371/23825, *op. cit.*).

33. See for more, F.O. 371/24963, E.R. Warner (memorandum), August 1940. For more on the Italian administration see also a later document: I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 1/4, Circular to all Embassies, summary: 'refutal of Italian claims on the Dodecanese issue', October 17, 1945.

34. On the rejection of the Italian suggestions to renew the Pact, J. S. KOLIOPOULOS, *Greece and the British Connection, 1935-1941*, Oxford 1977, p. 114-120. See, also, Grazzi's point of view: *Giornale del mattino* (July 29, 1945).

35. See, a review of the Greek and Italian daily press, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Greek Legation in Rome, 1940/2.

the outbreak of the Second World War, on 22 August 1939, the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, in a conversation with the Italian Minister in Athens, underlined that:

The irredentist propaganda of the Dodecanese was combated energetically, but the desire that he [i.e. Metaxas] expressed personally to my predecessor for moderation of the policy we were following against the Greek inhabitants of the Possession, which would have facilitated the Greek government's conduct, found no resistance in any way on our part³⁶.

On the following day, Metaxas tried to combine the effort to restrict such Italian measures in the Dodecanese with his government's desire for normal relations with Rome:

I told him that we have no intention to appear as intervening in the internal affairs of the Dodecanese, but that we have always considered that the proper treatment of the Dodecanesians would improve Greek-Italian relations. I had mentioned this issue repeatedly to the previous Ambassador, and Signor Boscarelli had pleaded repeatedly with his government, and for some time the prospect of improvement of the Dodecanese situation had appeared; but instead, it then worsened³⁷.

The Greek officials knew that the definite solution to the Dodecanese question would depend on the international political situation and mostly on the balance of power in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, apart from the obvious important role of the sovereign power, Italy, it was also desirable to block any possible claims by neighbouring Turkey, the former sovereign of the southeastern Aegean. In September 1935, at Geneva, Panayotis Pipinelis was present during the conversation between the Greek Foreign Minister, Demetrios Maximos, and his Turkish counterpart, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, which focused mainly on the subject of international sanctions against Italy and on the possibility of a common Greek-Turkish search for a solution in the Dodecanese:

36. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani [D.D.I.]*, 8a s., vol. XIII, p. 110, Rosso (Mosca) to Ciano, August 22, 1939.

37. [Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Ἡ Ἰταλικὴ ἐπίθεσις κατὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος [The Italian Attack against Greece]*, Athens 1940, p. 29.

Mr Maximos interrupted him to say that, between good friends, the issues must be clearly put, and that he [Rüştü Aras] should know that we could accept no discussion on the Dodecanese. Mr Rüştü Aras then was obliged, with some difficulty, to accept that this is so and that the only Turkish claim involves those islets which lie in the Asia Minor territorial waters. Mr Maximos then said that for these islets, which are not among the known Dodecanese islands, we could reach an understanding³⁸.

‘The Turkish officials have, since then, known the kind of interest that we place on this issue’, concluded Pipinelis – seven years after this exchange of views. He did not know, however, that in Geneva on these very same days, Aras, talking to Eden, had referred to the possibility of granting autonomy to the Dodecanese ‘in the event that these were liberated as a result of a war operation against Italy’³⁹!

The arguments of the Turks focused mainly on the need to secure the defence of their soil, namely the Asia Minor coast. Specifically, they noted that the islands formed a projection of the Anatolian coast⁴⁰. Ankara also pointed out that these islands were Ottoman territory before the 1912 Italian invasion. However, these arguments clearly came into conflict with the repeatedly declared wishes of the majority of the population, who did not wish simply to trade rulers. In that case, as the Italians noted, the Dodecanesians would prefer ‘to remain with Italy than to return under Turkey’⁴¹. At any rate, there had been no official demand from Ankara with regard to this area. In fact, until the outbreak of the Second World War, the Dodecanese question apparently had not become a subject of discussions between the Greek and Turkish governments.

It has been argued already that in the aftermath of Atatürk’s death, the Turkish side took care to safeguard its interests, in view of the intensification of Great Power rivalries, which tended to proliferate throughout Europe. The Turkish policy-makers were anxious about a direct threat from a Great Power, primarily Italy or the Soviet Union, or both. In the post-Lausanne era, until the outbreak of

38. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A 7/20, P. Pipinelis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 12, 1942.

39. As the later mentioned, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 2/2, Capetanidis (Istanbul) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 17, 1945.

40. See the indicative view of Yalçın, *Yeni Sabah* (April 20, 1940): Archives de la Marine [A.M.], II 137/I/2, Lemaesquier, April 24, 1940.

41. *D.D.I.*, 8a s., vol. XIII, p. 180, Gorazzi (Atene) to Ciano, August 25, 1939.

the Second World War, their major concern was Rome. According to von Neurath, they tended to view Italy as 'the true enemy'⁴². In this context, the status of the Dodecanese became very important for Turkey. The Italian position in the islands, heavily fortified since 1934 – especially Leros and Rhodes –, caused much anxiety in Ankara⁴³. The reassuring statements of Rome that the military installations in the area were 'purely defensive in character and were in no way aimed against Turkey' were received with scepticism in Ankara⁴⁴. These Turkish fears were also intensified after the Italian aggression in Albania; and on the eve of the war this feeling was to become more acute: 'Turkey is unable to tolerate the maintenance of Italian outposts at the limits of her territorial waters', noted Massigli⁴⁵. The Turks officially have always feared that the islands might serve as a springboard for attacking the Anatolian mainland: 'this fear has been intensified by the Italians' action in fortifying the islands, especially Leros and Rhodes', the State Department pointed out during the Second World War⁴⁶. The Italians themselves publicly expressed their bewilderment at the Turks' frequent relapse into 'distrust and hostility' towards them⁴⁷. Nevertheless, as expressed through a multitude of testimonies, care to safeguard the security of the Asia Minor coast against

42. A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 29, Fasc.: Rapporti italo-turchi, 1939, De Peppo to Ministero degli Affari Esteri (January 1, 1939).

43. A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 29, Fasc.: Rapporti italo-turchi; 1939, De Peppo to Ministero degli Affari Esteri (January 1, 1939); Governo delle Isole Italiane dell'Egeo (Rodi) to Ciano (January 2, 1939). Even before, A.A.E., Turquie/605, Kammerer (Sтамбуl), February 22, 1935; The French Ambassador at Ankara, in particular, stressed in February 1935: 'L'opinion officielle n'a jamais cessé ici de se montrer particulièrement ombrageuse pour tout ce qui a trait au Dodécane. Les mauvais souvenirs de 1911, loin d'être effacés, ont été alimentés et renforcés ces dernières années par l'hostilité très vive qu'ont rencontrés auprès des dirigeants turcs la politique et les méthodes de M. Mussolini; l'équipement militaire des îles de Rhodes et Leros devenues depuis peu des bases navales et aériennes modernes a, en outre, créé en ce pays un certain émoi et surtout une susceptibilité très vive. Il n'est pas étonnant, dans ces conditions, que les journaux aient exploité les récents événements dans un sens nettement défavorable à l'Italie; on a été jusqu'à imprimer que le soulèvement se communiquait à toutes les îles du Dodécane et que la jeunesse grecque originaire de l'archipel constituait à Athènes une légion de volontaires destinés, en cas de guerre, à offrir leurs services à la Grèce!'

44. See, among others, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1938, 2/1, Raphael to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 13, 1937.

45. A.A.E., Italie/362, Massigli to Bonnet, July 22, 1939.

46. S.D.R., T. 206 (RG59/Box 61) Howard, January 1943.

47. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1940/2, I. Politis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 20, 1940.

possible opportunist schemes of Fascist Italy is not alone sufficient to explain Ankara's concerns. After the unexpected conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, Turkey entered a phase of definite disengagement also from the Soviet Union⁴⁸. In early October, in Moscow, the Foreign Minister, Şükrü Saracoğlu, had failed to conciliate his country's friendly policies with both the Soviet Union and the Western powers. The British and the French were to oppose vehemently the possibility of contracting a trilateral pact with Turkey, already on the cards, which would be combined with the signing by the last of a bilateral pact with Moscow, which would restrict her freedom of action in the Mediterranean on the Allies' behalf; nonetheless, provision was made for an exception in the event of armed conflict between the Allies and the USSR⁴⁹. The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs 'had the impression that he sees Russian imperialism standing up anew against Turkey'⁵⁰. Since then, Ankara felt strongly that the main threat Turkey faced came not from Rome but from Moscow; '[the Turks] were fully alive to the Russian danger', remarked Sargent in October 1939⁵¹.

It was under such conditions that Ankara's ties with the West became closer; even the concerns about Fascist Italy's opportunist intentions were relegated to second place⁵². The bilateral pacts with Britain and France, on 6 May and 23 June 1939 respectively, opened the way for the immediate conclusion of the tripartite treaty between Turkey and the two Western powers on 19 October⁵³. This political relationship was to have a strong influence on the country's

48. Archives de l'Armée [A.A.], 7N 3256, Note du correspondant pour le Proche Orient, October 18, 1939.

49. *Les Documents Diplomatiques Français [D.D.F.]*, 1939 (3 septembre – 31 décembre), No. 2, 17, 53, 102, 116, 129, 131, 142, 159, 162, 177, 179-181, 187-191, 194, 203, 205-208, 210-211, 214, 218, 221, 234, 236-237, p. 2 ff.

50. *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), Ostrorog (Moscou) to Daladier, October 17, 1939, p. 433-434.

51. E.O. 371/23755, O. Sargent, October 16, 1939.

52. According to Kemal Karpat, the Western allies themselves had even adopted the 'stereotyped concept that Turkey's fear of the Soviet Union is so deep as to make her ready to undertake any sacrifice in order to assure her survival': K. KARPAT, *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition, 1950-1974*, Leiden 1975, p. 76.

53. A.S.D., ASMM, Racc. 3279, Fasc. 12: Politica estera della Turchia, n.d.; extensively see A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 29, Rapporti anglo-turchi 1939, Berio (Ankara) May 29, 1939; A.A., 7N 3256, Note du correspondant pour le Proche Orient, October 18, 1939; *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), Massigli to Daladier, Daladier to Carbin, Massigli to Daladier; October 17-18, 1939; Note du Département, October 19, 1939, p. 434-438, 445-452. Also, see S. DERINGIL,

diplomatic orientation. Specifically, since Rome seemed willing to negotiate her position vis-à-vis the warring parties, London and Paris adopted the attitude that they should do everything possible to keep her neutral. 'Try to maintain the neutrality of Italy' was a position constantly approved by the governments and also by the Chiefs of Staff⁵⁴, who in another report stressed: 'it would be in the common interests of Great Britain, France and Italy to keep the war from spreading in the Mediterranean, and that some agreement with Italy might therefore be possible which would forbid belligerent acts in the area'⁵⁵. This assumption would be the basis of Allied policy toward Rome until the early months of 1940. As the British Foreign Secretary stressed, in a memorandum to the War Cabinet on 26 March, 'strategically the situation remains as ever: namely that any action we might contemplate in South-Eastern Europe is dependent upon the benevolent neutrality of Italy'⁵⁶, while at the Balkan Conference in Belgrade, during the first days of February, it had been emphasized that peace in the region depended on the constructive position of Rome⁵⁷.

Since they had already secured some defensive coverage through the Treaty with Britain and France, the Turks now sought a rapprochement with their former main rival, Italy; indeed, this attitude had been encouraged by the Western Allies, even by Greece itself⁵⁸. It was their hope, as reported in the Press, that 'if Italy remains neutral there is no chance that war will spread to the Mediterranean'⁵⁹. On 29 November, Numan Menemencioglu, still Secretary

Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War: an 'Active' Neutrality, Cambridge University Press 1989, p. 71-89.

54. Public Record Office: Cabinet Papers [CAB.] 66/2, War Cabinet: Military strategy to be adopted in the Near East including the Balkans, September 28, 1939. Extensively, see, *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), No. 5, 8, 37, 38, 41, 50, 61, 104, 290, 308, 316, 435, p. 5 ff.

55. CAB. 66/2, Possible detente with Italy in the Mediterranean: Report by the Chief of Staff Committee, October 17, 1939.

56. CAB. 66/6, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, March 26, 1940.

57. I.A.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1940/2, Rome Legation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7-2-1940.

58. A.S.D., ASMM, Pac. 3279/15, Relazione politica sulla Turchia, anno 1938, R. Ferrero-Rognoni (Istanbul), July 18, 1939. A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B29, Fasc. Rapp. italo-turchi 1939, Ciano to De Peppo, September 19, 1939; A.A./ 7N 3256, Correspondant pour le Proche Orient, October 18, 1939; *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. II, p. 91, Grazzi to Ciano, November 7, 1939.

59. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 89-91. See also, in the Greek press, *Le Messager d'Athènes* (November 12, 1939).

General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, confided to the British Ambassador in Rome, Sir Percy Loraine, that Turkey was now 'quite willing for friendlier and closer relations with Italy [...] as she was now the ally of England and France, and felt that a rapprochement would be consonant with the wishes and interests of the Western Powers'⁶⁰. More specifically, the Turkish Foreign Minister himself, answering to the British Ambassador's request for 'a marked change in his attitude towards Italy', had replied some days earlier:

In point of fact Turkey had not become more friendly. Italy was always the enemy and would remain so as long as she held fortified islands so close to the Turkish mainland. Nevertheless, now that the Tripartite Treaty was signed and Turkey felt sure of British support, Turkey was no longer frightened of Italy and, moreover, the Turkish Gt., realizing our policy with regard to Italy, wanted to do their best to give us every chance of success and to support us in that conciliatory policy.

We got talking of the far future and I said that it had always seemed to me that the Dodecanese would prove to be the perpetual stumbling block in the way between Turkey and Italy. He said that his idea was that when the time came for a general settlement something might be done on the lines of Italy either handing over the Dodecanese to Turkey (he did not actually go as far as this but I think that is what he had in mind) or coming to some suitable arrangement with regard to those islands, Italy being compensated by His Majesty's Government. I said that was all very well, but what were we expected to give up. Saracoğlu mentioned Djibouti and the Italian requirements with regard to the control of the Suez Canal. As neither of these appeared to entail any great sacrifice on our part I said no more⁶¹.

How could these considerations, 'which govern the whole Turkish policy', in the words of H. Knatchbull-Hugessen⁶², namely this connection of the Dodecanese question with Ankara's aims, be interpreted? Did they not run contrary to the fundamental orientation of Kemalist policy to preserve territorial integrity, which ruled out the return to areas inhabited by a non-

60. F.O. 371/23756, P. Loraine (Rome), November 29, 1939.

61. F.O. 371/23861, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Nichols, November 20, 1939.

62. Sir H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, London 1949, p. 147-148.

Turkish population – in this case not even Muslim? Did these initiatives open the way to claims of an expansionist or hegemonist nature, which the new State had appeared to abandon? On the other hand, what will be the meaning of the government's subsequent change of line during the armed conflict and of its eventual acceptance of the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece? The answers to these questions should be sought primarily in the evaluation of priorities on the eve of the Second World War, but also during and in the aftermath of the war, and were determined by the more general political conjuncture, which was to be created in the Aegean region in the course of the armed struggle.



ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ

CHAPTER II

THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN ALLIED INTERVENTION IN THE DODECANESE AGAINST ITALY

EVEN IF GREECE HAD NOT, one way or the other, officially and persistently raised the Dodecanese question, the Allies, and especially Britain as its main allied power in the Mediterranean, would have to address the issue sooner rather than later. As early as 1939-1940, the Dodecanese posed a dual threat to the Allies' own positions: on the one hand, the islands could offer forward air bases to the Axis for attacks in the broader area and, on the other, they tended to cut the Allies' communications with Greece and Turkey or could pose a direct threat to these two countries⁶³. Consequently, they should not attempt anything that might push Italy to draw up with Germany a possible action in the Aegean, for example⁶⁴. In view of a possible inclusion of Italy in the Axis front, the members of the 'Inter-Allied Committee for Military Studies' had remarked already in December 1939: 'It would be imperative to eliminate a threat that originates from the Dodecanese and would be directed against our maritime communications, knowing that we can provide effective aid to Turkey and Greece'⁶⁵. The position that the need to keep strategic control in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean imposes the neutrality of the Dodecanese was repeated persistently, while Italy's entry into the war was imminent⁶⁶. Already, one year before the outbreak of war, the strengthening of the Italian fortifications on Leros had caused Britain's concern⁶⁷. On 13 May 1939, the

63. Y. G. MOURELOS, *Fictions et réalités. La France, la Grèce et la stratégie des opérations périphériques dans le sud-est européen (1939-1940)*, Thessaloniki 1990, p. 104-105.

64. CAB 66/2, War Cabinet: Possible entente with Italy in the Mediterranean (October 17, 1939). *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. - 31 décembre), Bruxelles 2002, p. 55-56. On the uncertainty regarding the Italian attitude towards the warring parties, see, *op. cit.*, p. 5 ff.

65. A.A., TTA/94, C.L.N. Newall, D. Pound, E. Ironside, December 5, 1939.

66. A.A., TTA/94, Note du Secrétaire du Comité des E.M.I. (A.W. Clarke), May 5, 1940; Adam (Beyrouth), May 10, 1940; Bruel (Beyrouth), May 11, 1940.

67. A.S.D., ASME, Pac. 121, fasc. 2, Broccodi (Min. della Guerra), August 29, 1938.

British representatives had decided in common with their French colleagues to encircle the Italians in order to enforce the reduction of these fortifications⁶⁸. However, the defining turning point for the surfacing of the Dodecanese question was Italy's entry into the war in June 1940, at a moment when the British did not have the assistance of the French Allies. Italian engagement in the war necessitated strategic planning by London, immediately bringing to the forefront the issue of the islands' future status.

It quickly became apparent that this complex and multi-faceted issue would have to be dealt with on many levels. Initially, the collaboration of the people of the Dodecanese was considered necessary. However, this could increase the islanders' demands for union with Greece. Already, since Italy joined the war on the side of Germany in June 1940, the resistance of the Greek inhabitants of the islands to Italian sovereignty had been intensified. As Dixon noted, based on information from the Consul in Rhodes, C.N. Crisford, 'the Greek population were almost 100 per cent anti-Italian; there were no more than 20 or 30 Greeks in Rhodes who had willingly accepted Italian domination; there was a general feeling, upon Italy's entry into the war, that this would enable the islanders to regain their freedom from Italy'⁶⁹. Athens' claim to the area was founded on this irrefutable fact. 'On general principles, the islands with purely Greek and Christian inhabitants should go to Greece', Michael Palairet, the British Minister in Athens, confidentially noted at this time⁷⁰.

On the other hand, before the collapse of June 1940, the British, as well as the French, paid particular attention to the possibility of a military involvement by Turkey, which the Allies had regarded as the most important of the countries of Southeast Europe⁷¹. 'The Turkish military contribution was viewed as necessary in order to ensure a propitious development of operations on the

68. A.A., TTA/94.

69. F.O. 371/24963, P. Dixon: The Dodecanese, July 2, 1940. Dixon then proceeded to mention Italian measures aiming to deal with a more active unrest: 'Every possible step had been taken to ensure that the local population caused no trouble. None of them were armed and there was a general prohibition against shooting in the islands. In Rhodes the Greeks were not allowed to fish, owing to the precautions taken for coastal defense. The Greek population were in fact completely under the heel of the Italians.'

70. F.O. 371/24963, Palairet to F.O., October 5, 1940.

71. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 73-75, according to official British estimations. For the French, Y. G. MOURELOS, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Balkan front and to oppose any Italian threat that would be posed against the coasts of the Eastern Mediterranean basin⁷². Even before the outbreak of war, attack on the Dodecanese islands was combined with the use of sites in southwestern Anatolia⁷³. The capture of the islands 'was the basis of the discussions between the Allied General Staff and that of Turkey, as it was considered essential in order to procure advantages of great importance; the operation – they concluded – had to be undertaken as soon as possible'⁷⁴. 'The only real card in our hands is Turkey', the British Foreign Secretary will declare unequivocally at a Cabinet meeting on 26 March 1940⁷⁵! In fact, quite early in the Staff talks between the British and the French, both sides made clear how much importance they attached to Turkey, whether neutral or, preferably, as an ally⁷⁶. It is also on the eve of the war that the Western Allies, ignoring incomprehensibly – as it was to be shown later – the Greek participation, made a series of contacts, at diplomatic and military level, with only the Turkish government, in order to confront jointly the Axis Powers in the Eastern Mediterranean! Indeed, between May and July, talks had been held in Ankara between the three General Staffs, during which one of the first issues examined was the possibility of military intervention in the Dodecanese.

The Turks, for their part, not only had not hidden their fear of the Italians and their desire to expel them from the Dodecanese⁷⁷, but also, furthermore, had appeared willing to shoulder the main burden of a prospective attack in this region. During General Weygand's visit to Ankara in May 1939, the Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, and the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, proposed joint operations of the Western Allies and Turkey in

72. A.A., 7N 3256, (États-Major de l'Armée): Suggestions pouvant être retenues pour l'établissement d'un accord militaire avec les Turcs, July 7, 1939.

73. A.A., 7N 3256, Conférences d'États-Majors à Ankara, July 17, 1939.

74. [History of the Second World War. United Kingdom Military series, Ed. J.R.M. Butler], *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*. Vol. I: *The Early Successes against Italy*, by M.-G. I.S.O. PLAYFAIR, London 1954, p. 27.

75. CAB. 66/6, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, March 26, 1940.

76. N. H. GIBBS, *Grand Strategy*. Vol. I: *Rearmament Policy*, London 1976, p. 713-714.

77. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1940/2, Rome Legation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7/2/1940. See also, A.A., 7N 3227, Voirin (Istanbul), 14-3-1939; 7N 3256, Rapport du Général Weygand sur sa mission à Ankara; Déclarations confidentielles du Président de l'État Turc, May 11, 1939; Réunion des Chefs d'États-Majors. Séance du 1-VIII-1939; Massigli to Bonnet, July 18, 1939.

the Aegean, with the clearing of the Italian bases in Rhodes and Leros as their first target. The Turks were to support the same position to the French General during his second visit to Ankara, between 9 and 13 September, showing an impressive 'unity of views'⁷⁸. In fact, in haste, they had sought persistently from the outset the execution of these operations and had shown, moreover, that they considered them feasible, provided they would be sufficiently armed and would be covered in their land operations by the Navy and the Air Force of the Allies – primarily the British⁷⁹. During the mission of General Huntziger, Commandant des forces militaires en Syrie, to Ankara in July, the conclusions from the preceding talks were confirmed and the bases were laid for the signing of a tripartite military convention. With special reference to the Dodecanese, since the importance of their immediate capture in the event of a rift with Italy was stressed anew, provision was made for entrusting execution of operations to Turkey 'with the cooperation of naval and air forces which the Allied Powers were able to put into operation'⁸⁰. The French High Command had even greater ambitions for the Aegean region than the British; and they felt that the best way of ensuring Turkish participation in the war would be to show their determination to reduce the Dodecanese at an early stage⁸¹.

So, in fact, immediately after the outbreak of the war, the representatives of the British and French General Staffs – especially the Allied Permanent Military Representatives – had recommended, in a joint memorandum, giving 'the utmost possible support to Turkey' in the event of a German attack in Southeast Europe, of Italy's hostility without German attack, or of Italian hostility *and*

78. *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 septembre – 31 décembre), p. 74, Rapport sur le voyage à Ankara par le Général Weygand, September 12, 1939. See also, *A.A.*, 7N 3256, Rapport du Général Weygand sur sa mission à Ankara.

79. *A.A.*, 7N 3256, Réunion du 1er mai 1939 au Cabinet du Ml. F. Çakmak, etc; Note sur l'arrivée en Turquie d'une mission militaire britannique (Cap. Leleu au Gl. Voirin), June 30, 1939. See also, Suggestions pouvant être retenues pour l'établissement d'un accord militaire avec les Turcs (État-Major de l'Armée), July 7, 1939.

80. *A.A.*, 7N 3256, Conférences d'États-Majors à Ankara, 19-25 juillet 1939; Réunion des Chefs d'États-Majors Généraux, séance du 1 août 1939.

81. *The Mediterranean and the Middle East...*, vol. I, by I.S.O. PLAYFAIR, p. 86-87. On French foreign policy, G. PRÉVÉLAKIS, 'Entre alliance et crise de confiance: La politique balkanique de la France et son échec (1938-1940)', *Balkanologie*, VII, 1 (Juin 2003). N.H. GIBBS, *Grand Strategy...*, p. 713-714; see also, J. M. GUYER – J.R.M. BUTLER, *Grand Strategy*, vol. III: *June 1941 – August 1942*, London 1964, p. 455-457.

a German attack. Ankara needed supplies and financial support; on the other hand, without adequate air defence it was extremely doubtful whether the Turks would be able to maintain their position⁸². Since then, allied strategy should, in any case, concentrate on gaining the support of Ankara: this recommendation had been approved by both the Chiefs of Staff and the governments in the two allied countries⁸³. The cost of providing not only economic and financial aid but also armaments to Turkey had been defined exactly after an 'oriental' bargaining with her representatives⁸⁴. But the Allies' final decisions on the issue were to be set out in the text of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance on 19 October 1939, which was equally binding as a bilateral obligation between Turkey and each of the two other Powers. 'Turkey shall come to the assistance of Great Britain and France, e.g. in the event of (an act of) aggression by a European Power in the Mediterranean, in which France and the United Kingdom are involved, and places on Great Britain and France the obligation of giving assistance to Turkey should she be involved in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the Power against her.' These general provisions were included in the Treaty, *expressis verbis*; but, they remained secrets, a special agreement concerning the granting of credits and the delivery of military supplies to Turkey, as well as a military convention, indicating the manner in which military co-operation between the contracting parties should be effected⁸⁵. More precisely, and with regard to the Dodecanese, according to article 3, they were 'at one in recognizing' the importance of reducing the terms in the event

82. *The Mediterranean and the Middle East...*, vol. I, by I.S.O. PLAYFAIR, p. 87.

83. CAB 66/2, War Cabinet: Military strategy to be adopted in the Near East including the Balkans, September 28, 1939. See also, *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), No. 50, 54, 74, 130, 135, 254, 271, 364, p. 73 ff.

84. Massigli à Daladier, September 21, 1939 : *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), p. 205-206.

85. See the text of agreement in A.M., TTA/94, A.W. Clarke, October 2, 1939; *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), p. 445-452. Public Record Office, Premier [PREM.] 3/447/12A, Policy towards Turkey: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, April 4, 1944, see Annex. See an analysis of the general provisions of the Treaty, ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 29, Fasc. Rapporti anglo-turchi 1939, De Peppo to Min. degli Esteri, October 23, 1939. On the Italian attitude towards the agreement see A.S.D., ASMM, Racc. 3279, Fasc. 13, De Peppo, October 20, 1939; Ministero della Marina: Pro-memoria per Sotto Segretario di Stato, October 20, 1940; A.S.D., ASME, AP. 1930 – 1945, Turchia, B. 29, De Peppo to Ministero degli Esteri, October 23, 1939. For more on reactions in Turkey see *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. II, p. 144-145, De Peppo to Ciano, November 11, 1939.

of a conflict implying hostile action on the part of Italy; the operations which would in consequence have to be carried out would be undertaken by Turkish forces with the co-operation of such naval and air forces as the contracting parties might be able to provide. Last, in accordance with article 4, the Turkish General Staff was burdened with the obligation of examining with their Greek counterparts the terms relating to just one possible collaboration on behalf of Thessaloniki⁸⁶!

The contracting of the military convention was followed immediately by the opening of talks between the General Staffs of the signatory countries, represented by generals Weygand and Wavell, as well as by Marshal Çakmak. It should be noted that the last had replied affirmatively to the question whether article 3 was referring to the Dodecanese in the event of Italy remaining neutral⁸⁷. 'It is difficult – Weygand remarked – not to deal with [this question], at least in the hope of seeing Italian neutrality prolonged, because of the very particular interest shown by the Turkish General Staff'⁸⁸. Consequently, he would no longer hesitate to suggest that it was up to the Turkish General Staff to communicate the plan of attack in the Dodecanese, 'which would serve as the basis for activating British-French collaboration'. In reply, Çakmak pointed out the urgent need 'repeatedly confirmed' for a decision on the measures imposed, so that the British and the French could apply the plan of sea and air cover of the initial attack which the Turks would launch against Rhodes⁸⁹; and he took the opportunity of making the complaint that the armaments that had been supplied to Ankara fell far short of what she had asked for in order to enter the war⁹⁰.

The dialogue between the three powers was to continue on this basis during the first half of 1940. Nonetheless, 'the number of unknown factors' was 'too large to be able to estimate the time demanded for the envisaged operation', but

86. A.A., 7N 3256, Note sur la situation internationale: Le pacte tripartite anglo-franco-turc, 28 octobre, 1939. See also, Rapport sur le voyage à Ankara par le Général Weygand, 12 sept. 1939, *D.D.F.*: 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), p. 75-76.

87. A.A., 7N 3256, Réunion du 20 octobre 1939.

88. A.A., 7N 3256, Général Weygand au Commandant en chef des forces terrestres, October 26, 1939.

89. A.M., TTA/94, Réunion du 20 et 21 octobre 1939; aussi, A.A., 7N 3256, Réunion du 21 octobre 1939.

90. Corbin (Londres) to Daladier, October 24, 26, 1939: *D.D.F.*, 1939 (3 sept. – 31 déc.), p. 493-494, 500-501.

they declared 'that they were in a position to suppress the threat of Italian action starting off from the Dodecanese', on condition that their air force would be able to operate in liaison with the fleet from Turkish bases'⁹¹. This same Committee will conclude, in May 1940, that the two Allies had to take 'short-term measures in order to help the Turks to subjugate the Dodecanese'. Indeed, it could be argued that the British had outbid the French in this direction⁹². As Knatchbull-Hugessen was to state, 'the conversation leading up to tripartite military convention and Staff conversations at Aleppo – in March 1940 – had to provide for joint Anglo-Turkish operations against the Dodecanese'⁹³. At the Haifa Conference, on 27 May, the Turkish representatives again persisted 'firmly' in the view that it should 'strike swiftly and strongly at this centre of enemy resistance', having fixed the plan for the capture of Rhodes⁹⁴. However, the situation was possibly not so simple: in that period of difficulties, neither France nor the United Kingdom had resources to spare. As pointed out in a note of the Central Service during the Aleppo Conference, 'since Turkey has no experience of this type of operation there might be a need to send forces to assist either in consolidating a foothold on the islands or in extricating the Turks'; and the note concluded: 'We have no forces available in the Middle East for this operation... Consequently, the requisite troops have to be provided at the expense of other theatres of war'⁹⁵. Apart from the British, who insisted particularly on this matter, the Turks declared that they were not prepared to see their Air Force weakened by losses in operations against the Dodecanese, since its full strength might be needed to defend Thrace⁹⁶.

The Italians were following, with increasing anxiety, the interest, particularly of the British, in Turkey entering the war⁹⁷. In this sense, the Foreign Office

91. A.M., TTA/94, C.L.N. Newall, D. Pound, E. Ironside (Comité d'Études Militaires Interallié), December 5, 1939. W.O. 106/2049, Operations against the Dodecanese, April 12, 1940.

92. A.S.D., ASMM, Racc. 3279, Fasc. 9, R. Pontremoli (Istanbul) to Ministero della Marina, May 8, 1940.

93. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen, October 8, 1940. See for more W.O. 106/2049, Copies of the Conference, March 25-April 28, 1940. The minutes of the conference in A.M., II, BB7/I/2, Lemaesquier to Commandant en chef de la F.M.F., March 26, April 10, 1940.

94. A.M., II BB7/I/1, Note de service: Conférence d'Haïffa (Ankara), June 11, 1939.

95. W.O. 106/2049, Operations against the Dodecanese, April 12, 1940.

96. *The Mediterranean and the Middle East...*, vol. I, by I.S.O. PLAYFAIR, p. 90, 148.

97. ASMM, Racc. 3279, Fasc. 9, R. Pontremoli (Ankara) to Minist. della Marina, May 8, 1940. See the identical conclusion of the British in F.O. 371/24963, P. Nichols (min.), April 2, 1940.

officials noted: 'From the nature of the defensive preparation it is to be assumed that the Rhodes authorities are expecting Turkey to fall on the Dodecanese, with British support, either as an act of aggression or after Italy had come into the war on the German side'⁹⁸. But the Allies themselves were following, with even greater anxiety, the activity of Italy, which was on the increase since the visit by Marshals Balbo and De Bono⁹⁹. Observed from that time were the strengthening of the fortifications in Rhodes and the steady rise in the number of Italian troops stationed in the wider region of the Dodecanese. Towards the end of April it was estimated that there were 30-50,000 men, up to 18 ships and as many as 10 submarines in Leros¹⁰⁰. Indeed, in view of Italy's possible entry into the war, these forces were tending to be reinforced¹⁰¹. The Turks too were following the Italian activity attentively. As the months passed, their initial unease, interwoven with the progressive cooling of Rome's relations with the two Western allied powers, developed into anxiety as to what stance Rome would adopt in the end¹⁰²; in fact, von Papen was to observe on 3 June that he had found President İnönü consumed by 'a state that might prove worrying, verging on fear'¹⁰³. Nonetheless, it seems that in this particular case the German ambassador's intervention had a most assuaging effect: Turkey – he guaranteed – had nothing to fear from Italy entering the war, unless she committed a hostile act against her...¹⁰⁴ Behold!

98. F.O. 371/24963, Ph. Nichols (min.), April 24, 1940.

99. F.O. 371/24963, Visit of Mr. McDermott to Rhodes, February 3rd – February 16th, 1940. I.Δ.A.Y.E., D.P./63, Raphail, July 30, 1944: PREM. 3/3/6, Military attaché (Ankara) to War Office, April 18, 1943.

100. According to available information, the Italian armed force in the Dodecanese consisted of, in April 1940, of 50,000-35,000 men (A.A.E., Italic/362, Maugras (Athènes) (tel.), 6 mai, 1940; according to the War Office, it was 35,000 men (F.O. 371/24963, April 29, 1940). A.M., II, BB7/I/2, Lemaesquier (Istanbul), May 6, 10, 14, 1940.

101. A.A., 7N 3227, Attaché militaire (Ankara), May 15, 1940; A.M., II, BB7/I/2, Lemaesquier, June 2, 1940.

102. A.M., II, BB7/2, Massigli (Ankara) to Département des Affaires Étrangères, April 23, 1940. For a previous report, A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 30, Fasc. Rapporti italo-turchi, 1940: A. Berio (Ankara) to Ministero degli Esteri, January 27, 1940.

103. *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. IV, p. 560: De Peppo to Ciano, June 4, 1940. On the allied interest in Italian forces in the Dodecanese, see W.O. 53/1671, Order of Battle of the Italian forces in the Dodecanese islands, September 1940.

104. A.A., 7N 3256, Visite de von Papen au Président de la République, June 5, 1940; also, *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. IV, p. 560: De Peppo to Ciano, June 4, 1940.

Henceforth, this solution was destined to be harmonized with Ankara's ever more overt desire not to become embroiled in the armed conflict. Moreover, from early on the Italians had been informed – again via von Papen – that this decision of the Turkish government was firm and would be applied even if they themselves entered the war¹⁰⁵. In fact, in June 1940 this prediction was to be confirmed¹⁰⁶. Conversely, the same issue was raised by the Allies: in order to secure control in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean after Italy's entry into the war, they would be obliged to turn aggressively against the Dodecanese¹⁰⁷ with the active participation of Turkey in the operation!

In the light of these ascertainments, the possibility of Turkey's participation in the war is worth examining. Would it be reasonable to assume that Turkey would have been persuaded to proceed in this direction against her will and without the Allies having met, to a satisfactory degree, the obligations to arm her, under the terms of the tripartite Agreement of 19 October 1939? Truly, until Italy's entry into the war, the two Allies had only to keep in part their promises towards Ankara. The common General Staff did not hesitate to point out that 'there are delays in the promised delivery of armaments'¹⁰⁸. At Haifa, General Smith, head of the British Delegation, had said repeatedly that the Turkish Delegation 'presents a perfect solution which, however, demands material that it is impossible to provide'¹⁰⁹. Even so, it was a common assumption of the French and the British that Ankara was animated by a persistent desire to regain the Dodecanese¹¹⁰. In conversation with Percy Loraine, in November 1939, Menemençioğlu had remarked that 'when the

105. A.S.D., ASME, AP 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 30: Fasc. Rapporti politici, De Peppo to Ciano, April 25, 1940.

106. *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. V, p. 232-233, De Peppo to Ciano, July 15, 1940.

107. According to the conclusions of the Italians themselves: *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. IV, p. 560-561, De Peppo to Ciano, June 4, 1940.

108. A.A. 7N 3256, (Commandement en chef de l'ensemble des théâtres d'opérations): Répercussions possibles de l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie sur l'attitude de la Russie et de la Turquie, June 11, 1940. For rich evidence on the non-compliance with the obligation to dispatch material to Turkey: 7N 3227.

109. *Ibidem*. And similar conclusion by the Allies Committee: A.M., TTA/94, A.W. Clarke: Possibilités d'actions militaires offertes aux Alliés dans le cas d'une guerre avec l'Italie, May 5, 1940. See also, A.M., TTA/94, Amiral Esteva au Commandant en chef des F.M.F., May 4, 1940.

110. A.M., TTA/94, Amiral Esteva (Toulon) au Commandant en chef des F.M.F., 4 May, 1940; A.A.E., Italie/362, Massigli (tel.), June 1, 1940.

time came for a general settlement, Turkey would trust to England and France to find some means of removing the open sore which Turkey still felt that the fortified base in the Dodecanese represented in Turkish-Italian relations...¹¹¹. The Foreign Office regarded as significant the fact that Menemencioğlu should have referred so frankly to the question of the Dodecanese, observing that 'the Turks of course hoped to get the Dodecanese as a result of Italy coming into the war on the side of Germany; she now still hopes to get them and will look to us to provide the Italians with some compensation'; and he concluded: 'Quite apart from whether the Italians would be willing to give up the Dodecanese, there would remain the added difficulty that the population is almost entirely Greek and that the Greeks would no doubt very much resent the islands going to Turkey'¹¹². Faced with answering the same question six months later, and now alone after the fall of France, the British insisted in this initial ascertainment¹¹³. After all, was not this position perhaps compatible with the expectation that, even if not participating in the war, in the event of an Allied victory they would succeed in regaining all or, at least, after agreement with Greece, part of the Dodecanese¹¹⁴?

Nevertheless, the name of Greece does not appear in the discussion about the future of the Dodecanese! In the past, the issue had been alluded to in July 1939 by the distinguished French diplomat René Massigli and had been raised momentarily by the Foreign Office in mid-October, when it was heard that a scheme for dealing with the Dodecanese problem had been put forward by Ankara, whereby Turkey, Italy and Greece would come to a joint agreement regarding the future of these islands: at any rate, they should be demilitarized and so 'they would not be of any great interest to any of the three powers in question'. This idea, which has been described by Orme Sargent as 'rather impracticable', was not taken further¹¹⁵. The question was raised again only in

111. F.O. 371/23756, P. Loraine, November 29, 1939.

112. F.O. 371/23756, R. Bowker (minute), December 3, 1939. For the idea that Turkey could secure the Dodecanese as a result of its participation in the war: A.M., TTA/94, Amiral Esteva, February 20, 1940.

113. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen, October 8, 1940. P. Dixon (min.), December 9, 1940.

114. A.M., II, BB7/I/2, Lemaesquier: Dernières impressions de Turquie, début de septembre 1940.

115. F.O. 371/23755, O. Sargent, October 19, 1939.

August 1940, when E.R. Warner approached it with a rather cold boldness and lack of understanding:

We should not allow the question of whether the Greeks or the Turks are to be given the Dodecanese impede our immediate action against the Italians in the islands. The issue could perhaps be evaded for the present if we took the line in our propaganda that it is our intention to liberate the islands from their tyranny and that their future status will be settled after the war by negotiations between the interested parties. If it is impossible to evade the issue in this way, a wide measure of autonomy under a joint Turco-Greek mandate might be promised¹¹⁶.

Nevertheless, a skillful high-level diplomat, Under-Secretary of State Sir Orme Sargent, immediately paid more attention to the problem. It was not clear, he noted on 1 August, what should be done in order to set in motion Warner's conclusion but it was well worth 'careful study'¹¹⁷. Indeed, Gladwyn Jebb was asked to consult the various services in order to study carefully the future course of action¹¹⁸.

In fact, the question was a much more serious one. Notwithstanding censorship, Turkish ambitions became known to Greek public opinion, which saw clearly a serious threat, greater than the Italian one, to the region's national future¹¹⁹. In late July 1939, facing the prospect of the outbreak of a new European war, Athens had instructed its Minister to Ankara, Raphail Raphail, to suss out the Turks with regards to the diplomatic developments which could decide the future of the Dodecanese. 'For some time now', Raphail replied, 'I have been making every possible effort to find out whether the Dodecanese issue has been raised here, during any diplomatic discussions; and I have the impression that nothing of the kind has happened'¹²⁰. Around the same time, in

116. F.O. 371/24963, E.R. Warner, August 1940.

117. F.O. 371/24963, Sargent, August 1, 1940.

118. F.O. 371/24963, H. Hopkinson, August 8, 1940.

119. *D.D.I.*, 8a s., vol. XIII, p. 180, Grazzi (Atene) to Ciano, August 25, 1939.

120. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1/1, R. Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 28, 1939. However, this fundamental remark was accompanied by the assumption that the issue could surface again in the near future: 'Still, judging by the articles in the Turkish Press which, I understand, largely represents and reflects the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I have no doubt that sooner or later, this issue will be discussed'.

two articles in the daily newspaper *Yeni Sabah*, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın projected the need for the return of the Dodecanese 'to their legitimate owners'; however, as the editor, he avoided specifying who was the rightful owner of the title: 'the Greeks or the Turks' was what Raphael Raphael was wondering as well, along with other experienced diplomats, such as René Massigli¹²¹. Only in April 1940 did the author of the article state explicitly that he meant Turkey as 'legitimate owner'¹²². Furthermore, the Greek Minister had diagnosed that 'sooner or later this issue' would be raised by Ankara¹²³. The Dodecanesians themselves were categorically opposed to such a development: they preferred to remain under the regime of the Italian administration rather than to have Turkey as sovereign power¹²⁴! The Allies had realized this feeling for some time. Early on the British had noted that the Greeks would very much resent it if the islands went over to Turkey¹²⁵. As Palairret put it later, 'We cannot enlist the help of the Dodecanesians either at home or abroad and then hand the islands over to the Turks'; and he expressed his personal opinion: 'The islands with purely Greek and Christian inhabitants should go to Greece, particularly if Greece is fighting on our side...'¹²⁶.

However, would the Turks be prepared to see the islands given to Greece? If they would not, could, at least, any form of compromise be reached between them? In this direction, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Viscount Halifax, was to seek the solution either (a) by dividing the Archipelago between Greece and Turkey, or (b) by giving the Archipelago an autonomous régime under Greco-Turkish protection, or (c) by any other system¹²⁷. Answering this question, the British Ambassador in Ankara replied that it was 'most unlikely that the Turks would waive their claim to the islands or at least to such as are of primary strategical importance'. 'It is to be remembered', he added, 'that they insisted on having Imbros and Tenedos in spite of the Greek population...'

121. A.A.E., Italie/362, Massigli to Bonnet, July 18, 22, 1939.

122. A.M., II BB7/I/2, Lemaesquier (Ankara) to Ministère de la Marine, 24-4-1940: 'Il y a tout près de l'Asie Mineure un certain nombre d'îles qui s'appellent le Dodécanèse et qui sont, en somme, le prolongement de notre Anatolie. Ces îles sont-elles d'une importance vitale pour l'Italie au lieu pour nous? Pourquoi ne nous les restitue-t-elle pas?' (*Yeni Sabah*, April 20, 1940).

123. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1/1, R. Raphael to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 28, 1939.

124. *D.D.I.*, 8a s., vol. XIII (12 agosto – 3 sett. 1939), p. 180 (Grazzi to Ciano, 25 agosto 1939).

125. F.O. 371/23756, R. Bowker, December 3, 1939.

126. F.O. 371/24963, Palairret, October 5, 1940.

127. F.O. 371/24963, Viscount Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugessen, October 4, 1940.

Thus, after expressing his doubts about the schemes involving Greek sovereignty or a condominium 'wherever essential Turkish strategic interests were safeguarded', or even a status of autonomy under Turco-Greek protection, he concluded by suggesting that the final solution be postponed until the ultimate peace settlement, when the two States might be left to negotiate 'a partition between themselves or any other arrangement acceptable to both'¹²⁸. Despite his different views, Michael Palairet had submitted, from Athens, roughly the same suggestion¹²⁹. The Foreign Office officials agreed with them: they excluded any form of compromise to be induced by themselves to Greece and Turkey: 'I agree with the suggestion which both Sir M. Palairet and Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen make, namely that if we capture the Islands we should administer them ourselves until the end of the war and until a settlement is reached between the interested parties'¹³⁰; and P. Dixon had stressed: 'The islands is a matter to be settled between the interested parties after the War, and to lay all emphasis on our primary common object, which is to free them from Italian domination'¹³¹.

Yet, was this line of thinking capable of smoothing relations between the two parties and, at the same time, of facilitating Allied action against the Dodecanese under any circumstances? 'We are at present considering what line we should take with Turkish and Greek Governments if questioned, as well as with the representatives of local population', wrote Sargent on 19 October¹³². Two days earlier, he had also noted some more specific, but nonetheless self-explanatory guidelines by which the issue could be resolved: 'the subsequent disposal of the islands with the subject of negotiations at the Peace Conference between the three powers concerned, provided that the two latter are fighting with us...'¹³³ In general terms, the text of the final conclusions of the Foreign Office, up to the beginning of the war in the Balkans, stressed:

Seen from the particular angle of Athens and Ankara our proposals may look like much ado about very little, but if, as is to be assumed, our object is to use discontented subject peoples wherever we can to discomfit our

128. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen, October 8, 1940.

129. F.O. 371/24963, Palairet, October 5, 1940; F.O. 371/24963, Nichols, October 17, 1940.

130. F.O. 371/24963, Nichols (min.), October 17, 1940.

131. F.O. 371/24963, P. Dixon (min.), October 15, 1940.

132. F.O. 371/24963, Sargent to Lampson (Cairo), October 19, 1940.

133. F.O. 371/24963, Sargent (min.), October 17, 1940.

adversaries and keep their nerves on edge, it would still seem to us desirable that we should be ready to make what use we can of the Dodecanesians. We must at least take steps to maintain their morale and show that we do not spurn them as potential allies. With regard to more advanced preparations for cooperation, only Middle East Command and the C.-in-C. Mediterranean can say how the potentialities of the inhabitants should be assessed.

The second question is whether, in dealing with the Dodecanesians, we should operate from Greece and Turkey. This is obviously a delicate matter and we fully appreciate the reluctance of Hugessen and Palairat to become involved, both on account of 'D' operations and in view of the difficult question of what is to be done with the islands if and when we get them.

The third question raised is that of the future of the Dodecanese and what we are to say respectively to the Greeks, Turks and the Dodecanesians themselves. If we are to operate from Greece and Turkey the fact will almost certainly become known to the Greek and Turkish Governments and we shall then have to give them the best noncommittal answer that we can devise in reply to a possible enquiry as to what we intend to do with the archipelago if we get hold of it. Such an answer would probably be on the lines that the islands would be held during the war in the common interests of Great Britain, Turkey and Greece and that the subsequent disposal of the islands will be the subject of negotiation at the peace conference between the 3 powers concerned. With regard to the Dodecanesians with whom we establish contact, we think it would be quite sufficient to tell them that our immediate intention is to free the islands from Italian tyranny, but we would deprecate saying that their fate would be settled at the peace conference between the interested parties, since we do not want to pledge ourselves to have to consult the local inhabitants, even though they certainly are an 'interested party'¹³⁴.

In other words, the immediate undertaking of military action in the Dodecanese, as desired by the British, stumbled on difficulties which concerned the problem of the region's future status. If indeed it were possible for the

134. F.O. 371/24963, E.R. Warner (minute): Ph. Nichols, November 19, 1940.

British to occupy the islands themselves, without the assistance of the two neighbouring countries, the issue could be left more easily for after the end of the war, yet it was doubtful whether at that time the British possessed the forces to go it alone. Still, the first intervention, in September 1940, by the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, on possible action in the Dodecanese, was connected with this suggestion: as Palairret cabled to London, 'President of the Council said to me that, speaking as a soldier, he wondered why we did not attack the Dodecanesians ourselves at once without the Turks, and thus destroy Italian power in the Eastern Mediterranean'¹³⁵. The same thesis had already been supported by General Papagos, Chief of the Greek General Staff: the view that the Turks might capture the Dodecanese by direct attack, he considered wasteful of effort, as the Dodecanese could be easily neutralized¹³⁶. One week after his initial approach, Metaxas brought up the issue in order to emphasize the importance for the British of capturing the Dodecanese and suggested that, as long as Britain was on the defensive in the Mediterranean, the Greeks must lie low and avoid provoking the Italians. However, immediately after Britain managed to take the offensive against Italy, they would be actively on London's side¹³⁷. Philip Nichols's comment, on behalf of the Foreign Office, was characteristic: 'You may be assured that [this] project is dear to the heart of everyone concerned, but unfortunately it would entail a major operation, for which at present neither the men nor the equipment are available'¹³⁸.

There is no doubt that the Greek government's thoughts were motivated by the sense of its impotence to secure, at the time or in the future, the role it desired in settling the Dodecanese issue. Regionally or on the wider international level, the political situation gave little hope that Greece could enforce a just and stable solution, one based on the will of the overwhelming majority of the islands' population. Yet, all this changed from the moment that Greece faced the unprovoked Italian invasion, managed to repel it and thus became an important factor in the Allied effort; especially since this came after the French surrender, Italy's entry into the war and, soon thereafter, the obvious

135. F.O. 371/24918, Palairret, September 10, 1940.

136. J. S. Blunt (Military Attaché, Athens) to F.O., January 8, 1940 (See, Y. G. MOURELOS, *Fictions et réalités...*, p. 93.)

137. F.O. 371/24918, Palairret, September 17, 1940.

138. F.O. 371/24918, Nichols to Palairret, September 20, 1940.

problem in German-Soviet relations. Without having foreseen the crucial role that was to be played by Greece, the British officials, during the deliberations on the Dodecanese before the start of the Greek-Italian armed conflict, had already hinted that the future status of the islands would be a subject of negotiation at the Peace Conference between Britain, Turkey and Greece on an equal basis, provided that the two latter are fighting with them: this position was stressed first by Orme Sargent, on 17 October. Meanwhile, when Palairet submitted his proposal that the islands should go to Greece, he had added: 'particularly if Greece is fighting in our side...'¹³⁹.

139. F.O. 371/24963, Palairet, October 5, 1940.

CHAPTER III

THE GREEK-ITALIAN WAR AND THE NEW COURSE OF THE DODECANESE QUESTION

THE ITALIAN INVASION OF GREECE on 28 October 1940 gave a new dimension to the role that the Dodecanese could play during the war. The Greeks' victories on the Albanian front coincided with British successes over the Italian troops in Libya and this new course of events tended to stress further the importance of an occupation of the Dodecanese: 'Now that Italy has attacked Greece, it is obviously of even greater urgency, and there are considerably better opportunities, to take action against the Italians in the Dodecanese'¹⁴⁰. This remark by Pierson Dixon of the diplomatic service, on 14 November, was also based on a wider appreciation of the situation, as explained two days earlier in a Foreign Office minute. According to Orme Sargent, there were three arguments in favour of taking the islands: firstly, to destroy the Italian air bases, which constituted a serious nuisance for the British; secondly, to control this area, if the Greek Mainland were to be overrun, in order to restore the Allies' prestige and give fresh impetus to the Greeks; and thirdly, to encourage the Turks by convincing them of the allied strength¹⁴¹. Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, minuted his agreement: 'It looks good sense to me'¹⁴². The military leadership was in concord: 'The need for early capture of Dodecanese is greatly increased.'¹⁴³ After all, was it possible to overlook the additional fact that, after Greece's entry into the war, the British now had the possibility of striking the Italians from the bases they were hastening to install on Greek islands – Crete, Samos and elsewhere? Furthermore, should Turkey and 'eventually Greece through separate peace with Italy be out of War', use of airstrips in the Dodecanese would be essential for keeping up the strong pressure of air strikes in the Balkans¹⁴⁴.

140. F.O. 371/24963, Dixon to Ph. Broad, Ministry of Economic Warfare, November 14, 1940.

141. F.O. 371/24963, Sargent, November 12, 1940.

142. F.O. 371/24963, Halifax (minute), November 14, 1940.

143. See even, *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. VI, p. 368 (De Peppo to Ciano, December 31, 1940).

144. PREM. 3/124/2, C.-in-C. Middle East to the Chief of Staff, December 16, 1940.

In fact, the military details for an operation against the Dodecanese had been discussed earlier, but little had been done before mid-November, when Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Fleet, expressed his hope of shortly initiating a piecemeal seizure, which was code-named operation 'Mandibles'. The Joint Planning Staff in London drew up a plan to capture first the outlying islands, Rhodes and finally Cos and Leros; this was approved by the Prime Minister and then, in principle, on 2 December, by the War Cabinet¹⁴⁵. The question of military operations kept coming up in the discussions of the military authorities, which had agreed on a 'nibbling' policy to occupy the islands by degrees. The issue was raised repeatedly, but nothing was settled before the review of the entire British Mediterranean policy, early in 1941. Then, on 16 January, the Chiefs of Staff informed the Commander-in-Chief of the undesirability of the pinprick operations till the complete plan was settled¹⁴⁶. This had not been accomplished by the end of the month, when the Chiefs of Staff telegraphed to the Middle East, urging major operations against the islands as soon as possible. Smaller operations should be related to the larger as part of a coherent plan; but subject to this the Commander-in-Chief was given full freedom to begin preliminaries. In reply, Wavell outlined briefly his plan for the operation under the code-name 'Mandibles', which would begin with operations against Kassos and Castellorizo, soon to be followed by major operations against Rhodes. The first operations were, however, doomed from the outset. The attack on Kassos failed and the assault on Castellorizo – under the name 'Operation Pitch' – was even worse: according to British estimations, the principal causes were 'Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean's underestimation of task, planning in hands of a sick man [!], shortage of fuel, inadequate communications'¹⁴⁷. The

145. PREM. 3/124/2, Ismay to Churchill, November 28, 1940; Churchill to C.-in-C., Mediterranean, December 11, 1940; CAB. 101/273, Y. M. Streatfield (p. 27-28). In details, F.O. 371/24963, L.C. Hollis to Nichols, November 23; Nichols (minute), December 6, 1940; see also, Chief of Staff Committee: Report, December 20, 1940.

146. Despite demands for secrecy, the Greek liaison officer with the British Fleet, Captain C. Kontoyiannis, knew of the impending operation (A.M.M., Koryzis Papers, Kontoyiannis, February 19, 1941).

147. CAB. 101/273, Streatfield, p. 40-41. See also, W.O. 106/3260, F.O./S.W.I.: The Dodecanese question (February 17, 1942). For the different views of experts, PREM. 3/124/2, C.-in-C. Middle East to the Chief of Staff, December 12; War Cabinet: Chief of Staff Committee, December 20; Min. of

Prime Minister's view that an attack on the smaller islands of the Dodecanese would be unwise was confirmed¹⁴⁸.

A few days later, the new British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who had already had talks in Athens, examined the whole military situation with Wavell in Cairo, in the light of London's anxiety arising from the Castellorizo fiasco and the need to give priority to campaigning in Greece; it was agreed to go slow on 'Mandibles'. Finally, at a new meeting between the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff (COS), on 13 March, it was decided that 'Mandibles' should not be delayed indefinitely and Eden was instructed to press hard for its completion before the end of the month. In reply, the Foreign Secretary informed the Prime Minister that no operations against the Dodecanese would be possible until mid-April: British military command in the Middle East had reached this decision having taken into account naval commitments for operation 'Lustre' in continental Greece, lack of intelligence from the islands and the time still needed to equip and train the necessary forces. This was accepted in London and reaffirmed early in April¹⁴⁹. '(Certainly) don't spoil "Mandibles" through haste', said Churchill¹⁵⁰. On the other hand, in his opinion, if any of the Dodecanese islands were attacked, these should be the big ones.

It could be assumed that the failure in planning and carrying out the first phase of the operation was due to the fact that the British had acted alone in the face of counter-attacks by enemy air units based in the Dodecanese. However, as had become clear from the outset, the co-operation of the States neighbouring the region was impeded by political issues involving the future status of the islands. Moreover, in the aftermath of 28 October 1940, a new element was introduced on the scene. The Greeks, already at war with Italy, naturally looked forward to the annexation of the Dodecanese, especially in the light of their victory over the Italians, as well as the wish of the inhabitants in these islands. Even in Cyprus, there were moves to form a Greek division¹⁵¹! The

Defense to Prime Minister, December 23, 1940. See also, R. HIGHAM, *Diary of a Disaster: British Aid to Greece 1940-41*, Lexington 1986, p. 49, 78, 88, 157, 286.

148. W.O. 106/3260, War Cabinet: Attack on the Dodecanese, January 14, 1941; note by the Secretary, January 13, 1941.

149. CAB. 101/273, Streatfield, (p. 59-60); see also, R. HIGHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 250-252.

150. PREM. 3/124/2, Churchill to Wavell, March 30, 1941.

151. *D.D.I.*, 9a s., vol. VI, p. 368 (De Peppo to Ciano, December 31, 1940). W. S. CHURCHILL, *The Second World War*, vol. III: *The Grand Alliance*, London 1950, p. 64.

Dodecanesians themselves looked upon Greece's war as their own war. There had been demonstrations in Athens and in Thessaloniki, there was intensive activity by the Central Committee of the Struggle for Union with Greece and, according to the British Minister in Athens, the 'Enosis' claim was one of the 'battle cries' of the Greek Army¹⁵². In early January 1941, the first regiment of Dodecanesian volunteers was sworn in¹⁵³. Michael Palairet had cabled London on 18 November of the previous year: 'I must emphasize that all Greeks hold intensely strong views as to the Greek character of Dodecanese; they will also consider that their own successful resistance to the Italians and the anti-Italian attitude of the islanders themselves will greatly facilitate operations against the Islands'¹⁵⁴.

Earlier, in 1939-1940, British officials had not been decisively influenced by the clear wish of the Dodecanesians for union with Greece¹⁵⁵. Now, however, would they not seriously take into account Greece's active and successful participation in the war against the Axis? To what extent would London insist on considering other political factors which, up to that point, seemed to place it in a dilemma as to whether it should support a solution compatible with the will of the islands' inhabitants? Not unexpectedly, the first to pose and answer this question was the British Minister in Athens: 'I feel that they [the islands] should eventually return to Greece'¹⁵⁶; and in the following days he came forward with an even stronger view on the matter. On 14 December he raised the issue again: 'After the Greek victories on the Albanian frontier, which have been of such inestimable value to our case, it seems to me that it is our duty and our interest to be as generous about the Dodecanese as we were about the Ionian Islands'¹⁵⁷; On the other hand, he also stressed that dismay and discouragement would be created among the Greeks if they learned that the British were preparing to attack the islands while their future remained

152. According to M. Palairet (W.O. 106/3260, Palairet to Halifax, December 12, 1940).

153. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet (tel.), December 11, 1940. For more, B. MOSTRAS, *op. cit.*, p. 30-32; also, J. TOMAZOS, *op. cit.*, p. 60-62.

154. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet to Halifax, November 18, 1940.

155. Even later, Lord Lloyd of Dolobran cabled to Halifax that 'there was, of course, no historical base for such a claim would not diminish the clamour of the cry' [!] (PREM. 3/124/2, Lord Lloyd of Dolobran to Halifax, December 22, 1940).

156. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet (tel.), November 18, 1940.

157. F.O. 371/29932, M. Palairet to Halifax, December 14, 1940.

uncertain¹⁵⁸; Palairet had dwelt upon this last point earlier, on 18 November, when he stated: 'If we discourage the Greeks now by implying that the Islands are not to come to Greece, we shall risk lowering their morale at a most critical moment'¹⁵⁹;

The Foreign Office officials understood the point of Palairet's suggestions, but they indicated also that London should be careful in handling the issue. Orme Sargent, after consultations, concluded:

We must, I feel, be very, very careful not to commit ourselves in any way either to the Greek or Turkish case and to accept Sir M. Palairet's suggestion would be in effect to give the Greeks a start over the Turks. This Palairet no doubt thinks justifiable since the Greeks are fighting for us and the Turks are not. But I feel that it would be most shortsighted to fall in with this plan and might lead to real difficulties between the Greeks and Turks and thus might even retard Turkish entry into the war on our side¹⁶⁰;

Palairet replied that 'The Greeks would find it difficult to believe that, after their gallant and successful achievements (which have been greatly to our advantage) we would even contemplate handing over to Turkey the Greeks rescued from Italian domination without Turkish help'¹⁶¹; and later he added that any Greek government which allowed the Dodecanese to pass to Turkey would be driven from office by public opinion¹⁶²; Even Knatchbull-Hugessen, from Ankara, agreed with this point: 'I fully agree that Greece has major claim to the islands both from the point of view of population and because Greece is fighting and Turkey is not. But I cannot say how far the Turkish government would go in accepting these views'¹⁶³; Nevertheless, the British dilemma quickly became more acute, especially since the Turks did not hide their objections to a possible unilateral action by the Greeks. If the Greek Army took the islands, any claim by Turkey would have to be abandoned¹⁶⁴: Both parties, allies or

158. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet to Halifax, December 11, 1940.

159. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet (tel.), November 18, 1940.

160. F.O. 371/24963, Sargent (min.), November 19, 1940.

161. F.O. 371/24963, M. Palairet (tel.), December 11, 1940.

162. F.O. 371/29932, Palairet, January 3, 1941.

163. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Halifax, December 15, 1940.

164. *D.D.I.*, 9 s., vol. VI, p. 368, (De Peppo to Ciano, December 31, 1940).

enemies, agreed with this assumption¹⁶⁵. It is in this perspective that the shaping of British policy on the Dodecanese became the subject of intense debate, at a military as well as a political level, in which both the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister participated.

In conclusion, immediately after the Italian attack on Greece, the question of the future of the Dodecanese was associated with the prospect of capturing the islands from the Italians, as the Chiefs of Staff proposed. Was it possible to combine this undertaking with a settlement at the political level? The British officials again debated the issue and came up with more than one suggestion regarding the possibility of launching an operation in the area without risking Turkish-Greek friction. The message of the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean to the military and diplomatic authorities is indicative: 'A serious difficulty will occur concerning attitude to be taken up over Greek and Turkish claims'; and he concluded: 'It is evident that matter is already under consideration but I feel a decision on policy in this matter is one of urgency if we are not to find ourselves unable to proceed while question of attitude of H. M. Government remains unsettled'¹⁶⁶.

Explicitly, on 27 November 1940, Lord Halifax, still Foreign Secretary, in a memorandum to the War Cabinet, pointed out that it would be essential to ensure that there should be no quarrel between Greeks and Turks 'over the prize when captured', and suggested:

On the assumption that we shall be concerned in any action taken against the Islands, and in their subsequent occupation, we should administer the Dodecanese ourselves in the event of their capture and keep them under British administration until the end of the war; a decision as to the future status of the Islands should be deferred till the peace settlement.

Then, he continued, the Greeks and the Turks should try to agree between themselves as to the future of the region¹⁶⁷. These proposals were approved

165. According to Sargent, F.O. 371/24922, Sargent (memorandum), December 14, 1940.

166. F.O. 371/24963, C. in C. Mediterranean, November 18, 1940; L.C. Hallis (War Cabinet Office) to Nichols, November 23, 1940.

167. CAB. 66/13, The Dodecanese: memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, November 27, 1940. See also, W.O. 106/3260, Halifax to M. Palairret and H. Knatchbull-Hugessen [November 24, 1940].

by the War Cabinet on 2 December¹⁶⁸, despite the fact that last paragraph was contested by Palairret¹⁶⁹. Even Nichols stressed: 'If we have to choose between a lowering of Greek morale and adding to the possible disinclination of the Turks to enter the war, we must surely choose the former'¹⁷⁰.

Nevertheless, the Foreign Office, with a view to elaborate a more constructive hypothesis, will launch a last initiative. Sargent will note on 17 December: 'It would of course solve all our difficulties if we could get a Greco-Turkish agreement before the fall of the Archipelago'.¹⁷¹ This volte-face was also evident in the Prime Minister's approval of a telegram to the Ambassador at Ankara:

His Majesty's Government are, of course, aware that the Turkish Government, although 'non-belligerent' in the Greco-Italian war, cannot be indifferent to the future of the Dodecanese; but for this very reason His Majesty's Government would welcome it if the Turkish Government could see their respective interests in the Archipelago, with a view to reaching an amicable settlement as to the ultimate ownership of the islands if they should be captured from or surrendered by the Italians in the course of the present war¹⁷².

By sending these instructions to Ankara, the Foreign Secretary could also answer to Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, who was eager to launch an attack against the Archipelago: 'I hope that we shall have time to deal with and to reach an amicable understanding with both Greece and Turkey before any [such] decision is taken'¹⁷³.

What kind of compromise did the British hope to secure from Ankara? Did they put forward a proposal themselves, hoping that it could form the basis for a settlement with the Greeks on the future status of the Dodecanese? Certainly, the Foreign Office officials assumed that it would be possible 'to be quite frank with the Turks and try to persuade them to agree to the Islands being handed

168. F.O. 371/24963, Nichols (note), December 6, 1940.

169. F.O. 371/24963, Palairret to Halifax, December 11, 1940. For a previous expression of this opinion by the same person, November 18, 1940; for a later one, W.O. 106/3260, Palairret to Eden, December 25, 1940.

170. F.O. 371/24963, Nichols, November 19, 1940.

171. F.O. 371/24963, O. Sargent, December 17, 1940.

172. F.O. 371/24963, F.O. to Knatchbull-Hugessen, December 24, 1940. See also, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Prime Minister, December 21, 1940; J. H. Peck to V. G. Lawferd, December 23, 1940.

173. F.O. 371/24963, Halifax to Alexander (Admiralty), December 16, 1940.

to Greece; but this in its turn might, if the Turks were not amenable, lead to a dispute of Greece and Turkey'¹⁷⁴. Knatchbull-Hugessen, after underlining that the Turks never mentioned the subject to him, nor he to them, had cabled earlier to the Foreign Office:

Clearly the Turks are most closely interested from a strategical point of view and I think it will be essential to satisfy their needs on this point. Lease of bases might be considered. Beyond this, given their good relations with Greece, a friendly settlement should not be difficult. I would mention however that Castellorizo would appear to be indicated as destined for Turkey. It is certainly a declared principle of the Turkish Government to maintain homogeneity and this argument could be used, but it would not prevail where strategical considerations arose¹⁷⁵.

Yet, what did this effort to confirm to the 'strategical considerations of the Turkish government' entail? Four days before Knatchbull-Hugessen submitted his ideas, the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean had discussed the future of the Dodecanese with Admiral Ulgen, in London. The Turkish officer volunteered the opinion that, trying to come to an amicable settlement with the Greeks concerning the possession of the Dodecanese, his government would ask only for two islands – probably Cos and another one close to the coast of Asia Minor¹⁷⁶. Knatchbull-Hugessen had seriously considered these views although he also stressed that it should not be assumed that the Turkish government will also adopt them. 'Admiral Ulgen's views', he noted, 'reinforce the views he expressed above himself, in the same telegram of 15th December'; and he concluded: 'he will certainly report to his Government and might be approached'¹⁷⁷; 'This opens up possibility of a satisfactory settlement', Dixon remarked on 17 December: the Greeks could take Rhodes together with most of the remaining islands, while the Turks could receive Cos, Castellorizo and possibly some other island which would be considered vital from a strategic point of view¹⁷⁸. It is on this assumption that the final instructions the Foreign

174. F.O. 371/24963, Dixon (note), December 17, 1940.

175. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., December 15, 1940.

176. F.O. 371/24963, C. in C. Mediterranean to Admiralty, December 11, 1940.

177. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., December 15, 1940.

178. F.O. 371/24963, Dixon, December 17, 1940.

Office gave to the Ankara Embassy were based: London would welcome it if the Turkish government could discuss with the Greeks their respective interests and could reach an amicable settlement about the ultimate ownership of the Dodecanese islands in case they were captured from or surrendered by the Italians in the course of the war. Knatchbull-Hugessen was also instructed to tell the Turks: 'The Turkish Government might consider their position to be adequately safeguarded by the retention of one or two islands close to the Turkish mainland and possibly by the lease of bases in an other of the islands'¹⁷⁹.

The suggestion evoked, once more, Michael Palairet's reaction, which had, finally, to be justified amply:

I cannot help feeling that the instructions to Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen may stimulate Turkey to make claims to the islands, which they could not have put forward unless encouraged to do so and may create friction which we wish to avoid... I do not think that they [the Greeks] will understand why we should consider it necessary for them to come to a previous agreement with the Turks about the islands which we propose to capture from Italy without Turkish help¹⁸⁰.

In fact, Palairet was excited after reading the telegram from Ankara of the previous day: on 23 December the Turkish Foreign Minister had remarked to the Greek Minister that the population in the Dodecanese was predominantly Greek and that only Greeks could live there! Knatchbull-Hugessen transmitted also his Greek colleague's impression that 'the Turkish Government realizes that if the islands are captured with no effort on the part of Turkey they can hardly put forward a claim except for once or two nearest the Turkish territory and that they think it is better to let the islands go by default than to go to war merely to secure their claims'¹⁸¹. The London officials were surprised to ascertain that the Turks 'might be content' with less than the British themselves had supposed¹⁸². This basic assessment by Halifax was followed by that of his

179. F.O. 371/24963, Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugessen, December 24, 1940.

180. F.O. 371/24963, Palairet to Halifax, December 25, 1940.

181. F.O. 371/24963, Knatchbull-Hugessen, December 24, 1940.

182. F.O. 371/24963, Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugessen, December 24, 1940.

successor Anthony Eden, namely that Ankara 'might prove unexpectedly accommodating'¹⁸³. He wrote precisely to Palairet:

It must be remembered that the Turks undoubtedly have an interest in this question, although it is not of the same degree or character as that of the Greek government. Indeed it was because His Majesty's Government appreciated the burning issues the question of the Dodecanese raised for both Greece and Turkey that they were moved to take the initiative to promote a friendly settlement between the two Governments, before the fall of the Archipelago.

And he authorized him to speak in this sense to President of the Council, adding that 'at the peace conference the Greek Government can be sure that His Majesty's Government mindful of Greek claims and Greek interests in the Archipelago will do their utmost to ensure a just and equitable solution of this question'¹⁸⁴.

It was under these circumstances that Palairet was authorized to inform Metaxas of the approach, with a view to promoting a Turco-Greek agreement about the future of the Dodecanese¹⁸⁵. The Greek Prime Minister, who had not mentioned the matter since his country's entry into the war on 28 October, asked Palairet whether the British had any obligations towards Turkey about this area. When the British diplomat answered 'none', Metaxas expressed great relief and said that 'that simplified the matter very much'; and after expressing his hope that London would exercise 'benevolent mediation' in discussions between the two neighbouring countries, he said that after the martyrdom suffered by the Dodecanesians under the Italians, 'he could not contemplate the return to alien domination for any of these purely Greek islands'. On the other hand, he would agree not to fortify them if Turkey wished it, but he could not agree to the lease of bases. 'I gathered', Palairet concluded, 'that he does not really expect the Turks to claim the islands'¹⁸⁶.

183. F.O. 371/24963, Eden to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, January 6, 1941.

184. W.O. 106/3260, Eden to Palairet, January 14, 1941.

185. W.O. 106/3260, Eden to Palairet, December 28, 1940.

186. According to Palairet's remark, F.O. 371/24963, Palairet to Eden, December 28, 1940; also, W.O. 106/3260, Palairet to Eden, December 29, 1940.

Metaxas's views were already known to the British, when the Turkish government's answer was conveyed to London. On 27 December, Knatchbull-Hugessen had expressed his government's wish to avoid anything that would create difficulties between Turkey and Greece¹⁸⁷. In early January 1941, Numan Menemencioğlu agreed that, in fact, Hellenic sovereignty over the Dodecanese would not constitute a strategic danger; but, at the same time, he pointed out that in certain islands – especially in Rhodes and Cos – the Turkish minority was large and Ankara 'could not allow Turkish subjects to be placed under foreign rule'. As regards the fact that Greece was belligerent, he mentioned that his country 'as non-belligerent, had been of considerable assistance, as a steadying element in this part of the world whereas if she had come in, she would have been a liability'¹⁸⁸. Ankara's official reply runs as follows:

The Turkish Government's view is that the Dodecanese should be occupied exclusively by the British, that the Greeks should not participate and that status quo should then not be disturbed until the end of the war.

The Turkish Government would have been inclined to a reasonable partition of the Dodecanese on a basis which would assure absolute security for Turkey, and even for this they would desire British mediation, but for the 'severity' of general Metaxas's attitude of which I had spoken to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In the face of General Metaxas's attitude, the Turkish Government do not see the use of putting themselves into direct or indirect contact with the Greek Government. They consider it 'unseasonable' (the word His Excellency used was 'intempestif') to let it be understood that Turkey has any intention of making any sacrifice¹⁸⁹.

Certainly, in his comments, Knatchbull-Hugessen hastened to stress, firstly, that Menemencioğlu had emphasized that this was his government's answer 'for the moment', and, secondly, that had it not been for the Metaxas's position, as this was expressed recently, Ankara's attitude would have been more accommodating¹⁹⁰. In fact he tended to conclude in the course of the following

187. W.O. 106/3260, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, December 27, 1940.

188. F.O. 371/29932, Knatchbull-Hugessen to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 2, 1941.

189. F.O. 371/29932, Knatchbull-Hugessen to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 4, 1941.

190. *Ibidem*.

days, that this position was not really as uncompromising as it appeared at first sight. On 16 January, the Turkish Foreign Minister indicated, in speaking to Knatchbull-Hugessen, that 'he had originally been and still was ready to discuss quite open-mindedly possibilities of an arrangement'. Indeed, he would never have taken up the attitude manifested in his 4 January reply 'if it had not been for Greek attitude', which was resumed in a claim for all the Islands: 'If he started by making concessions in face of the present Greek attitude, he would place himself at a disadvantage'¹⁹¹, and the British ambassador stressed that the 'problem is to arrive at an acceptable compromise and in order to do this the Turkish point of view cannot be ignored'¹⁹². According to a Foreign Office Research Department statement, 'the Turkish Foreign Minister in 1941, while protesting that no Turks must be left under alien rule, and inclining to partition on a basis which would ensure absolute security for Turkey, gave the impression that he was open to a bargain'¹⁹³.

Nevertheless, the reply of the Turkish government was immediately deemed 'disappointing'¹⁹⁴. Anthony Eden, using this term, admitted that it was, in the circumstances, difficult to arrange a satisfactory settlement between Athens and Ankara; and he promptly proposed to the War Cabinet to consider that the negotiations were over, after the Turks had alarmed the Greeks 'by making extensive claims'¹⁹⁵. The Prime Minister himself expressed the opinion that any rivalry between Greeks and Turks was to be avoided¹⁹⁶. In this context the British decided to establish an administration of their own in the Islands, in the event of their capture or surrender during the war. As to the future status of the area, it should be left to the peace settlement. Furthermore, Knatchbull-Hugessen was told that the Turks had to realize that it was not open to London to prevent the Greeks, who were at war with the Italians, from attacking or participating in an attack on any territory occupied by their enemy¹⁹⁷. This information was also

191. F.O. 371/29932, Knatchbull to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 16, 1941.

192. W.O. 106/3260, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, January 28, 1941.

193. F.O. 371/43788, Research Department, Foreign Office: Turkey's claims and interests in territories and populations outside her frontiers.

194. W.O. 106/3260, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 14, 1941.

195. CAB, 65/17, January 9, 1941. According, evidently, a Foreign Office remark: F.O. 371/33165, D. Howard to Palaret, January 5, 1941.

196. *The Mediterranean and the Middle East...*, vol. I, p. 309.

197. F.O. 371/29932, [Foreign Office] to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 14, 1941.

given to Raphail, in a strictly personal form and together with the expressed assurance that he would not convey this to his government; indeed, the Greek diplomat mentioned this only to Metaxas himself¹⁹⁸. In fact, Michael Palairret notified the Greek Prime Minister on this issue a few days later, just before his unexpected death. Metaxas, for his part, had been ready to concede at most some form of demilitarization; but he asked no further question about the Turkish attitude. It was on 21 January 1941 that he consented to say that 'the question had much better be left to be settled by events'¹⁹⁹.



198. A later information, Raphail to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 10, 1942, in *The Dodecanese...*, doc. 25 (p. 92).

199. F.O. 371/29932, Palairret to Eden, January 21, 1941. See also, F.O. 371/44188, Turkish claims and interests in territories and populations outside her frontiers, Edmonds [F.O. Research Dt.] to Clutton, June 22, 1944.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATTITUDE OF THE WESTERN ALLIES TO THE DODECANESE QUESTION

AFTER THE FALL OF GREECE and its occupation by the Axis powers, responsibility for furthering the claim to the Dodecanese fell on the government-in-exile, headed by Emmanuel Tsouderos. In the memorandum he submitted to King George II, on 4 July 1941, the union with the Dodecanese had been recorded as one of Greece's main goals, in the framework of its 'minimum national claims'²⁰⁰. In public, he stated openly that 'these islands, although they are at present under the occupation of Italy, are purely Hellenic from every point of view – national, religious and cultural. Hellas has today, after her triumph against Italy, every right to ask that Dodecanese, to which Italy has no rights whatever, be returned to the mother land'²⁰¹. The Greek Prime Minister raised the question with the Allies in a memorandum he submitted to the British Government, as early as 29 September 1941²⁰². On 1 November, in a speech to the Greek community in London, and later, on 23 December, in a further memorandum to the British Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Orme Sargent, he made it clear that the Dodecanese, recognized as Greek territory by international agreements, were forcibly held by the Italians; in consequence, having defeated the Italians, Greece was entitled to 'recover the territories which Italy seized from her'²⁰³. These same proposals were presented by Tsouderos in a conversation with Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs: 'I first drew attention to the legal position and to the titles, legal, political and ethical, which Greece had over these islands', according to the principles of self-determination proclaimed by the Allies' statesmen during the war, and according to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. He stated precisely:

200. See, E. TSOUDEROS, *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια, 1941-1944...*, p. 86.

201. See also, J. TOMAZOS, *op. cit.*, 1944, p. 9.

202. E. TSOUDEROS, *op. cit.*, p. 96, 179. Also, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., 1943, A7/20.

203. F.O., 371/29838, Tsouderos to Sargent, December 23, 1941. W.O. 106/3260; F.O. The Dodecanese question (memorandum), February 17, 1942.

I then developed the following argument: The interests of our two countries coincided fully in every major European conflict, when we automatically found ourselves by the side of Britain. This could not be said of other Balkan countries. I earnestly hoped we would continue to be on the same side in future also, and to render mutual services. The Greek people had suffered more than ever before in their history. It would be a ghastly tragedy after such heavy sacrifices that they should experience the same feelings of frustration and injustice as each time previously. We expected Britain to help us so that we may again be in a position, when the next crisis will engulf Europe, to be able to help them. Every principle – moral, legal and sentimental – militated in our favour²⁰⁴.

Henceforth, at every opportunity, he repeated this standing claim of Greece²⁰⁵.

But were the British in a position to satisfy these Greek feelings? And if so, how could they achieve this? Indeed, early in the war, they appeared reluctant to discuss territorial questions. This position had been made clear even before Greece fell to the Axis, at a time when Alexandros Koryzsis, as Prime Minister, had raised the possibility that Cyprus could be offered to Greece, or at least that London would promise that it would do so after the war²⁰⁶. The British government's firm rejection of this demand coincided with the occupation of Greece by the Axis forces. Since then the Greek government concentrated its attention on its two other national claims, Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese²⁰⁷. Nevertheless, at no moment did the British government appear willing to move from its position of not discussing territorial issues before the end of the war. Summarizing his government's position, Orme Sargent, in a letter to Tsouderos, had noted that 'our attitude is that it is at present premature to raise any questions of territorial adjustments after the war'²⁰⁸.

204. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1944/43, Record of conversation with Sir Alexander Cadogan, November 17, 1942.

205. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Dragoumis Papers, 64/5, doc. 66 [1943]; doc. 69 (August 28, 1944); 67.1, doc. 14 (October 27, 1944). For a systematic presentation, W.O. 106/3260, Dixon (appendix), April 1943.

206. See, C. SVOLOPOULOS, 'Anglo-Hellenic Talks on Cyprus during the Axis Campaign against Greece', *Balkan Studies*, 23 (1982), p. 199-217.

207. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943/A7/20, Tsouderos to Sargent, December 23, 1941.

208. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943/A7/20, Sargent to Tsouderos, December 21, 1941.

Tsouderos had earlier been told to avoid references to territorial claims²⁰⁹. More characteristically, the Minister in London, Athanassios Aghnides, after a conversation with the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, noted: 'he begged me repeatedly not to try to pin the British government down to any definite promises of a territorial nature, as it was the policy of that Government not to bind themselves with any other Government'²¹⁰. London maintained this position up to the end of the war. When, on the prospect of Italy's surrender, in 1943, the Greek claims were renewed, London replied again that 'it is premature to discuss territorial questions while the war is still going on'²¹¹. 'We shall try to support the Greek claim at the peace settlement', noted Churchill himself, in April 1944; and in this same document he stressed that 'we should continue to avoid giving any immediate commitment as any promise at this stage would form a precedent for all the other minor allies to press their territorial claims'²¹². Even on the eve of Greece's liberation, the British Prime Minister told Papandreou that claims in the Dodecanese must wait until after the war²¹³; the Greek homologue 'accepted this' – as noted in the minute of the conversation²¹⁴.

209. F.O. 371/33165, Warner (min.), December 29, 1941.

210. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15. Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 9, 1943. Convinced that the deliberations during the war would determine the final settlement of matters of Greek interest, Athanassios Aghnides, a former assistant Secretary-General of the League of Nations, had been very active on this front. He noted: 'As soon as I was assigned to head the London Legation, I considered it as my duty to take a position regarding our various national claims – and especially those on the Dodecanese, throughout the years before the end of hostilities, fearing that the fate of the islands could become the subject of bargaining between our allies for their own interest. I also needed to take into account that, after each of my visits, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office had to draft the classic Record of Conversation for the Foreign Secretary. Thus, in my small typewriter, I used to write a short memorandum in which I referred to our claims. Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary, appreciated this gesture, since (receiving many visits each day) he needed to draft too many records. Thus, his record with the Greek Ambassador was significantly influenced by the short note that I handed him at the end of each conversation.'

211. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1944, Aghnides to Eden, August 4, 1943; Howard to Aghnides, August 20, 1943.

212. PREM. 3/124/4, Prime Minister to Leeper, April 4, 1944.

213. W. S. CHURCHILL, *The Second World War*, vol. VI, (London, 1945), p. 101. See also, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943-44/15, Exintaris (Rome), 20 October 1944; Raphail, October 27, 1944.

214. F.O. 371/43778, August 22, 1944. Even after Greece's liberation this stance was not altered: A.A.E., Europe 1944-49, Greece/59, Massigli (London), November 25, 1944.

The United States government took, at an early point, a similar line in response to the Greek claims: territorial arrangements should be agreed upon only upon the conclusion of the war²¹⁵. However, President Roosevelt made it clear that he personally believed: 'the Dodecanese question should be then determined by a plebiscite held under international trusteeship'²¹⁶.

On the other hand, the British never entered into negotiations or discussions on this issue with the Turkish government either. As Pierson Dixon stressed in an official memorandum in March 1942, 'the conclusion is that we could not in any circumstances use the Dodecanese as part of a bribe to the Turks'²¹⁷; Britain had not made and would not make any proposal to Turkey to enter the war at the expense of the Dodecanesians, as Sargent assured Aghnides²¹⁸. This general principle not only guided British policy, but also precluded other potential 'embarrassments'. To this, the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, added his own permanent sensitivities:

We should continue to avoid giving any immediate commitment, as any promise to the Greeks at this stage would form a precedent for all the other minor allies to press their territorial claims ... I realize that one of the special reasons for not committing ourselves prematurely about the future of the Dodecanese was that we did not want to offend the Turks at a time when we might want their help to drive the Axis out the islands²¹⁹.

Meanwhile, the refusal to accept or even discuss the Greek demand for the annexation of the Dodecanese barely concealed the British officials' favourable attitude towards this claim. 'We have entered into no commitment with the Greek Government; but we are morally bound to do our best to satisfy as far as we can their aspirations in the Archipelago which, moreover, is inhabited by an overwhelmingly Greek population', noted Dixon, on behalf of the Southern

215. See the Tsouderos memorandum, S.D.R.: Roosevelt Library, Official File, Box 206, Tsouderos to State Department, June 12, 1942.

216. S.D.R.: Roosevelt Library, Papers S. Welles, Box 164, S. Welles (memorandum of conversation with C. Diamantopoulos), November 27, 1942. See also, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Dragoumis Papers, 64/5 (doc. 66), Anglo-Greek relations, 1943.

217. F.O. 371/24963, see also, F.O. 371/33340, Dixon's memorandum, March 31, 1942.

218. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 9, 1943.

219. PREM. 3/124/4, Prime Minister to Leeper, April 4, 1944.

Department of the Foreign Office²²⁰; and D.F. Howard stated 'we hope that an amicable settlement may be reached between the Turks and Greeks. But we recognize that the Greeks have better claim to the islands and that by their contribution to the allied cause they have deserved recognition of that claim'²²¹. Even the Foreign Minister stated in the House of Commons that 'we remember the amazing achievements of the Greeks in this conflict; Greece was the first to debunk Mussolini'. Leeper had stressed that whilst the policy of His Majesty's Government is that all territorial claims must be reserved for settlement at the Conference he should be grateful for instructions as to the extent to which sympathy with the Greek claims to the Dodecanese should be shown: 'I presume that this claim is one which would receive the support of His Majesty's Government at the Peace Conference and this probability should be taken into account'²²². The Greek Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Philippos Dragoumis, had reasons to be optimistic in the aftermath of Liberation: 'On the Dodecanesian issue, we have many strong indications that it will be favourably resolved, so we can already regard it as certain'²²³. Later on, Eden himself was to round up these comments: 'it has always been our intention that all the Islands should go to Greece after the war'²²⁴.

Anthony Eden had succeeded Lord Halifax on 28 December 1940, at a moment when the view that the Greek claim had at least a lead over any others tended to prevail in the Foreign Office. From then on, the new Foreign Secretary would contribute to supporting and, through time, strengthening this view. As in the case of other British diplomats, his basic motive in shaping such an attitude should not be sought in the application of the principle of self-determination; after all, the British were rather careful in using this argument, which could also be invoked by the Greeks in a possible claim to Cyprus. Yet, Greece's participation in the fight against the Axis during its most crucial period and with positive results, as was already becoming apparent by the time

220. F.O. 371/33340, Dixon's memorandum, March 31, 1942; On the same spirit: minutes by Sargent, Cadogan and Eden (March 31 and April 1).

221. F.O. 371/37224, D.F. Howard : The Dodecanese (mem.).

222. PREM. 3/124/4, Leeper to F.O., March 30, 1944.

223. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943/15, Dragoumis to Washington Embassy, November 1, 1944. In the same spirit, W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Washington, April 15, 1945.

224. F.O. 371/48263, Eden to Peterson, April 3, 1945. See also, W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Washington, April 15, 1945.

Eden assumed his new post, strongly influenced his attitude. Additionally, in his view, British pleading in favour of the union of the Dodecanese with Greece could also contribute to keeping the Greeks satisfied and in preventing them – temporarily at least – from putting forward the issue of Cyprus²²⁵. Shortly after assuming his post, Eden outlined his views in a long letter to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, which he also sent to Churchill and Alexander:

In dealing with the very thorny problem of the Dodecanese, we have always been mindful of possible repercussions on the question of Cyprus. For example, we have been at pains to warn those responsible for our propaganda that too much stress must not be laid on the ‘alien domination’ of the Dodecanese islands for fear lest it provoke a ‘tu quoque’ in regard to Cyprus. But the Dodecanese problem has become of such urgency during the past few weeks that we have felt obliged to initiate certain action. My own feeling is that the action we have taken, and its results, should not result in prejudicing our position in Cyprus, though of course you are best able to judge that. Perhaps it will be best if I briefly summarize the position.

The new Foreign Secretary then dwelt extensively on the reasons that made him believe that ‘it seemed most unlikely that a settlement of the Dodecanese question would lead the Greek Government to raise with the British the question of Cyprus’:

I think I am right in saying that the question of the Dodecanese has always been a more burning issue with the Greek Government and the Greek people than the question of Cyprus. If this was so before the war it is even more the case since the Italian attack on Greece. The Greeks not unnaturally regard the ejection of the Italian usurpers from the Dodecanese as one of their war aims against Italy, just as it has become one of the battle cries of the Greek army. As for Cyprus, it is true that that island is, like the Dodecanese, in foreign occupation, but in that case the occupying power is the friend and ally and helper of Greece.

225. On the Hellenic claim on Cyprus, see, C. SVOLOPOULOS, ‘Anglo-Hellenic talks on Cyprus...’, p. 199-217.

Moreover I should judge that the Greeks would be so grateful to me for our instrumentality in helping them to attain their ambitions in regard to the Dodecanese that they would be prepared to forget, or at least suppress, any feelings that they may have entertained about Cyprus.

You say that a settlement of the Dodecanese question in Greece's favour would strengthen the now dying Enosist party in Cyprus, and I appreciate that there is a danger that this might occur. But I believe I am right in thinking that that party in the past has been to some extent at least stimulated from Athens. In the event of a settlement of the Dodecanese question in favour of Greece I think that we need feel no hesitation in asking the Greek Government, should the Enosist agitation revive, to co-operate with us by counselling moderation and good behaviour on their compatriots in Cyprus.

I hope that you may agree in the light of the foregoing, that the action we are taking in regard to the Dodecanese is inevitable, as I feel sure that you will agree that the Dodecanese problem is of such vital and immediate importance, both political and strategic, that it would be a mistake to be deterred from the action now started for fear of the possible repercussions in Cyprus²²⁶.

It is worth noting that, apart from the stance revealed in these internal documents of the British government, the Greeks themselves had progressively received 'clear favourable indications' from London, even without securing any definitive official statement concerning the future status of Dodecanese²²⁷.

226. F.O. 371/24963, Eden to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, January 6, 1941. In the same spirit: F.O. 371/24963, Warner (memor.) [1941]. In a conversation with the Greek Prime Minister on 25 November 1941, Eden had stressed the need to avoid references of Greek national claims in three directions – Dodecanese, Northern Epirus and Cyprus (I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A7/20, Sargent to Tsouderos, December 21, 1941). On the connection of the Dodecanesian with the Cypriote Question by the Dodecanesians also, see A.S.D., Grecia, B. 16, J. Polychronides (President of the Dodecanesian League), [March 17, 1938].

227. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to Rome, Cairo and Ankara Embassies, November 22, 1944, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 103. At the same time, the French Ambassador to London made similar observations: 'À titre confidentiel, on a indiqué à l'un de mes collaborateurs que le gouvernement Britannique estime pour sa part que le Dodécanèse devait être attribué à la Grèce. Toutefois, aucune déclaration publique n'a été faite à ce sujet et dans leurs rapports

'We are preferring certainties to expectations,' Aghnides had pointed out to Sargent²²⁸. Nevertheless, by the end of the war, it was officially repeated that before making any commitment the British would certainly consult the Greek Government. This assurance was given once more by the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, to Ch. Simopoulos, on 12 March 1942, and was repeated on 1 April²²⁹. In a less definite statement, the British had repeatedly referred to their intention to satisfy fully the 'Enosis' claim: thus Orme Sargent had noted to Aghnides that '[he] wished us to have confidence in the British government'²³⁰. 'We have indicated that we sympathize with Greek aspirations,' the Air Minister had minuted²³¹. 'Your sovereignty over the Dodecanese will be recognized after the end of the war,' Eden had assured King George II on 17 December 1942, according to Greek sources²³². And Reginald Leeper, not concealing his personal support of that claim²³³, in his talks with the Greek government tended to take the line, more and more clearly, that there would be a positive outcome. His conversation with the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Philippos Dragoumis, on 28 July 1944, was characteristic: 'I do not hear you talking about your claim on the Dodecanese – It is not needed, because we consider these islands as Greek – (Laughingly). Well, I am in a position to assure you even now that they will be yours after the war'²³⁴. Finally, having followed the course of the negotiations on this matter at close hand, Aghnides later deposed his invariably authoritative testimony: Cadogan and Sargent had

avec le gouvernement hellène, les Anglais se sont bornés à marquer à diverses reprises qu'ils examineraient avec sympathie les revendications grecques.' (A.A.E., Europe 1944-49, Grèce/59, Massigli, November 25, 1944.)

228. F.O. 371/37224, Record of a conversation between Sir O. Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on February 1, 1943.

229. F.O. 371/33165, Cadogan, March 14, 1942; Eden to Palairat, April 10, 1942. See also, I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A7/20, Cadogan to Aghnides, 1943, December 1, 1942.

230. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Record of conversation between Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on February 9, 1943.

231. PREM. 3/3/10, Air Minister to Mideast, April 29, 1943.

232. I.Δ.A.Y.E.: Dragoumis Papers, 64/5, Dodecanese, Cairo, August 28, 1944.

233. PREM. 3/124/4, Leeper to F.O., March 30, 1944.

234. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1944/38/2 [Record Dragoumis – Leeper], 28-7-1944; also, *op. cit.*, Skeferis to Italy Committee, 4-8-1944. For a confirmation of this conversation by Tsouderos, see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943-44, 15/4, Tsouderos to Italy Committee (Rome), August 4, 1944.

'reassured' him 'about the fate of the Dodecanese'. 'The Americans and ourselves – the latter assured him – are making [every effort] to avoid an unfavourable outcome'²³⁵.

Moreover, the Greek side was assured, early in the war, that the British had made no commitment whatever in regard to the Dodecanese, and that they were not engaged in any negotiations with another party. Indeed, the British insistence on avoiding any negotiation on this subject had been confirmed during Eden's visit to Moscow, in December 1941²³⁶. In that case, quite unexpectedly, when the British Foreign Minister asked him for his ideas on improving the situation with Turkey, Stalin had then expressly stressed: 'Tell them that they will get the Dodecanese'. The following dialogue ensued:

Eden: That is very difficult with the Greeks, as the islands are mostly inhabited by Greeks and the Greek people have long planned to have them.

Stalin: You cannot be very strict in pursuing this nationality principle. Also in Greece there are Turks.

Eden: Do you think it would have an effect upon the Turks?

Stalin: All these islands blockade the outlet from Turkey. You could arrange an exchange of islands between Greece and Turkey so that some went to one and some to the other²³⁷.

Eden had agreed to the Russian proposal to add that they would assist Turkey in the event of her being attacked by a third Power²³⁸. But, in Moscow, he reacted immediately to Stalin's suggestions, expressing his full disagreement with the Soviet leader's opportunistic ideas²³⁹. In this, London also had the support of Washington. Thus, the British Foreign Minister finally cabled to Knatchbull-Hugessen that 'in view of Greek claims and our obligation to

235. Αρχείο Ἐταιρείας Φίλων τοῦ Λαοῦ [Archive of the Society of the Friends of the People] Archives of Spyros Markezinis [Α.Φ.Α.], Aghnides to Spyros Markezinis, July 20, 1980; also, conversations between them [June 1971].

236. F.O. 371/33340, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 23, 1942.

237. CAB. 66/20, Record of an interview between the Foreign Secretary and M. Stalin, December 16, 1941 (contents of two drafts in Russian handed by the Russians).

238. CAB. 65/19, August 7, 11, 14, 1942.

239. F.O. 371/33165, Eden to Palaiet, April 10, 1942.

Greece we should not be prepared to agree to the surrender of the Dodecanese to Turkey²⁴⁰.

The reception of Stalin's idea in Ankara reflects the attitude of all three sides, Greeks, British and Turks, at that moment. The Greeks, who were anxiously monitoring any developments in the Dodecanese question, insisted on preventing its complication by other events; the British tried to evade any discussion on the matter and the Turks maintained their cautious attitude. Indeed, lacking early information on the issue, the Greek Minister, initially in London and subsequently in Ankara, appeared extremely anxious about the effects that the Soviet proposal might have on Ankara's future position²⁴¹. On 23 January 1942 Eden cautioned Knatchbull-Hugessen that 'I did not wish the Soviet Government to reassure the Turks precisely because I feared they would tell them that M. Stalin had proposed to me the cession to Turkey of the Dodecanese and part of Syria: this in fact is what they have done'. The British Foreign Secretary also noted: 'If the Turks again refer to the matter, you should, in defence of your assurance that you had informed them of everything discussed at Moscow of interest to them, stress the point that although M. Stalin did make these suggestions they were never the subject of discussion'²⁴².

240. F.O. 371/33340, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 23, 1942. The British Foreign Minister will confirm this in his next telegram to Ankara (F.O. 371/33340, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, February 6, 1942). Among the British diplomats, there was a strong reaction to Stalin's proposals. Thus, Palaret minuted: 'I trust that, if the proposal is renewed by the Soviet Government, His M's Government will make it clear that the status of the islands cannot be settled until after the war, but that the purely Greek character of their inhabitants gives our fighting ally, Greece, a claim superior to that of Turkey, whose role has so far been prudently passive. It is the considered opinion of many good judges that Government's resistance to German attack was one of the principal reasons for the delay (which has proved invaluable) in Hitler's assault on Russia. It would be a sorry return if Russians were to instigate the withdrawal from Greece of a reward on which she has set her heart on and to which her gallantry and fidelity to her Allies seem to entitle her'. See also, Baggallay's views: 'Should you have opportunity I shall be glad if you will point out to Soviet gt. that Russia owes much to the Greeks for their gallant campaign which delayed German attack on Russia, and that to encourage Turkish claims to the Dodecanese is a poor return' (F.O. 371/33165, Palaret to Eden, January 12, 1942; Baggallay, minute).

241. W.O. 106/3260, F.O. (S.W.1) mem.: The Dodecanese question (June 1940-Jan. 1942), February 17, 1942.

242. F.O. 371/33340, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 23, 1942. A few days later, Eden will repeat to the Ambassador his hope that the latter didn't give to the Turkish Minister of

At any rate, this line was strongly supported by the Foreign Office. According to Orme Sargent, 'to Turkey, we should say that we are doing for the Soviet Union no more than what we have in the Anglo-Turkish treaty done for Turkey, namely, to support her in maintaining her pre-war frontiers'. Alexander Cadogan, agreeing with Sargent's opinion, stressed that 'we really must not compensate Turkey for her fears at the expense of Greece'. Knatchbull-Hugessen was told that 'in view of Greek claims and our obligations to Greece, we should not be prepared to agree to the surrender of Dodecanese to Turkey'²⁴³. 'I agree with Sir Orme Sargent and Sir Alexander Cadogan', minuted Eden below their suggestions²⁴⁴.

As to the Turks themselves, there is no evidence that, after having been informed on the subject by the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara²⁴⁵, they tried to sound Moscow further over this²⁴⁶. Saracoğlu assured Raphail that 'no specific proposal' was made to him by the Soviet Embassy about Bulgaria; only hints had been made, 'which he preferred not to take, because he knows how dangerous promises of such a nature are wherever they come from, and that in the end they cost dearly'. The Greek diplomat was obviously ignorant at that moment of the Soviets' special reference to the Dodecanese²⁴⁷; but he remarked in his report that 'these proposals were received by Turkey with the greatest reservation and distrust'. In order to explain this attitude, Raphail concluded: 'It seems that Mr. Saracoğlu is rather distrustful because he sees

Foreign Affairs the impression 'that we have an open mind about the future of the Dodecanese' (F.O. 371/33340, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, February 6, 1942).

243. W.O. 106/3260, F.O. (S.W.1) mem.: The Dodecanese question, February 17, 1942.

244. F.O. 371/33340, [Minutes on] Dixon's memorandum, March 31, 1942.

245. F.O. 371/33183, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., January 19, 1942.

246. Feridun Cemal Erkin, high ranking official of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and later Foreign Minister, supports the view that the Soviet Ambassador to Ankara notified the Turkish government about the following: 'The Soviet government, which is overjoyed by the honest position of Ankara, has through Stalin proposed to Eden to award Turkey for its neutrality, by ceding, after the war, the Dodecanese and the Bulgarian lands up to Ruscuk' (*Tercuman*, 28 July 1976). Erkin appears as a critic of Ankara's moderate policy on the issue of the Dodecanese... See also, W.O. 106/3260, F.O. (S.W.1) mem.: The Dodecanese question..., February 17, 1942.

247. In fact, the Turkish Foreign Minister confided to Knatchbull-Hugessen that the Greek Minister was probably unaware that anything was said by Stalin to Eden about Dodecanese (F.O. 371/33340, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, February 6, 1942).

British intervention and realizes that this is a unilateral Russian plan which may conceal something at present unknown²⁴⁸.

Indeed, on that same day, 3 February, the Greek government's fears were eased during a luncheon at the Foreign Office. For the Hellenic side, the King was present, together with the Prime Minister and the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry; for the British side, Eden and Foreign Office officials participated²⁴⁹. Emmanuel Tsouderos, in a handwritten note, recorded his conclusions:

During yesterday's conversation between the King, Eden and myself, the Dodecanese issue was made clear with precision. I think there is no longer any reason to worry. Eden spoke to us about his conversation with Stalin, adding that Stalin had not insisted on his proposal in the end. Nevertheless, the opinion of all participants is that there is no reason to raise the issue either with the Turks or with the Russians²⁵⁰.

The Greek Prime Minister expanded on this conclusion in greater detail in a later memorandum:

It is evident that when Stalin mentioned to Eden the necessity for awards to Turkey for recompensing her attitude in the war, he was speaking in general terms and probably with the intention that his suggestion should be known by Turkey, in order to dissipate the persistent suspicions as to Russian designs felt in Ankara. The mention of the Dodecanese by name, even if this group of Islands was mentioned by Stalin, was certainly a very vague one. It was made by a man who does not even know the history and the significance of these Islands, having only heard that they were occupied by the Italians as a jumping-stone for a contemplated aggression against

248. Raphail to the Min. of Foreign Affairs, February 3, 1942 in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 94. During January 1942 there had been an exchange of vague views with the Greek embassy in the Soviet Union: I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A7/20.

249. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A7/20, Tsouderos to Legations of Ankara and Kuibichev, February 4, 1942 (handwritten).

250. *Ibidem*. During this conversation and replying to a question by Tsouderos, Eden replied: 'Yes, in an irrelevant moment he said that we must satisfy the Turks, because their neutrality benefits us and he mentioned the Dodecanese, without appearing to know the issue.' And the British Foreign Minister continued: 'I replied to him that this issue concerns our Greek friends, who are deeply interested,' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Dragoumis Papers, 24/5/70).

Turkey by Italy. On this point, it is right to trust what Mr. Eden said to the King of the Hellenes and the Greek Prime Minister at the luncheon at the Foreign Office. It would also [be] wrong to disbelieve the assurances of Saracoğlu to M. Raphail about the vagueness of the Soviet communication to him, as far as the compensations to Turkey are concerned. The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was justified in not paying much attention to Russian promises, made with the object of flattering and placating Turkey²⁵¹.

Yet these crucial remarks of Tsouderos should not lead to the conclusion that his side then rested its case. During the following months the Greek diplomatic representatives in London, Ankara and Moscow, apparently anxious, kept raising the issue. On 7 March, and again in the following days, Cadogan, speaking to Simopoulos, repeatedly disclaimed rumours that his government had had further discussions with Stalin which would affect the future of the Dodecanese²⁵²; and on 21 April, in reply to any enquiries, Eden again assured Simopoulos that Greek interests were in no way affected²⁵³. However, the Chargé at Kuybyshev, Panayotis Pipinelis, was continuously very persistent in expressing his concerns, which were based (as it was to be proved) on erroneous information²⁵⁴. In the face of these tendencies, the British Ambassador reached the point of asking his Foreign Secretary for permission to 'at need assure Greek Legation that nothing affecting Greece's claims in the Dodecanese or Bulgaria is at present in the picture, but that if it were, His Majesty's Government would certainly agree to nothing without knowledge of the Greek Government in London'. Eden minuted on the telegram 'Yes'²⁵⁵.

251. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A7/20, [Tsouderos] memorandum, n.d.

252. F.O. 371/33165, Cadogan: [memorandum], March 7, March 14, April 1, 1942.

253. F.O. 371/33165, Eden to Palairet, April 24, 1942.

254. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A7/20, Pipinelis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 27, January 30, 1942. Tsouderos, himself badly informed prior to the 3 February meeting, noted that Stalin referred to some small coastal islets (see, *ibidem*, handwritten notes by Tsouderos, January 29, 1942). Finally the Prime Minister concluded that 'the telegrams from the government's representative in Russia are too emotional and touch often the fringe of sensation, a very bad process for the interpretation of conversations and elucidation of facts, in the diplomatic field' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government: 1943, A7/20, [E.Tsouderos] memorandum, n.d.).

255. F.O. 371/33165, A. Clark Kerr to Eden, May 15, 1942. In similar lines, see also, F.O. to Kerr, May 22, 1942.

This uncertain quiet over the Dodecanese question was to be disturbed in 1943, when the impression was created among the Allies that Turkey's participation in the war on their side was indeed possible. At the Casablanca Conference, on 12 January 1943, the Allied summit agreed that Winston Churchill should approach Turkey; and then, after his meeting at Adana with İnönü in late January, he described Ankara's attitude as 'realistic and encouraging'²⁵⁶. Did the Allies, under the pressing need to bring the Turks into the conflict on their side, offer them territorial gains in the Aegean? The answer to this question, remained pending for some time. The references in the Adana communiqué that the two parties examined the current situation 'particularly in those regions which Turkey is interested', that 'on all the principal points identity of view was established' and that 'the problems that may arise after the war were also considered and agreement was again reached on these', should, as the Foreign Office officials themselves noted, rather worry than calm the Greeks²⁵⁷. Moreover, a rumour (presumably German-inspired according to British sources) spread that the Dodecanese had been 'sold' to Turkey by the British Prime Minister²⁵⁸. Later on, even in March, Emmanuel Tsouderos again voiced concern about this issue and urged the vital importance of ensuring that his country's claims were not prejudiced by any arrangements with the Turks; he also stated that, according to information he had received, there was a secret clause attached to the 1939 Treaty, under which the United Kingdom had entered into certain arrangements with Ankara in regard to the Dodecanese

256. CAB. 101/296, Policy to Turkey, 1942, by Y.M. Streatfield, (p. 12-18).

257. For a first demarche by the Greek Minister to London: F.O. 371/37224, Record of a conversation between Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on Monday, February 1, 1943. See also, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Gov., 1943, A/Φ2/15, Conversations between Sir Orme Sargent and Aghnides (on February 1 and February 9, 1943). The Greek anxiety had been prompted by press reports – P. Kanellopoulos noted on 2 February, 1943: 'Today the *Times* write that in Adana issues affecting Greece and Greek islands were discussed. It is morally inconceivable that such issues would be discussed without letting us know': P. KANELLOPOULOS, *Ημερολόγιο: 31 Μαρτίου 1942 – 4 Ιανουαρίου 1945* [Diary: March 31, 1942 - January 4, 1945], Athens 1977, p. 334.

On the next day, the Greek Prime Minister expressed his anxiety to the US government as well (I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1941-1944, 43/4, Record of Conversation between the President of the Greek government with the US Ambassador, February 2, 1943).

258. F.O. 371/37211, Minister of State (Cairo) to Foreign Office, February 7, 1943; also, February 13, 1943.

– either dealing with the future status of the islands or solely with operational questions²⁵⁹.

The Foreign Office officials rushed immediately to ease these anxieties. Anthony Eden himself instructed Cadogan to see the Greek Prime Minister in order to affirm that his country's interests had not been endangered or prejudiced in any way²⁶⁰. Before Tsouderos's arrival in London, Sargent and Cadogan told Aghnides that no issue concerning these interests was discussed, and their government in no way committed themselves regarding Greece's claims in the Dodecanese, the great concern for which they well knew. 'The Turks asked nothing, not even something over the Dodecanese', Cadogan added on the next day²⁶¹. Raphail had also reached the same conclusion²⁶². The fact that Hellenic interests were in no way prejudiced during the Adana summit is also confirmed by the official record of the Conference, where no mention of the Aegean islands can be found²⁶³. In due time, Tsouderos himself was convinced that 'any negotiations with the Turks were not made through sacrifices of Greece', as he remarked later in his memoirs; and he added that 'anyway, the Turks skilfully asked for nothing because what they were interested in was to avoid entering the war'²⁶⁴.

And yet, before the way opened for the final phase of the Dodecanese question, another significant development was to take place. This was the rejection of an idea put for the first and only time, significantly by the British Prime Minister himself, to offer Rhodes to Turkey! Indeed, together with the

259. F.O. 371/37224, D. Howard to Leeper, March 27, 1943; also, *The Dodecanese*: note P. Dixon, March 5, 1943.

260. F.O. 371/37224, Record of a conversation between Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on February 1, 1943, [note by Eden]. The same document: I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15.

261. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Record of conversation between Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on February 9, 1943; see also, Dragoumis Papers, 64/5/70. This is confirmed, later, by Tsouderos, in *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια...*, p. 146-147. Cadogan's assurance with regard to the Turks was repeated later by Sargent: I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Foreign Ministry, July 9, 1943; July 31, 1943.

262. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1941-43, 24, Raphail to Ministry, February 6, 1943.

263. CAB. 122/571, War Cabinet: Record of a conference held near in January 1943. See also, S. DERINGIL, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War...*, p. 144-147.

264. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Rome Legation, 1944/2, Raphail to Tsouderos, February 22, 1944. See also, E. Tsouderos, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

questions he put to Ismay, Churchill, who always tended to exaggerate Turkey's importance for British interests²⁶⁵, also expressly asked Eden's 'considered view on this':

The time will presently come when it might be right to ask Turkey either (a) to give us Air facilities for attacking Rhodes, or (b) to join with us in the attack. Could we offer them Rhodes as the prize? If so it might turn the scale, provided all other things were harmonious²⁶⁶.

In his reply, the Foreign Secretary strongly rejected any idea about giving or promising Rhodes or any other part of the Dodecanese to Turkey:

I should be most unwilling to offer the Turks Rhodes or any other islands of the Dodecanese. By tradition and sentiment these islands are Greek; an overwhelming majority of the population is of Greek race and would almost certainly favour union with Greece. Since the entry of Greece into the war in 1940 successive Greek Governments have made clear to us the great importance which they attach to the Dodecanese becoming part of Greece, and it is certain that in this they reflect the views of the whole Greek people. The acquisition of the Dodecanese is by far the most important of Greek territorial claims, and it has strong justification.

Then, Anthony Eden examined the issue in a wider perspective:

We have resisted the frequent requests of the Greek Government for assurances about the future status of the islands and we are under no commitments, either to them or to the Turks, on this point. Nevertheless, it has long been our view that the Greek claims are just and that after the war they should get most, if not all, of the islands (subject maybe to certain military conditions imposed in the interests of Turkish security). Turkish claims are based on grounds of prestige, strategy and the presence of small Turkish minorities in some of the islands, and these interests would have to be safeguarded in any final settlement. We have always

265. See, C. ΣΒΟΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Η απόφαση για την επέκταση της ελληνικής κυριαρχίας στη Μικρά Ασία* [The Decision to Extend the Greek Sovereignty in Asia Minor], Athens 2009, p. 38-39, 54, 91; S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

266. PREM. 3/3/6, Churchill to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, April 4, 1943.

hoped that the Greek and Turkish Governments would be able to work out some mutually satisfactory arrangement in due course.

If we were to give Turkey any of the islands we should do irreparable harm to our relations with Greece. Furthermore, we should be sowing the seeds of discord in the Eastern Mediterranean, since Turkish possession of the Dodecanese would revive all the old enmity between Greece and Turkey. At present both countries are sincere in their wish to maintain most friendly relations and Greco-Turkish friendship is a fundamental principle of our own policy in that area.

Finally, the gift of Rhodes to Turkey would be contrary to the principle, to which we still adhere, of leaving all territorial questions till the peace settlement. We certainly could not depart from this principle without the concurrence of the United States Government (who would probably oppose this particular arrangement on the grounds of the Atlantic Charter)²⁶⁷.

Eden's arguments were strong and these views were finally adopted by the Prime Minister, who minuted on the Foreign Secretary's memorandum: 'I agree'²⁶⁸. After that, the attitude he adopted was made clear in his instructions later on:

We should continue to avoid giving any immediate commitment, as any promise to the Greeks at this stage would form a precedent for all the other minor allies to press their territorial claims. We could only say that the status of the islands must be reserved for the peace settlement ...

I realize that one of the special reasons for not committing ourselves prematurely about the future of the Dodecanese was that we did not want to offend the Turks at a time when we might want their help to drive the Axis out of the Islands. The fact that this reason, owing to the development of the Turkish attitude in general, has not the same force as formerly, does not affect my present decision²⁶⁹.

267. PREM. 3/3/6, Eden to Prime Minister, April 9, 1943. The text had been drafted by Cadogan – as a 'draft minute to the Prime Minister'. Eden had by his own hand made some changes, for example that the acquisition of the Dodecanese '[and its] strong justification' (F.O. 371/37224, April 8, 1943).

268. *Ibidem*.

269. PREM. 3/3/6, Prime Minister to General Wilson (personal and most secret), April 20, 1943.

British policy henceforth did not deviate essentially from this main line²⁷⁰.

Apart from the official government, British public opinion too was sympathetic towards the claim for ceding the Dodecanese to Greece²⁷¹. In the House of Commons, W.W. Astor, Ivor Thomas and John Harvey Parker, had sped to support the above solution, which was, moreover, in accord with the rules that the Allies were called upon to defend. Furthermore, in relation to this, they were expressing a view that was already promoted widely in the columns of the British Press: at the future Peace Conference, it would have been impossible not to accept the demand of the vast majority of the Dodecanesians to unite with Greece²⁷². Specifically, Astor, asked the Foreign Secretary whether the Dodecanese were covered by the provisions of the Atlantic Charter. Eden tried to evade the question, arguing that the post-war status of the islands could not be decided at that stage; but Astor insisted ironically that 'surely the Atlantic Charter does not exclude territories inhabited by members of the gallant Greek nation'. 'No sir', was the answer, 'I think my honorable friend's conclusion would be about correct...'²⁷³. Answering a letter by Aghnides (in which the Greek diplomat thanked him), Astor ventured the view that Eden's reply was 'as good as we could hope for in the circumstances'; the Greek diplomat himself described it as 'on the whole satisfactory'²⁷⁴. It is important to note that, when the same question had been asked in the Commons for the first time, in January

270. Greek anxieties were aroused because of an unclear expression in an article by Harold Nicolson, which was otherwise rather in favour of the Greek positions (*Spectator*, June 22, 1943). Replying to a message by the Greek Prime Minister, Nicolson himself stressed that he had tried to argue that Greek sovereignty over the islands might have to be restricted through an agreement for their demilitarization. (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Tsouderos, June 22, July 1, 1943). Tsouderos regarded Nicolson's explanations as satisfactory (*ibidem*, Tsouderos to Aghnides, July 4, 1943).

271. The British Government, in an official statement in the House of Commons declared on October 18, 1944, that the Dodecanesians 'will not be treated as enemies or ex-enemies but as friends'.

272. See, *Manchester Guardian*, August 26, 1943.

273. Parliamentary Debates, Official Reports, vol. 400 (no. 90), June 14, 1944, p. 1957-1958 (F.O. 371/43755, June 14, 1944 [extract of the record]). For a specific reference to this event in Rome see A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Min. degli Affari Esteri to Stato Maggiore Generale, August 21, 1944.

274. I.Δ.A.Y.E., London Legation, Aghnides to Astor, June 17, 1944; Astor to Aghnides, June 20, 1944. See also, Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 1/3, Papandreou to Greek Embassy, Ankara, June 19, 1944.

1943, Foreign Office officials, obviously embarrassed, had successfully pressed for its withdrawal, 'in view of the unfortunate effect which the answer may have on the Turks'; at the same time, they had admitted that in case the member of Parliament was not dissuaded, the answer to his question could only be a plain 'yes sir'²⁷⁵.

The 1943 question was finally withdrawn, and public reference to obligations created by implementation of the Atlantic Charter was avoided. But the British government kept returning to this issue. Immediately after the signature of the Charter, Stafford Cripps, talking with Panayotis Pipinelis, remarked that in order to pave the way for the peace, 'generalities such as the Atlantic decisions are not enough, but a positive and detailed handling of each issue in Europe is needed'²⁷⁶. Sargent expressed a similar view: 'The Atlantic Charter, which is drafted in very general terms, was not a safe instrument for any country to invoke in order to reinforce its claim to territory which it had not possessed before the war'²⁷⁷. In this case, the danger of linking all these to Cyprus was obvious. Anthony Eden had also pointed out to Churchill that the cession of any of the Dodecanese islands to any country other than Greece would inevitably provoke strong objections from the US administration, 'who would probably oppose this particular arrangement on the grounds of the Atlantic Charter'²⁷⁸.

In fact, Washington opted to follow, in principle, the same direction as London: 'territorial settlements cannot be made prior to the termination of hostilities'. In the aftermath of the Italian surrender, the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, replied to the official Greek note of 13 August, as follows:

With regard to the questions raised concerning the territories claimed by Greece, I desire to confirm the statement, made orally to the Counselor of the Embassy on the occasion of the presentation of the note under reference, that it is the policy of this Government that territorial questions be left for settlement after the war. Consequently, this Government is not prepared to

275. F.O. 371/35349, Parliamentary question by Mr. Astor: to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether the Atlantic Charter applies to the Dodecanese Islands [2nd sitting Day after 24th January 1943].

276. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-1943/24, Pipinelis to Tsouderos, November 1, 1941.

277. F.O. 37224, Greek claims in the Aegean (minutes), February 10, 1943.

278. PREM. 3/3/6, Eden to Prime Minister, April 9, 1943.

take any action which would constitute a prior commitment on its part as to the eventual disposition of territorial claims²⁷⁹.

However, the fact that the United States government, following the same principle as its British counterpart, had not committed itself publicly in favour of the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece did not mean that Washington had not tended to accept this solution even from an early moment. Indeed, replying to an informal memorandum from the Greek Prime Minister, President Roosevelt had indicated that he regarded the Dodecanese 'as included among instances of implementation of the principle of self-determination of peoples'²⁸⁰; he also stressed that in 'talking to Mr. Churchill, he had always insisted that the principle of self-determination should be respected'²⁸¹. When asked whether this implied that the British Prime Minister had taken a position on the issue of the 'inhabitants' national wishes, the US President made it clear that 'the spirit of the whole conversation did not allow suspicions that he put forward any objections'²⁸². This position had been confirmed by the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, on 5 July, and by the Assistant Secretary, Adolf Berle, on 19 July 1943: the United States was determined to implement fully the rules of the Atlantic Charter²⁸³. Even when a part of the American Press aired the idea of a 'cession of the Dodecanese as recompense for Turkish participation in the war', the Greek Minister cabled from Washington that this would hardly be accepted by the government: 'Turkey may have historic claims upon the Dodecanese islands, but their population is overwhelmingly Greek and their cession to Turkey would be in contradiction to the principles of Atlantic Charters'²⁸⁴.

279. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Κεντρική υπηρεσία, Α' πολιτική, [Central Office] [K.Y.], 1943 – 1944, C. Hull to K. Diamantopoulos, September 15, 1943.

280. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to the Greek Government-in-exile, June 11, 1943; see also, Diamantopoulos, June 18, 1943, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 53: reply to Tsouderos, 14 June 1943 (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943/A7/20). See also, S.D.R., Roosevelt Library, Papers S. Welles, (memorandum of conversation with C. Diamantopoulos), June 18, 1943.

281. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943, A7/20, Tsouderos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 15, 1943.

282. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, June 17, 1943.

283. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, July 5, 1943; July 19, 1943.

284. Press cutting by *Washington Post*, cited by Diamantopoulos, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, August 16, 1943.

This fundamental position of the United States leaders was elaborated further by State Department officials. Indeed, study of the various aspects of the Dodecanese issue provided more arguments in favour of the Hellenic claim, as described by Emmanuel Tsouderos on 12 June 1942²⁸⁵. According to the Inter-Divisional Committee, which examined the matter on 6 November 1943, the cession to Greece was 'the preferred solution to the problem'; at the same time, the cession of the islands to Turkey was definitely rejected 'because of the clear-cut nature of the Greek claims and because the Turkish government had expressed no desire for the acquisition of the islands as a whole'²⁸⁶. In March 1944, the territorial subcommittee and the Inter-Divisional committees on Greece and Turkey also came to the conclusion that 'the Islands, with the possible exception of Castellorizo, be ceded to Greece'²⁸⁷. On 27 June and 1 September 1944, the same view was put forward by the Inter-Divisional Committee on Italy: the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece 'would be in accord with the principle of nationality'²⁸⁸. No doubt the debates in the House of Representatives and in the Senate²⁸⁹, as well as the publication of articles by prominent analysts in the daily Press²⁹⁰, played a role in shaping this attitude²⁹¹.

Arguably, the role of the Greek government-in-exile but also of the Dodecanesians themselves, especially those of the diaspora, was important

285. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1943/20/A7, The Prime Minister of Greece (memor.), June 12, 1942; also, S.D.R.: Roosevelt Library, Official File, Box 206.

286. The proposal was signed by Harry N. Howard, Phillip N. Ireland, Cyril E. Black (PS) and George N. Allen, Foy D. Kohler (NE), see, S.D.R., RG 59, Box 152, NND 750130, Views of the Inter-Divisional Committee on Greece, November 6, 1943. On September 13, 1943, H.N. Howard (drafting officer), had submitted the relevant proposal, with almost identical wording (S.D.R., RG 59, Box 119, PG-10).

287. S.D.R., RG 59, Box 71, TS 152, Records of the Advisory Committee on Post-war Foreign Policy, H.N. Howard, March 4, 1944.

288. S.D.R., 1 122/4, NND 750130; also, T.1221/4, Views of the Inter-Divisional Committee on Italy, September 2, 1944.

289. As those of Ch. Andrews (March 13, 1944), L. Hall (November 13, 1943), P. Jarman (January 4, 1944). On the submission on 8 August 1944, of Resolution 317 by Congressman Claude Pepper, see I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1946, Claims/75, Dodecanese Information Office, April 3, 1946. See also, S. WAMBAUGH, *The Dodecanese Islands*, reprinted from *Greece of Tomorrow*, [ed. American Friends of Greece], New York 1943.

290. See, among others, *Time* (21-9-1943), *Spectator* (3-12-1943).

291. See, among others, *The Greek Dodecanese. A Symposium by Prominent Americans*, ed. by Dr. MAVRIS, New York [1944].

in bringing about this result²⁹². Not only during the war but even before its outbreak, the many members of the community organized in the 'Dodecanesian League of America' had publicized indefatigably their irredentist claims²⁹³. But the Greeks' victories in Albania had stirred public opinion in the United States, with the resultant securing of the State Department's assent for setting up a 'Central Dodecanesian Fund' of 5 million dollars, in the name of the ancient Coan physician Hippocrates²⁹⁴! Highly indicative of this appeal, moreover, is the fact that on 21 May 1945, Senator Claude Pepper not only had no qualms about adopting but also agreed to the printing of – by unanimous consent of the Senate – in the Appendix of the Congressional Record an article written by Dr. N. G. Mavris, President of the Dodecanesian National Council, and first published in the *New Leader*²⁹⁵. 'I am sure', he stressed, 'that the subject is of intense interest and close to the hearts of all who appreciate the struggle for independence which Greece has made in this war'²⁹⁶.

292. On the Greek propaganda in the U.S.A. see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, June 15, 1943. See, characteristically, A.S.D., Dodecanneso/Busta 16, Moseati (Chicago) to Ambasciata a Washington, January 20, 27, 28, 1941; indeed, there will be a steady flow of Italian reports throughout the war. Following the publication of articles in the American press in favour of the cession of the Dodecanese to Turkey, Tsouderos sent indicative instructions to the Washington Embassy: 'In such cases you must take the initiative of an immediate reply, as any delay leads to the loss of timing' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, July 13, 1943; Tsouderos to Diamantopoulos, July 15, 1943).

293. See, indicatively, I.Δ.A.Y.E.: Dragoumis Papers, 63/14, Diamantopoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 15, October 26, 1944; also, A.S.D., Dodecanneso/Busta 16, Washington to Min. degli Esteri, December 12, 1938; also, Colonna (Washington) to Min. degli Esteri, June 6, 1941.

It is interesting that J. N. CASAVIS alone published in 1935-1940, four books: *Italy and the Unredeemed Isles of Greece* (1935); *Italian Atrocities in Grecian Dodecanese* (1936); *A Symposium on the Dodecanese protesting Italian Oppressions* (1938); *The First Days of the Occupation of the Dodecanese Islands by Italy* (1940).

294. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Colonna (Washington) to Min. degli Esteri, 6 giugno 1941.

295. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Tarchini (Washington) to Min. degli Esteri, 18 maggio 1945.

296. Congressional Record – Appendix, Extension of remarks of Hon. Claude Pepper of Florida in the Senate of the U.S., May 21, 1945.

CHAPTER V

THE ATTITUDE OF A KEMALIST TURKEY

A FIRST HYPOTHESIS could be that the Turkish government had, in the aftermath of Greece's entry into the war and during its own neutral position, avoided putting forward claims for expansion into territories with a non-Turkish or even a non-Muslim majority. At the same time, however, evident in the formulation of Ankara's policy was a constant concern about the safety of its coastal areas in the South Aegean; and it was this argument that others, in the British administration, tended also to underline. 'The Turks', Harold Nicolson publicly commented, 'have every right to claim that the proximity of the twelve islands to vital centres of Anatolian defence justify them in safeguarding their own future security'²⁹⁷. It may also be suggested that Ankara's soul-searching with regard to the Dodecanese was connected with a tendency for opportunism: if Britain seemed so anxious about their position, it might have something unexpected to gain. 'Turkey has no legal or irredentist feelings where these islands are concerned', it was stressed in a P.I.C. paper; 'but it is, of course, obvious that certain considerations in connection with the islands will be at the back of Turkish minds. For example, it is most improbable that she would not welcome a cession of the whole or some of the Dodecanese to her, solely on strategic grounds'²⁹⁸. Yet, it remained to be seen whether this tendency would prevail over the more permanent aims of Ankara's strategy, as these had been laid down by Atatürk himself²⁹⁹.

297. See, H. NICOLSON, 'Marginal Comment', *The Spectator*, June 18, 1943.

298. W.O. 106/3260, Turkey and the Dodecanese: P.I.C. paper no. 20, September 2, 1943.

299. This could be confirmed, according to some writers, by the information Palairot gave to Tsouderos, immediately after the latter assumed the premiership, that Turkey had asked Germany's acquiescence to occupy Greek islands in the Aegean, in order to avoid German occupation of them. Yet, Tsouderos himself found out two days later that in fact this was a suggestion made by the British ambassador to Ankara; Şükrü Saracoğlu, noted to the Greek Minister in Ankara that 'it was not pleasant to the Turkish government even the thought to

The Turkish government – either cautious or ill-prepared to venture or to accept a specific proposal with regard to the Dodecanese – avoided any discussion on the matter during 1941 and 1942. ‘The Turks have never mentioned the subject to me since early in 1941 and I see no signs of their intending to do so now’, Knatchbull-Hugessen noted in March 1943, to conclude that ‘certainly their action since that time has done nothing to strengthen any claim which they have entertained to the islands’³⁰⁰. ‘[They] have never raised Dodecanese question with Turkish Government’, Sargent repeated to the Greek Minister to London, Athanassios Aghnides, in July of that year³⁰¹. Certainly, some Turkish concerns about the future status of the Dodecanese had been voiced at the level of public opinion during this period. This seems to support the hypothesis that the objective of acquiring this area had not disappeared. It could even be considered natural, if one agrees that, despite the efforts of Kemalism to introduce a different political culture, the feeling of continuity with the Ottoman Empire survived in a significant part of the Turks. However, available evidence suggests that with regard to the issue in hand, this tendency was not reflected in government policy during the Second World

occupy the islands’, and indicated that this suggestion was a personal one, motivated by friendly feelings towards the Greek people (E. TSOUDEROS, *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια...*, p. 79-81). The Turkish Prime Minister was apparently afraid that such a development might provoke war with Germany and, also bring about disagreements between Greece and Turkey (see, S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 121). Still, any such thought of Turkish occupation will not be expressed regarding the Dodecanese in this period. It is worth noting that, aiming to obtain unlimited transit facilities, the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop toyed with the idea to propose – instead of another secret agreement – the cession to Turkey ‘of one or another island of the Aegean’, without making clear which this would be. This proposal was not conveyed to the Turkish government, as the German Ambassador to Ankara, Franz von Papen, regarded it premature; and his views prevailed. See, *Documents secrets du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères d’Allemagne: La politique allemande (1941-1943). Turquie*, traduit du russe, M. et H. ERISTOV, Paris 1946, p. 18, 23, 24, 26.

300. F.O. 371/37224, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent, March 12, 1943. He had given a similar assurance to the Greek Minister to Ankara: I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Raphael to Tsouderos, May 20, 1943.

301. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 4, 1943; also, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 31, 1943 in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 101. This view does not come into conflict with Saracoğlu’s observation that he doesn’t fear an attack on Turkey from Dodecanese because, in this case, they were ‘in a position to seize all the Dodecanese’ (*op. cit.*, p. 95-97).

War, especially after 1941. It is true that sporadic articles referring to Ankara's claims on the Dodecanese were published in the Press³⁰²: in the aftermath of Italy's surrender, some Turkish newspapers characteristically recalled the circumstances in which the islands had been taken away from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, and drew attention to the geographical proximity of at least some of them to the Anatolian coast³⁰³. At the same time, rumours appeared, even in the international Press, about the cession of territories to Turkey to ensure its entry into the war³⁰⁴. Later on, initiatives regarding a deal on territory in exchange for participation in the conflict were traced to members of the diplomatic service³⁰⁵ or the military³⁰⁶ sometimes at the highest level³⁰⁷. It has been argued that some of these functionaries may have been acting on official instructions to sound out foreign governments for such a deal. Even so, this in itself did not constitute the final official position; to reach the conclusion that Ankara played the game of land-for-entry-into-the-war, it would be necessary to see the Turkish government actually implementing (not merely toying with the idea of) such a policy. In any case, this hypothesis would not hold water if it could be proved that Ankara applied a different policy.

302. They have, characteristically, been stressed by F. G. WEBER, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War*, Columbia-London 1979, VIII ff.

303. For a later reference, A.A.E., Turquie/31, Maugras to Bidault, May 15, 1945.

304. See, among others, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, July 15, 1943.

305. Characteristically, the Turkish Minister at Madrid went on to express his 'personal' – as he emphasized – view that 'Turkey after the war would no longer be able to tolerate the occupation of islands near the Turkish coast by a foreign power' (F.O. 371/33312, Sir S. Hoare (Madrid) to F.O., June 16, 1942). Similar views by the Turkish Ambassador at Teheran (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, D. Lambrou to Tsouderos, February 15, 1943).

To this group, one must also include Tevfik Rüştü Aras, who, as Ambassador to London until the end of 1941, but also later, as a member of the Opposition, supported the creation of an autonomous regime in the Dodecanese (E. TSOUDEROS, *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια...*, p. 180).

306. According to the British Military Attaché in Ankara, ambitions in Dodecanese are limited Army circle and do not seem to be in any way general (PREM. 3/3/6, Military Attaché (Ankara) to War Office, April 18, 1943). Same statement by State Department, on 'some indications of concern in Turkey military circles regarding the future of the islands' (S.D.R., RG 59, Box 119, Howard, September 13, 1943). Indeed, the question arises whether the persistence of the Turkish General Staff on a Dodecanese attack implied a tendency to keep at least some of the islands.

307. For more on this subject, see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15 Raphail to Tsouderos, May 20, 1943.

In fact, Turkey's claims to the Dodecanese could be based on any or all of three grounds: a claim to certain islands, a concern that the interests of the Muslim minority should be safeguarded and, at least, a concern to safeguard the security of the Asia Minor coast. As time passed, it became clear that the Ankara government would insist to the end on the satisfaction of the last two terms. Following closely the formulation of Turkish policy, Raphail informed Tsouderos on May 1943:

In a letter which I had the honour of addressing to Your Excellency in the previous autumn (...) I put forward the opinion that we should not rule out some difficulties with Turkey regarding the Dodecanese or least a part of them, to which, with some justice, I was afraid that the Turkish government, invoking security reasons, would in time advance some claims. On this point, some hints had been made to me, either directly or indirectly, during the Greek-Italian war, and I had brought them to the attention of the then Prime Minister General Metaxas and later of Your Excellency.

After that, this issue was not raised in any way during my official conversations with the responsible officials, nor did anything come to my attention, giving the impression that the Turkish officials dealt in a more particular way with this issue.

It is true that some non-government circles, and mostly the Press, do talk from time to time about just Turkish claims on the Dodecanese, but it was easy for someone to understand that this was done without any guideline and probably constituted the expression of a vague idea, which may have been crystallized after the successful re-establishment of Turkish rule in the Sanjak of Alexandretta.³⁰⁸

308. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Raphail to Tsouderos, May 20, 1943. The Greek diplomat will persist in his view in a later telegram: 'The Dodecanese issue has occupied the Turkish press only in a fragmentary way; from time to time and with various pretexts, personal views have been expressed. The government has consistently avoided to provide for any direction through the press, even when it could more easily do it, because of the position it occupied towards the allies' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943-1944, 15/4, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 12, 1944).

In fact, after Greece's victorious participation in the war against Italy, the first authoritative references to the Dodecanese question from the official Turkish side appeared in July 1943, in articles by Numan Menemencioğlu, Necmettin Sadak, and then by Cyrus Sulzberger in *The New York Times*. The Turkish Foreign Minister, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne, had published an article in a profoundly pro-Greek spirit in *Ulus*: 'Today Turkey and Greece form two States which have a common fate, which think of their rights and their interests as a simple entity and which do not envisage the welfare of their future except as one of mutual support'³⁰⁹. A few days earlier, Sadak, a member of the Grand National Assembly and a well-known informal spokesman of the government, had referred directly to the Dodecanese, writing in *Akşam*: '[these islands] had for years been a source of insecurity for Turkey; they should belong to those who are not imperialists, with the precondition that they remain demilitarized'³¹⁰. Sulzberger actually took a step forward, describing Ankara's position on the Dodecanese even more clearly³¹¹. Knatchbull-Hugessen stressed: 'Although Sulzberger has of course concealed the fact and is particularly anxious that it should not become known through any source, the interesting point is that the opinions come from Numan direct'³¹². According to these views, Greece shall rightfully possess the Dodecanese after Italy's collapse; the population there is preponderantly Greek despite the existence of a small Turkish minority; the moral right to Greek domination there was admitted. Additionally, 'Turkey is most anxious to have the strongest possible alliance with Greece after this war, which thus obviates the security question involved'. The accuracy of Sulzberger's information was taken for granted. The United States Assistant Secretary of State noted: 'The Greek Minister, Kimon Diamantopoulos, came in to see me, at his request. He

309. See, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-1943/24, Raphail to Aghnides, July 24, 1943. See also, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 31, 1943, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 101.

310. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 8, 1943; Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 31, 1943, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 101. It is interesting that Aghnides noted that his views coincided with those of Harold Nicolson (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 9, 1943).

311. F.O. 371/37472, Copy of articles sent to *N.Y. Times*, on 13th and 14th August by Mr. Sulzberger giving opinions expressed by Numan. See also, I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y., 6/4, Raphail to Tsouderos, August 23, 1943.

312. F.O. 371/37471, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., July 25, 1943.

said that he had attached great significance to a report appearing in yesterday's *N.Y. Times* coming from Ankara. ... He gave great credence to it'. The reply of the Washington official to this inquiry was equally interesting: 'I observed that at an earlier time when he had displayed concern over reports that Turkey coveted the Dodecanese, I told him that we had no confirmation of any Turkish ambition in that direction'³¹³.

More importantly, the first acceptance by Ankara of the Hellenic claim to the Dodecanese had already been communicated to the Greek government through diplomatic channels much earlier. According to Aghnides, speaking confidentially with Cadogan on 15 January 1943, four months ago, the Turkish Ambassador to London, Rauf Orbay, in a conversation with Tsouderos at which he had been present, had said that Turkey 'would be perfectly content to leave these islands in the hands of friendly Greece'³¹⁴. Furthermore, at the end of December 1942, the Turkish diplomat had repeated categorically to the Greek premier that his government would have no objection to this solution. The Turks, he stated, would rather see the Greeks in possession of the Dodecanese than the Italians, whose presence necessitated the maintenance of strong armed forces on the Anatolian coast; on the contrary, he declared emphatically that the Greeks would not think of using the islands as a base for invading Asia Minor. He had, he added, to repeat this statement to the British Government³¹⁵. Later, on 27 August 1943, Enis Akaygen, Ambassador in Cairo, reaffirmed to the Deputy Prime Minister of the government-in-exile, Georgios Roussos, that his country did not wish to make any claim to the Dodecanese³¹⁶; and he repeated this statement to Tsouderos: 'On instructions from my government, I must state

313. S.D.R., T. 1246/1, A.A. Berle, Jr., August 18, 1943. For a confirmation of this information by the Greek side, see, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Diamantopoulos to Tsouderos, June 18, 1943; Cairo Government, 1941-1943/24, Raphael. October 17, 1943.

314. F.O. 371/37224, Cadogan (memorandum), January 15, 1943; E. TSOUDEROS, *Διπλωματικά παρασκήνια...*, p. 127-128.

315. F.O. 371/33165, Palairat to Sargent, December 30, 1942.

316. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1943, Record, Tsouderos-Enis Akaygen, August 28, 1943. According to Leeper's report, Tsouderos 'considers that my Turkish colleague must have been speaking on instructions' (F.O. 371/37225, Leeper to Foreign Office, August 29, 1943; W.O. 106/3260, Leeper to F.O., September 25, 1943). This incident was early confirmed by Greek diplomatic sources: I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Dragoumis Papers, 64/5/70: The Dodecanese question, p. 3-4; 64/5/69: The Dodecanese (August 28, 1944).

that Turkey harbours no territorial claims during the present war, and anyway Turkey has never raised such claims either in public or in secret, as you know'. 'These are also known to the British Ambassador', he added³¹⁷.

Indeed, on 1 September 1943, Knatchbull-Hugessen hastened to confirm that Rauf Orbay's statement 'does represent Turkish official attitude'. But, at the same time, he implied that Ankara had not yet made any such official statement to the British government³¹⁸. Some time before, he had noted that 'Numan has twice said that, in the interests of a Balkan Federation, he will be prepared to make sacrifices of Turkish sovereignty and it ought to be possible to apply this in the case of the Turks in the Dodecanese if the question ever arises'³¹⁹. It was only in November 1943 that this was expressed officially to London in definite terms. Then, the Turkish Foreign Minister volunteered to Anthony Eden that his country had no territorial claim whatever in this area³²⁰. Simultaneously, the American Ambassador in Ankara was informed of Turkey's renunciation of any claim over the Dodecanese³²¹. After that, both London and Washington formulated their policy taking for granted that 'Turkey has formally disclaimed any territorial interest and renounced all intention of disputing the claim of Greece'; according to this same assumption, it was firmly stressed that 'Turkey's strategic interest seems to be that the islands should not be in unfriendly hands, and she will perhaps expect a measure of demilitarization'³²². The Greek Minister in Ankara was of the same mind:

I would not wish to deny the lively interest of certain Turkish circles and one or two Press instruments of pro-Axis and excessively nationalist tendencies, but official circles have adopted an admittedly flawless stance to date. They mean, I believe, today more than at any time previously, that the policy followed by Turkey does not permit the formulation of demands,

317. For a full record of the conversation see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y., 1943, Record, Tsouderos-Enis Akaygen, August 28, 1943; E. TSOUDEROS, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

318. F.O. 371/37225, Leeper to Foreign Office, August 29, 1943 [Note by H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, September 1, 1943].

319. F.O. 371/37224, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent, March 12, 1943.

320. F.O. 371/43788, F.O. Research Department: Turkey's claims and interests in territories and populations outside her frontiers.

321. S.D.R., T.1246, State Department note, October 31, 1944.

322. F.O. 371/33165, F.O. Research Department: The Greek-Turkish frontier (June 20, 1944).

particularly those that conflict fully with Greece. At present, at least, I have the explicit and categorical assurance of the British ambassador that the Dodecanese question was not raised in his conversation with Turkish officials. On the other hand, it was not raised by America³²³.

This choice explains also Ankara's negative stance towards von Papen's initiative of proposing, in September 1943, in the aftermath of Italy's collapse, the ceding of the Dodecanese to Turkey by a government under Mussolini³²⁴. Even if Badoglio had made such a proposal, his government could not pursue/promote it because Italy's unconditional surrender had given the allies a mortgage on all Italian possessions. Eden then took note of this 'with satisfaction'³²⁵, and Knatchbull-Hugessen conveyed to the Foreign Minister 'an expression of His Majesty's Government's great satisfaction and thanks for the attitude of Turkish Government regarding the Dodecanese'³²⁶.

Was this turnabout due, perhaps, to a spirit which – mutating – was tending to hold sway within Turkey, pro-Allies and, by extension, pro-Greek? In order for this particular stance of Ankara to be interpreted correctly, it must not lead to generalized connotations. The expediencies of foreign policy do not dictate, correspondingly, the adoption of a tactic of assent at home. At the same time as the shaping of new, more favourable attitudes towards the Greeks regarding the Dodecanese question, in 1942-1943 an economic persecution was launched against the minorities, through the imposition of swingeing taxation on wealth, known as 'varlık vergisi'. In fact, the categories of the non-Muslim population which seem to have been affected most by the new levies were the companies and individuals involved in business since 1939, the middlemen and the commissionaires, the owners of immoveable property

323. I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-1943, 24, Raphail to Tsouderos, October 17, 1943. In the same spirit, Sargent had already noted that the evolution of the Turkish attitude was positive; he had also stressed that the Turks had never put forward a Dodecanese issue in conversations with the British government, (I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Agnides to Tsouderos, July 31, 1943).

324. It was learnt later that Hitler had given the consent to his Ambassador's proposal (W.O. 106/3260, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., October 2, 1943).

325. F.O. 371/37226, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, September 27, 1943, note by Cadogan (September 31) and Eden (October 1).

326. F.O. 371/37226, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, October 8, 1943.

and the salaried private employees, even Orthodox priests, schools, hospitals and other philanthropic institutions were liable to pay the so-called tax on extraordinary 'war profits'. These fiscal measures had a serious impact on the citizens of Greek origin. According to the Greek consular authorities, they had to pay at least 60,000,000 T.L.; those were unable or refused to pay the sum demanded of them were exiled to Anatolia! Although constituting a very small proportion of the population in Turkey, approximately 0.55 per cent, the Constantinopolitan Greeks were called upon to shoulder just 20 percent of the total 'varlık' taxation!³²⁷ Although both the Prime Minister and the ministers of Greece stressed the negative political significance of the measure, this does not seem to have had an immediate result³²⁸. The new law stuck, causing widespread ruin and misery in the Greek community and, despite its abolition in March 1944, seriously affected the friendship between the two neighbouring countries. According to a Foreign Office estimation, 'the Turks are determined to eliminate the Greeks from Turkish national life, whether they form part of the Greek minority or are Hellene Greeks who played a large part in the commercial and cultural life of Istanbul'³²⁹.

327. For this question see, AL. ALEXANDRIS, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918-1974*, Athens 1983, p. 211-233. Moreover, it is characteristic of the British strong diplomatic pressure in a view to prevent damaging effect on Greek-Turkish relations, the following text: 'The British Ambassador at Ankara had received instructions to draw the attention of the Turkish Government to the treatment of the Greek element which was not, he knew from us, what it ought to be. Mr. Saracoğlu had been told that this Turkish attitude might even, indirectly, be damaging for the good relations between the two countries, Greece and Turkey. The Turkish Premier had replied that it had never entered their minds to use the question of taxation or other questions between the Turkish administration and the Greek element with the ulterior motive of undermining the friendly relations between the two countries... Mr. Eden advise Mr. Tsouderos to avoid, in the handling of this question, any steps which might lend to a political impasse. However unpleasant the question of the tax on wealth, it should not result in damage being caused to vastly mere important interests for the two countries as was the maintenance of the Greco-Turkish friendship' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-1944, 43, Minute of a conversation between Mr. Anthony Eden and Mr. Tsouderos, at the F.O. on March 1, 1943). On Aghnides worries, F.O. 371/37224, A. Cadogan (minute), January 15, 1943.

328. Early, F.O. 371/37224, A. Cadogan (note), January 15, 1943. Later, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Greek Legation in Rome, 1944/3, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 22, 1944. On the reactions of the Turks themselves, see ENIS TULÇA, Enis bey (Enis Akaygen). *L'ambassadeur de Kemal Atatürk chez E. Venizélos (1929-1945)*, [Ayvalik 2002], p. 176.

329. See, AL. ALEXANDRIS, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

Despite this stance, Ankara's option on the Dodecanese question was not, in fact, abandoned but, on the contrary, was clearly verified when, in August 1944, Ankara broke off relations with Germany. This development had initially caused some worries: from occupied Athens, information came that the public opinion was 'alarmed that Turkey's entry into the war cause probable compensations at the expense of Greek interests'³³⁰. In fact, however, Turkey did not make its rapprochement with Britain dependent on a territorial concession anywhere, especially in the Dodecanese; on the contrary, this rapprochement with London decisively turned Ankara towards the acceptance of the cession of the islands to Greece. The Turkish government's main aim was to safeguard security in the post-war era, through a stabilizing triangular alliance with Greece and Great Britain. The imminent collapse of Germany and the rising power of the Soviet Union led Turkey to the conclusion that only the Western Allies were in a position to protect her in the face of likely pressures by Moscow in the direction of the Straits and the Eastern Mediterranean³³¹.

Thus, in late July 1944, on the eve of the liberation of Greece from the Germans, the Turkish Ambassador to Cairo repeated to George Papandreou that Ankara had no ambitions with regard to the Dodecanese. From his side, the new Greek Prime Minister expressed to Enis Akaygen his joy at Turkey's imminent entry into the Allied family:

[Turkey] will now acquire a safer place there, something which we fervently desire, since we regard the Greek-Turkish alliance as a foundation of our Balkan policy. I then mentioned the imminent capture of the Aegean islands and of the Dodecanese, with the participation of Greek forces. Mr. Enis categorically stated that the official policy of Turkey puts forward no territorial claim, especially on Greece, a friend and an ally, and therefore our claim on the Dodecanese meets no Turkish objection whatsoever³³².

However, an official Turkish communication in this spirit was not made to the Greek government until 15 November; it was repeated by the Press two days

330. Benaki Museum, Peltekis Archives, 159/4, Message no. 204, August 4, 1944.

331. See, characteristically, F. VON PAPPEN, *Memoirs* [Ἀπομνημονεύματα], London 1952, Athens 2000, p. 134.

332. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y. 6/4/1944, G. Papandreou to Raphail, July 31, 1944. For a confirmation by Enis Akaygen, who had passed on this information to Papandreou, see E. ΤΥΛÇA, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

later. This reference, Raphail pointed out from Ankara, 'at a time when it is well known that the information published by Anatolian Agency undergoes strict advance vetting, is in itself quite revealing'³³³. After the enthusiastic reference to the liberation of Athens from the Germans, on 12 October³³⁴, characteristic was – according to the Greek Minister – the largely positive reaction of Turkish public opinion to this information: 'even those journalists who normally voice reservations on this matter this time kept silent and two articles printed in this connection, those of Mr. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın in *Tanin* and of Mr. Necmettin Sadak in *Akşam*, find such a position on the part of the Turkish government very natural, given today's political relations between Greece and Turkey'³³⁵. The two columnists, who published their articles within two days – on 20 and 21 November 1944 –, were parliamentary deputies and also members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, well known for their pro-Allies sentiments. 'Neither since the beginning of this war', Sadak stressed, 'nor indeed before the war has Turkey sought any territory outside the frontiers of the fatherland from anyone and no place has been given among our rights to the thought that we should take back the islands'; and he concluded: 'what we seek is that the islands should not in future serve as a dangerous base for operations against the East; for them to come into the hands of Greece is the strongest guarantee for Turkey'. Hüseyin Cahit's position was similar: 'In the hands of an enemy these islands have always

333. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to Rome, Cairo and Ankara Embassies, November 22, 1944 in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 103; I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y. 6/4/1945, Aghnides to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 15, 1944; Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 27, 1944, F.O. 371/43755, Peterson (Ankara) to Eden, November 23, 1944. The same information was given to the US and then the French and the Italian governments: S.D.R., T.1246, original paper 868.014/10-3144, October 31, 1944. A.A.E., Europe 1944-1960/59, Saint-Hardouin (Ankara), September 27, 1944. A.S.D., Grecia/B. 16, F. Cavalletto (Roma), December 12, 1944.

334. Apart from the message of the Prime Minister for the happiness and prosperity of the 'noble nation' to which his country had been 'united by bonds of indissoluble friendship', see also references to articles of the Turkish press; in the same spirit in S.D.R., T.1246, 868.014/10-31-44, Steinherdt (Ankara) to Secretary of State, October 21, 1944.

335. R. Raphail to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 27, 1944, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 104. See also, for a commentary, F.O. 371/43755, Peterson to Eden, November 23, 1944. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Cavalletto (Roma), December 13, 1944. Sandak and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın were also deputies and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Grand National Assembly; they – according to the Greek Minister's note – were usually inspired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on such serious matters.

been a danger; but if they are in the hands of a friendly country, they will serve only to strengthen further the bonds of friendship'³³⁶.

Before turning to a more systematic interpretation of Turkish policy on this issue, it would be useful to refer carefully to Ankara's priorities and aims during the war, which, after all, shaped its tactic. Ultimately, these aims and tactic directly derived from the wider strategic understanding of Atatürk and his close associates, who were still in power after his death in 1938. Indeed, in his articles referring to the Turkish Foreign Minister's views, Sulzberger had concluded that, given the 'wisdom adjuring against territorial quests which might sap Turkish strength by leading to additional minority problems, the Government has consistently stated with absolute certainty that Turkey does not wish new lands and when her part in this conflict becomes more active it will not be in search of revisionist acquisitions'³³⁷. In the same vein, in December 1942, the British Ambassador to Ankara had stressed:

As regards Turkish post-war desiderata, there was no sign that the Turkish Government had any aims in the direction of territorial aggrandisement; all Turks realize that the Ottoman Empire was a liability and have no desire to revive it³³⁸!

Identical had been the opinion of the French³³⁹. On the other hand, as early as spring 1941, von Papen had concluded that: 'It would be erroneous

336. They particularly insisted on the issue of Greek-Turkish friendship: 'We are of the opinion that it is impossible to find a better indication of the trust and friendship, which the Turkish Government cherishes for the Greek nation' – stated Hüseyin Cahit; and Sadak stressed: 'For Turkey, which regards the closest co-operation with Greece in the Mediterranean and east of the Balkans as a foundation-stone of its policy, top see the Greek civil administration installed on the islands, apart from the fact that it will be a factor contributing to an increase in our security, will at the same time open up the way for opportunities contributing to an increase in economic relations between the two countries and a rapprochement between them' (*The Dodecanese...*, p. 105-107).

337. F.O. 371/37472, Copy of articles sent to *N.Y. Times* on 13th and 14th August by Mr. Sulzberger giving opinions expressed by Numan; see, also, note by Knatchbull-Hugessen, August 26, 1943.

338. F.O. 371/33313, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, December 10, 1942.

339. In time, this impression tended to become a generally accepted conclusion. Thus, the French naval attaché stressed that Turkey, aware of the need to devote many more years in its internal reconstruction, had no territorial ambitions and therefore only wanted to avoid damage

to assume that the German promise of this or that island or the English promise of the areas in southern Syria could influence the course which the Turkish Government is determined to pursue in the interests of its clean reputation'³⁴⁰. 'Turkey had no claim against anybody for frontier rectification and the government were not going to ruin the country by plunging it into war', he had confidentially told the Counsellor of the British Embassy Muvaffak Menemencioglu, 'who sometimes says in a louder voice what his more distinguished brother – Numan – says in a whisper to himself'³⁴¹. The Turks themselves sometimes faced any opportunist offers with suspicion or even irony. It is indicative that when Knatchbull-Hugessen gave Saracoğlu news of the rumour that von Papen had offered them the two Caspian provinces of Persia in return for a breach with Great Britain, the Turkish politician replied: 'That would not be nearly enough, I must have Scotland as well...'³⁴². H. Howard of the Foreign Office had undertaken to study the subject in connection with the Dodecanese question:

In point of fact it seems very unlikely that the Turks would make participation in operations against the islands conditional on their entry into the war. Their attitude throughout the war indicated that they do not attach such importance to establishing their claims to the Dodecanese that any promises from us about the islands would influence their decision ... If eventually the Turks do enter the war it will almost certainly be for other reasons³⁴³.

And his namesake dealing with the Dodecanese question on the part of the State Department stated that 'such acquisition would be contrary to the avowed Turkish policy of acquiring no large ethnic minorities'³⁴⁴. As Ismet İnönü underlined, 'Pan-Turanism is contrary to the national Turkish policy'³⁴⁵.

or external threats; his predecessor noted that Turkey's policy wanted to avoid any intervention by the warring parties. A.M., 2BB, 7/1/5, Larosière (Ankara), 12-1-1944; 7/1/3, Duval (Ankara), 1-10-1941.

340. See, S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

341. F.O. 371/37225, J. D. Sterndale-Bennett (Ankara) to Sargent, August 2, 1943.

342. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

343. F.O. 371/37225, Howard minute, June 7, 1943.

344. S.D.R., RG 59, Box 119, H.N. Howard, September 13, 1943.

345. I.A.A.Y.E., K.Y./1944, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 22, 1944.

Evidently, these officials pointed to the main strategic aim of the Turks: to preserve the security and territorial integrity of their national State. Even then, the General Staff had been briefed not to discuss 'questions other than those of defense'³⁴⁶. In the turmoil of a world war, only two decades after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish policy-makers appeared to be extremely anxious about international developments. One may agree with Selim Deringil's conclusion that, in safeguarding their basic interests, after the hard experiences of the First World War, the Turks followed a policy unmoved by emotions, showed considerable diplomatic skill and resourcefulness, and, at the same time, most of their predictions regarding the post-war era were accurate³⁴⁷; with a lot of opportunism – it must be added. Among the major considerations governing their policy, Knatchbull-Hugessen insisted, were fear of Russia and anxiety to maintain control of the Dardanelles³⁴⁸; to be protected against any danger, even against those – according to another assumption – which might arise from Berlin, appeared to be the strongest reason for which Turkey would eventually join the Allied camp³⁴⁹. This trend became more obvious from the

346. W.O. 106/3260, War Office to Prime Minister, April 23, 1943.

347. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 184-185.

348. F.O. 371/33313, [Extract from C.D.S. (42), 335th Meeting], December 4, 1942. On this point, Raphail's observations were telling: 'It is possible to say that the whole foreign policy of Turkey is concentrated on one single point, namely, to create the best possible conditions for its protection from the Russian threat, which Turkey regards today greater than ever'. (I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-1943/24, Raphail to Tsouderos, 7-2-1943.)

349. Characteristically, PREM., 3/3/6, Military Attaché (Ankara) to War Office, April 18, 1943. Thus, in a memorandum of the 27th September 1943, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated: 'In 1939, we and the French concluded with Turkey a tripartite treaty of mutual assistance to provide for the various eventualities which might occur. It was hoped that this treaty would be supplemented by one between Turkey and the Soviet Union. As events turned out, the second treaty was never concluded, and, indeed, in the brief period during which the German-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression held, the Tripartite Treaty was in fact, if not of design, directed as much against Soviet Russia against any other would be aggressor in the Balkans.' However, after having concluded an agreement on the aftermath of the German attack, the British and Soviet Governments made formal and written assurances to the Turkish that they remained faithful to the Montreux Convention governing the regime of the Straits and had no aggressive intention or claim on them; and also that they were ready to observe scrupulously the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government, which was more and more dissatisfied with the Turkish attitude of neutrality, went progressively so far as to say that their attitude towards Turkey will be governed by the attitude of that country towards

very beginning of 1942, in conjunction with the military operations³⁵⁰. Şükrü Saracoğlu, as Foreign Minister during the first phase of the war and then as Prime Minister, 'whole-heartedly with us' according to Knatchbull-Hugessen³⁵¹, personified these tendencies³⁵². This view did not differ essentially from that of his German counterpart, Franz von Papen³⁵³. The Turks communicated their anxieties to the Greeks as well; arguably they discussed these with them more than they did with the British³⁵⁴.

Finally, despite strong pressures from at least three major powers – Soviet Union, Germany and Britain –, Turkey not only avoided involvement in the war, but also was able to influence both warring camps in its favour; it managed to get each camp to pay a high price for continued resistance to the demands of the other. According to an assessment by A. B. Fox, 'small power diplomacy in the midst of a world conflict could hope to achieve no greater success'³⁵⁵. However, in order to implement this policy, the Turkish policy-makers had to refrain from projecting excessive territorial claims, even if these existed. At any rate, since their main goal was to remain out of the conflict, any territorial aspirations were unlikely to be realized³⁵⁶. Conversely, according to

Germany (CAB. 66/41, War Cabinet, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Policy towards Turkey, September 27, 1943; also, CAB. 66/19, August 7, 11, 1941).

350. F.O. 371/33311, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, February 5, 1942.

351. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *Diplomat...*, p. 201.

352. The remark was indicative that already in his speech in the Grand National Assembly, in spring 1943, a step had been made from neutrality to an attitude more friendly to Britain (A.M., 2BB, 7/1/5, Note du 8 avril 1943).

353. VON PAPEN, *op. cit.*, p. 22-23, 30, 134, 26.

354. Aghnides noted that the Turkish Ambassador in London had told him that just before the Russo-German war, Moscow proposed to Bulgaria the Enos-Midia line for keeping neutrality in the case of a Russo-Turkish war; Ankara, he added, 'was then very much shocked' by this suggestion (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A7/20). Moreover, the Greek Prime Minister, in his conversation with the Turkish Ambassador in Cairo on 28th August 1943, was told that a soviet idea was to bring the Straits under the sovereignty of two, not one state – implying that the second one could be Bulgaria, which Moscow expected to follow a pro-Soviet policy after the war. The Turkish Ambassador implied that even Britain could pursue a pro-Bulgarian post-war policy. He also expressed the fear that Russia, crossing the Danube, would aim to expand its influence to Thessaloniki (I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y./1943, Record Tsouderos – Enis Akaygen, August 28, 1943).

355. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

356. F.O. 371/37225, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent, August 2, 1943.

success³⁵⁵. However, in order to implement this policy, the Turkish policy-makers had to refrain from projecting excessive territorial claims, even if these existed. At any rate, since their main goal was to remain out of the conflict, any territorial aspirations were unlikely to be realized³⁵⁶. Conversely, according to the Greek Minister in Ankara, the view was widely advocated – at the level of public opinion – that ‘Turkey is not afraid of losing the benefits that would be secured for her by her timely entry into the war, because she does not aspire to the acquisition of territories, nor colonies, nor zones of influence’³⁵⁷. A major consideration governing Turkish policy as a whole during this period was, in Knatchbull-Hugessen’s view, the desire to safeguard the new State created by Kemal³⁵⁸.

Such an interpretation could, at first, take one back to the basic hypothesis that Palairé had put forward at an early stage of the war. He had suggested then that Turkey’s official position on the issue of the future status of the Dodecanese tended to be formulated in accordance with the fundamental strategic assumptions of Kemalist foreign policy: safeguarding the security of the Turkish lands as first priority and avoiding expansion to territories which were not inhabited by Turkish or Muslim majorities. Where a Muslim minority existed, Ankara’s concern should be limited to securing minority rights for its members. Obviously, the ‘fair treatment’ of this population would be a decisive condition for the agreement of Turkey to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece³⁵⁹. ‘(The) Turks have often made it clear’ was stressed in a P.I.C. paper³⁶⁰.

Moreover, for Ankara the most acute problem that would arise in respect to the Dodecanese was connected with current strategic considerations: namely, the safety of the Asia Minor coast. But such considerations could not support a policy of confronting the Greek claim in this direction. Indeed, the Turks feared that, under the sovereignty of a State other than Greece, especially of a

355. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

356. F.O. 371/37225, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent, August 2, 1943.

357. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/3, R. Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 7, 1944.

358. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *Diplomat...*, p. 147-148. Also, S.D.R., RG59, Box 19, H. Howard, September 13, 1943.

359. F.O. 371/33313, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, December 10, 1942; F.O. 371/37224, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent, March 12, 1943; PREM. 3/3/6, Military Attaché (Ankara) to War Office, April 18, 1943.

360. W.O. 106/3260, Turkey and the Dodecanese: P.I.C. paper no. 20, September 2, 1943.

Greek sovereignty, which would be considered less of a danger to Turkey than possession by Italy or another Great Power'³⁶¹. 'If we beforehand make it clear that neither we nor the Italians will have the Dodecanese after the war, it might allay their anxieties. I feel they may be willing to allow the Greeks to have them but not (repeat not) a so-called first class power. I see no reason to suppose that an amicable agreement could not be reached with Greeks provided that political situation and strategic requirements were met and the interests of the Turkish minorities were safeguarded'³⁶². These official assessments summarized the conditions which might be considered necessary in Ankara in order to put its territorial claims in second place: demilitarization; refusal to accept possession of the islands by a 'potential enemy power', i.e. 'a so-called first class power' or anyone which could 'follow an imperialist policy'³⁶³; even more, 'although guarantees of demilitarization might reasonably be imposed', there was strong evidence that this solution could contribute to strengthening friendly relationship between the two neighbouring countries³⁶⁴. 'Turkey has formally disclaimed any territorial interest and renounced all intention of disputing the claim of Greece', was stressed by the Foreign Office³⁶⁵.

Of course, Turkey's preference for Greece, instead of another State, as sovereign in the Dodecanese, did not derive only from this understanding of the balance of power between the two countries, but also mirrored the climate of necessary friendship which characterized their relations – '*excellentes*', as the French Chargé d'Affaires to Ankara described them, at the time of the Liberation of Athens from the Axis Occupation³⁶⁶. According to the Research

361. See, S.D.R., RG 59, Box 61, T.206, H. Howard, January 7, 1943. Also, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, R 29935, Türkei/1940-43, Von Papen, February 28, 1942.

362. W.O. 106/3260, Extract from Ankara Telegram MA/1111, April 18, 1943. Also, F.O. 371/44188, Turkey's claims and interests: Research Department, June 3, 1944.

363. S.D.R., RG 59/Box 119, H. Howard, September 18, 1943. A similar British wording: F.O. 371/33165, Palaret to Sargent, December 30, 1942; F.O. 37/37471, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., July 10, 1943.

364. S.D.R., RG 59/Box 152 (NND 750130), Italy-Greece-Turkey, Colonial Problems: The Dodecanese, September 2, 1944.

365. F.O. 371/33165, The Greek-Turkish frontier (Research Department), June 20, 1944.

366. A.A.E., Turquie/31, Saint-Hardouin to Bidault, October 23, 1944. At the same time, the Greek Minister to Ankara commented on a speech by the Turkish Prime Minister in the Grand National Assembly: Mr. Saracoğlu retained the non-committal attitude of the historical review of the war, but abandoned it when he reached the Italian attack against us, speaking of Greece

Department of the Foreign Office, 'not being a naval Power herself, Turkey is not keen on overseas commitments; nor does she want to add to her minorities. As long as friendship with Greece remains a principle of her policy, Turkey is unlikely to make serious objection to the Dodecanese passing to Greece'³⁶⁷. This same Department repeated in another statement that, having 'no desire for overseas commitments or for an increase in her minorities, Turkey's interest is that the Dodecanese should not be in unfriendly hands; it therefore suits her present policy well that Greece should have the islands'³⁶⁸. As Enis Akaygen had said to Tsouderos, the two States should steadily tend to discourage the 'overthrow of the existing factors of their policy in the Balkans and in the Aegean'³⁶⁹.

Finally, it is possible to connect this apparent necessity for Ankara not to disturb and even to promote Greek-Turkish friendship with the major considerations of its policy after the war. Thus, it should be noted that such a policy towards Athens combined well with the desire, which would become more and more evident, to co-operate closely with Britain and the Western Allies. As Knatchbull-Hugessen pointed out, the Turks realize 'that there will inevitably be a very close connection between ourselves and Greece which will be the governing factor in Eastern Mediterranean and they naturally want to be in on it'³⁷⁰. Truly, whenever agencies of Ankara tried to hint at the expediency of promoting some territorial sights on the Dodecanese, in combination with the satisfaction of strategic needs in the framework of the collaboration with the Western Allies, the representatives of Great Britain acted discouragingly³⁷¹. 'It is not without regret that the Turks are seeing Greece strengthening its

as a friend, of the heroic Greek nation and its brave fighters (I.A.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/3, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10-8-1944).

367. F.O. 371/44188, Turkish claim and interest in territories and populations outside her frontiers, Edmonds (Research Department) to Clutton, June 3, 1944.

368. F.O. 371/33165, Research Department, Foreign Office, October 23, 1944. Also, F.O. 371/37471, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, July 10, 1943; S.D.R., RG 59/Box 152 (NND 750130), Italy-Greece-Turkey, Colonial problems: The Dodecanese, September 2, 1944.

369. I.A.A.Y.E., K.Y./1945, Record Tsouderos - Akaygen, August 28, 1943.

370. F.O. 371/37472, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sargent.

371. W.O. 106/3260, War Office to Foreign Secretary, First Sea Lord, etc., August 12, 1943. And later, I.A.A.Y.E., K.Y., 6/1/1945, Raphail to Ioannis Politis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), September 27, 1945.

claims on the islands', the French Ambassador to Ankara noted, from his side, in May 1945; 'but the need that they also have of Greece – the only power in the Balkans which is not hostile to them – and, also, of England, is forcing them to hide their displeasure'³⁷².



372. A.A.E., Turquie 31, Maugras to Bidault, May 15, 1945.

CHAPTER VI

THE DODECANESE AS A BATTLEGROUND. MILITARY OPERATIONS AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY, 1943-1945

THE COURSE OF THE DODECANESE QUESTION during the Second World War had been connected strictly with the prospect of military operations in the Aegean³⁷³. These islands, as 'stepping stones between Europe and Asia'³⁷⁴, could well serve as army, naval and air bases. Indeed, during the war, although the Axis occupation of Greece had not in itself seriously increased the scale of attack on Egypt, it had weakened the Allies' control of sea communication in the Archipelago. However, until August 1943 this area appeared to have had limited strategic effect on the armed conflict, because of the inability of the Italians to find a military use for it, as well as because of the inadequacy of the Allies to undertake effective action for its capture. But in the aftermath of the Allies' victory in North Africa and their landing in Sicily and Italy, the southeastern Aegean area became a battleground of the warring parties and changed hands more than once. After Italy's surrender, in early September 1943, Churchill asked for the immediate capture of the southern Aegean islands as a 'fine contribution to the general war'. British forces did indeed take action in this battlefield, but soon after their capture the most important among the islands they occupied, such as Cos, Kalymnos and Leros, were retaken by the Germans; the last, in spite of a prolonged defence, on 16 November³⁷⁵. As for Rhodes, which was in Churchill's opinion, 'the key of the group', it passed from Italian to German hands before the Allies could take it³⁷⁶. Under

373. For the operations in the south-east Aegean, in general, *History of the Second World War* [United Kingdom Military series, ed. by J.R.M. BUTLER], *Grand Strategy...*, V, p. 88 ff. Also, see W. S. CHURCHILL, *The Second World War*, London 1952, V, p. 101 ff.

374. According to a H.N. Howard's remark (September 9, 1943): S.D.R., RG 59, Box 119.

375. A. ROGERS, *Churchill's Folly: Leros and the Aegean*, Cassell 2003.

376. More extensively on the military operations see, S.D.R., Roosevelt Library, Map Rooms, Box 79, ALUSNA Beyoğlu to Navy Dt., September 11, 14; October, 8, 10, ALUSLO Levant to Navy Dt., September 22, 29; October, 12, 15; November, 5, AMSME (Cairo) to War

these conditions, the Germans remained masters of the East Aegean. By the beginning of 1945, they had given up some of the smaller islands and had concentrated their forces on Rhodes, Cos, Leros and Kalymnos.

Inevitably, military planning in the East Aegean became connected with prospects regarding the future status of the area. A most important issue – which surfaced quite early, even during the Greek-Italian war – involved the part that the Greek government would play in Mediterranean operations, more especially in the Dodecanese area³⁷⁷. The ‘Dodecanesian Legion’, which had fought on the Albanian front, consisted of volunteers of Dodecanesian origin; the same name was given to the first military detachment formed after the capture of Greece, in the Middle East³⁷⁸: the ‘Sacred Company’ under Colonel Tsigantes had made commando raids in the region. Greek warships, under British command, had also actively participated in the 1943 operations in and around these islands. Indeed, it was in these operations that the submarine ‘Katsonis’ and the destroyer ‘Queen Olga’ had been sunk, while the destroyer ‘Adrias’ had also been severely damaged in the same area. So, Greece, as a belligerent allied power, one that had suffered an invasion by Italy and one that had defeated the Italian forces in 1940-1941, pressed, once more, that its troops should take part in the capture of the islands and that they should play a part in their subsequent provisional administration. This demand was expressed early on: ‘The Greeks demand that they too must certainly take part in the capture of the Dodecanese, considering this issue as a national concern’³⁷⁹. An additional argument advanced by Tsouderos, reiterating the demands made by the Dodecanesians themselves, was that the

Dt., September 27; October 4; November, 1, 3. The Greeks had correctly assessed the situation at an early moment: ‘Greeks believe prompt action will insure islands to Allies whereas delay may allow Jerry time to entrench’ S.D.R., Roosevelt Library, Map Room files, Box 79, AMSME (Cairo) to War Department, September 12, 1943; ALUSLO Alexandria to Navy Dt., November 12, 1943). On the failure of the operation, A.M.M./228, Ioannis Politis Papers, Politis to the King George II, November 22, 1943; Politis to Tsouderos, November 6, 1943.

377. F.O. 371/29932, Dixon’s minute, March 2, 1941.

378. Δ.Ι.Σ. (Army History Department), *Ο Έλληνικός Στρατός στη Μέση Ανατολή (The Greek Army in the Middle East)*, 1941-1945, Athens 1995, p. 10. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Dragoumis Papers, 64/5, doc. 70, ‘The Dodecanese question’.

379. According to Captain C. Kontoyiannis, based on the instructions of the Greek government (A.M.M./257, Koryzis Papers, Kontoyiannis, February 19, 1941).

Italian occupation authorities should be disbanded and that the Greeks should participate in the operations³⁸⁰.

More precisely, on 17 November 1942 Aghnides had presented Cadogan with a memorandum asking for the participation of the Greek Armed Forces in the campaign, as well as for the assumption of the islands' administration by the government-in-exile, after their eventual liberation. Incidentally, these operations could not create any misgivings in the neighbouring countries because of the relations of friendship existing between them and 'the fact that the occupation of the Dodecanese will be an element of security for the inhabitants of the mainland, who will be freed from the constant menace of seeing the islands used as a possible bridgehead against their independence and security'³⁸¹. In his reply, after expressing his cabinet's understanding 'of the feeling entertained by the whole Hellenic nation toward the question of Dodecanese', Cadogan reconfirmed the previous assurance that '[the British] will certainly not enter into any commitments affecting Greek interests without first consulting the Royal Hellenic Government'; they were also ready to recommend to their military 'that Greek troops should participate in any attack on the islands'. On the other hand, he added, the Allied administration to be established in the islands after their capture and until to the end of the war 'may wish to employ the services of a certain number of local inhabitants of Greek race to replace the local Italian officials as subordinates in [it]'³⁸². This arrangement was in accordance with the agreement of 9 March 1942³⁸³. Deputy Prime Minister of the government-in-exile, P. Kanellopoulos, returned

380. F.O. 371/37206, Tsouderos to Leeper, September 27, 1943. At the same time, another issue surfaced: the drafting of Dodecanesians into the Greek armed forces; the British did not object to this prospect (F.O. 371/37216, Leeper to F.O., December 15, 1943; F.O. to Leeper, December 21, 1943).

381. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε.: *Dragoumis Papers*, 64/5, doc. 70, The Dodecanese question; see also, Greek government-in-exile to the Foreign Office: Aide-mémoire on the Dodecanese, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 52. See also, W.O. 106/3260, A. Cadogan (mem.), November 17, 1942; Greek Government offices in London, November 17, 1942.

382. See, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., 1943, A7/20, Cadogan to Aghnides, December 1, 1942. Aghnides expressed, in an answer to this letter the appreciation and the understanding of his government for the British assurances (*ibidem*, Aghnides to A. Cadogan, December 24, 1942). See also, W.O. 106/3260, Cadogan to Aghnides, December 1, 1942; Howard to Talbot Rice, Dec. 1, 1942; Dixon to Warner, December 4, 1942.

383. Δ.Ι.Σ., *Ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς Στρατὸς στὴ Μέση Ἀνατολή...*, p. 30.

to this same subject, as did Tsouderos, at a meeting with Eden on 1 March 1943³⁸⁴. Summarizing these demands, they stressed a claim to the Dodecanese and, moreover, this with a view to participating in any attack on the area and in the administration of the islands following their capture. Apart from their reply to the first claim, British officials told the Greeks as regards the second point, that it was a question of military operations, on the timing of which the army authorities had to decide; but, on the assumption that control of operations was in British hands, they would do their best to see that Greek troops are allowed to participate. Concerning the third point, they agreed to employ, possibly, local Greeks in subordinate administrative posts under the British administration³⁸⁵. Taking the same line, the view of the government of the United States was that the deployment of the Hellenic armed forces in a military operation should be decided by direct agreement between the responsible military authorities³⁸⁶.

The British stance was to remain essentially unchanged until late 1943, that is for as long as military operations lasted – even after the Italians' withdrawal from the Dodecanese³⁸⁷. On several occasions the British repeated that 'there has been no change of attitude' and that their position in this matter remained as stated in Cadogan's letter of 1 December 1942³⁸⁸. Nonetheless, this does not mean that slightly varying views on the question were not exchanged between officials. In general, the representatives of the Foreign Office, taking the political factor more into account, made every effort not to displease their local allies³⁸⁹. When Greek forces had been excluded from the operations against the Dodecanese, Reginald Leeper cabled that 'Greece had unwaveringly fulfilled her duty as ally ever since her entry into the war at the most adverse

384. F.O. 371/37194, Tsouderos to Eden, March 1, 1943; in the same spirit, the vice president Kanellopoulos had, also, spoken: F.O. 371/37220, Law (min.), Febr. 3, 1943.

385. PREM. 3/3/10A, [Prime Minister], April 29, 1943. See also, W.O. 106/3260, Foreign Office to the Secretary of Staff Committee, April 6, 1943.

386. I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y./1943 – 1944, C. Hull to Diamantopoulos, September 15, 1943. As to the Greek government moves towards Washington, *The Dodecanese...*, p. 58.

387. On the Greek efforts between September – October 1943, extensively: F.O. 371/37226.

388. I.Δ.A.Y.E., London Legation, Cadogan to Aghnides, May 31, 1944.

389. W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Leeper (Cairo), July 2, 1943; Chiefs of Staff to Commanders in Chief, September 15, 1943; Commanders in Chief to Eisenhower, September 19, 1943; Warner to Dixon, September 21, 1943; Cadogan (mem.), September 27, 1943.

moment she had received unfriendly treatment'. He said frankly that although the Greek people's interest in the matter was recognized in Cadogan's letter, their government's request for participation in military operations and in the provisional administration of this area have met with evasion³⁹⁰. Indeed, the fact that no Hellenic troops participated in the operations in the islands had – in the words of *The Times* – 'bewildered the public'³⁹¹; and Eden, himself, had expressly said: 'We must do all we can to help the Greeks in this; we must remember that I have said publicly that there will be no "forget" for Allies'³⁹². The Foreign Office's final position was that, although the Greeks' claim to participate in the occupation and administration of the islands was less strong than in liberated territory, it was important that some gesture be made in this direction³⁹³. Cadogan stated firmly that, in principle: 'it has been agreed that provided the military situation allows the Greek government's wishes should be met on all important points'; moreover, a representative of it should go to the islands, seconded to the staff of the British Commander-in-Chief, and Greek troops should participate in any future operations against the Dodecanese, if the military authorities judged that this was not at variance with their operational plans³⁹⁴.

In the spring of 1943, war-torn Greece's aspiration for the participation of her forces crossed with the terms put forward by the Turkish General Staff in order for Turkey to contribute to the Allied effort. In view of the desire, particularly of London, to launch operations for the immediate capture of the Dodecanese, Field-Marshal Çakmak insisted that the Turkish army operate, with the support of the Allies, against Rhodes and not in the area of the northern Greek islands, as proposed by London. His General Staff, he explained, had a plan for that island's capture, which was in accordance with the old plan of 1940³⁹⁵. 'It is of course possible', Churchill had stressed, 'that the

390. W.O. 106/3260, Leeper to F.O., September 25, 1943 (nos. 277, 279, 280).

391. *The Times*, October 28, 1943.

392. F.O. 371/37226, Eden [note], September 27, 1943.

393. HS 5/307, Foreign Office (E.M.S.) to Minister of State, September 25, 1943.

394. F.O. 371/37226, Cadogan to Aghnides, October 15, 1943; see also, *The Dodecanese...*, p. 75-76; and, also, Leeper to Tsouderos, September 30, 1943 (*ibidem*, p. 73-74).

395. W.O. 106/3260, Extracts from the Minutes of the First Meeting between Marshal Fevzi Çakmak and General Sir Henry Wilson held on 16th April, 1943; tel. M. A./1111 of April 18.

Turks may demand that they should be allowed to participate in the capture of the Dodecanese as part of the price of entering the war at the side of United Nations or attempt to extract assurances from us regarding the future of the islands in return for granting us the use of Turkish bases, Turkey remaining non-belligerent'³⁹⁶. The British, this time having in mind that 'the Turks have always coveted certain of the islands in the Dodecanese', considered that their participation in an attack would not be to the Allies' advantage because, 'once installed, [they] would be loath to give up their control'; and, then, the Greeks would automatically become suspicious and dangers of a struggle between the two neighbours would arise³⁹⁷. In practice, they supposed that possession is nine-tenths of the law, and whichever country – Turkey or Greece – first gets a footing or plays a major part in the capture of the islands, will be able to put forward the stronger case. They concluded: 'We should therefore try to ensure that those troops whose country's claim we propose later to support at the Peace Conference first set foot in the islands'³⁹⁸. Given the Foreign Office's evident desire to avoid friction between the two neighbouring countries, the British decided that the initial assault be made by their own forces alone³⁹⁹. Knatchbull-Hugessen was content to pass only one comment: Turkish participation 'seems most undesirable'⁴⁰⁰. On the other hand, the situation in the Mediterranean had changed radically since the military agreement of 1939, as a result of the entry of Greece into the war, the collapse of France, and the failure of Turkey to implement the Treaty of Mutual Assistance when Italy entered the war – in consequence of which article 3 of this agreement was 'no

396. PREM. 3/3/10A, [Prime Minister], April 29, 1943. Before reaching this conclusion, Churchill had communicated with General Wilson. He had also had evidently taken into account the information provided by the British Military Attaché in Ankara, who had noted that the Turks showed a desire to undertake the capture of Dodecanese themselves as planned in 1940 discussions; but, they agreed that this plan should be studied again by British and Turkish staff officers (PREM. 3/3/6, Military Attaché (Ankara) to War Office, April 18; Churchill to General Wilson, April 20, 1943).

397. W.O. 106/3260, Position of the Dodecanese, April 11, 1943. In the same spirit, F.O. 371/37224, Howard, January 25, 1943.

398. W.O. 106/3260, War Cabinet: The Dodecanese, April 11, 1943.

399. PREM. 3/3/10A, [Prime Minister], April 29, 1943. See also, W.O. 106/3260, Chief of Staff to Commanders-in-Chief, April 29, 1943.

400. F.O. 371/37225, Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, May 25, 1943.

longer applicable'⁴⁰¹. Finally, Howard summarized the situation in a minute of 7 June: 'The Chiefs of Staff first raised the point in April that the Turkish might demand to participate in the capture of the Dodecanese as part of their price for entering the war or for granting us the use of our bases ... The point was referred to in the Chiefs of Staff telegram to the Commander-in-Chief Middle East but the latter was instructed merely to give the Turkish no encouragement to advance such claims'⁴⁰². Churchill now doubted the absolute importance of Turkish aid:

Hitherto we have talked of the great help that air bases in Turkey would be for any attack we make on 'Handcuff'. But when I look at the distances on the map it seems we could get there from Syria, Cyprus, Alexandria and Benghazi, at least with long-range bombers. Before going any further into this matter, I want to know how decisive a factor in the attack on 'Handcuff' would be the Turkish assistance, either passive or active'⁴⁰³.

In these circumstances, the participation or not of other detachments, Greek or Turkish, did not constitute a precondition for the undertaking or not of the campaign against the Dodecanese, which, in any case, the British were planning with the agreement of the American allies. The capture of the islands would allow them to detain the full flow of traffic in the broader area, permit a high degree of control over the important Axis communications in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and open the way for action in the Balkans. In early 1943, the whole question of Allied strategy was under consideration but it depended largely on the resources available and, specifically, on the use of the Turkish airfields and the availability of suitable trained troops⁴⁰⁴.

401. It was the opinion of Churchill: PREM. 3/3/10A, [Prime Minister], April 29; Mideast to Air Ministry, May 6, 1943. See also, W.O. 106/3260, Position of the Dodecanese, April 11, 1943; F.O. to Chiefs of Staff Committee, April 6, 1943; Air Ministry to Commanders-in-Chief, April 26, 1943 (File 867/3257, Memorandum from State Department on Near Eastern Affairs (Kohler), March 26, 1943).

402. F.O. 371/37225, Howard (minute), June 7, 1943.

403. PREM. 3/3/6, Churchill to General Ismay, April 4, 1943.

404. W.O. 32/11430, Dodecanese, December 1942 to the loss of Leros, 1943: report by M. O. 1 (Records). On Churchill's insistence that the capture of the Dodecanese was necessarily linked to the entry of Turkey into the war, see, K. SAINSBURY, *Churchill and Roosevelt in the War. The War they Fought and the Peace they Hoped to Make*, London 1944, p. 38, 40, 44.

In this context, the possibility of Turkey's entry into the war, as a necessary step for the successful conclusion of the operations in the Eastern Aegean, had been studied seriously since the beginning of 1943, independently of Ankara's participation in the campaign to capture the Dodecanese⁴⁰⁵. Earlier, in December 1942, Orme Sargent had appeared optimistic in the matter: in the Under-Secretary of State's view, a conversation that the Counsellor of the British Embassy to Ankara had with Numan was indicative of a change 'in the tempo of Turkish co-operation' with the Allies: 'In fact, without being unduly optimistic, I am beginning to hope that it may not be as difficult as we thought to achieve the task which the Prime Minister has set us of bringing the Turks into the war in the Spring'⁴⁰⁶. On the other hand, Ismay had answered Churchill's question of 4 April, that 'passive assistance from the Turks in the form of permission to use their airfields might well make the difference between success and failure'; and the Prime Minister had noted on the page, 'good'⁴⁰⁷. Since then, an important amount of supplies had been carried to Turkey – instructors and training facilities of all kinds, as well as military and naval material⁴⁰⁸. From January to May 1943, some £16,000,000-worth of equipment other than petrol was transported to Turkey from the Middle East; and the traffic continued after that on a comparable scale, in response to Ankara's requests. It is under these conditions that the operations 'Accolade', for the seizure of the Dodecanese, and 'Hardihood', for the reinforcement of a belligerent Turkey, were planned⁴⁰⁹. Meanwhile, in the middle of the year, it appeared that the Turks, for fear of possible Russian domination of the Balkans after the war, were relying on the maintenance of a balance of power in their neighbouring area⁴¹⁰. They did not cease arguing that they had been left with inadequate equipment, a fact that inevitably influenced their decisions in the

405. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

406. F.O. 371/33313, Sargent [note], December 2, 1942.

407. PREM. 3/3/6, C.A.S. to Prime Minister, April 11, 1943. See also, W. S. CHURCHILL, *The Second World War*, vol. V: *Closing the Ring*, London 1952, p. 345-347.

408. PREM. 3/3/6, Prime Minister's personal telegram [to President Roosevelt], April 26, 1943: 'We are giving all the help we can to the Turks in the way of instructors and training facilities of all kinds, and we are doing what we can to improve their communications.'

409. *History of the Second World War* [United Kingdom Military Series, ed. by J.R.M. BUTLER], *Grand Strategy*, vol. IV (*August 1942-September 1943*) [by M. HOWARD], London 1972, p. 411.

410. *Grand Strategy...*, vol. V, p. 89-90.

major crisis that subsequently arose, after the launching of the eventual Allied attack on the Dodecanese⁴¹¹. Even after the collapse of fascist Italy, they were seemingly not to be persuaded that the time was right for them to enter the war on the side of the Allies⁴¹².

In connection with these developments, planning for an operation in the Dodecanese was complicated by the uncertainty of Turkey's attitude, the complexities of the Balkan situation, and the needs of the Sicilian and Italian campaigns; between May 1943 and January 1944, no fewer than seven plans of this nature were produced⁴¹³. Their failure was due in large part to the attitude of Ankara, which refused not only to enter the war, but also to permit the use of airbases by the Allies. Indeed, by the end of July, Churchill himself had raised the possibility of implementing 'Hardihood' immediately, in connection with an operation against the Dodecanese – especially Rhodes: 'We ought to get there quite quickly if it is humanly possible, as I need this place as part of the diplomatic approach to Turkey'⁴¹⁴. Therefore, it was pointed out that, although the advantages of Turkey's entry into the war were very great, the Allied convoys could not pass safely through the Aegean 'until either we have secured the Dodecanese islands or more powerful air forces are provided to enable the enemy airfields thereon to be effectively neutralized'⁴¹⁵. The proposals made, on this basis, by the military authorities were approved by the Prime Minister on 9 September: 'Good, this is a time to play high; improvise and dare'. This decision was repeated by Commander-in-Chief Middle East to Eisenhower, in a telegram asking for ships for a possible operation against Rhodes⁴¹⁶. Meanwhile, Roosevelt's stern

411. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *Diplomat...*, p. 165. CAB. 101/296, Policy to Turkey..., p. 2 ff.

412. For this agreement, as formulated by Sargent: I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government 9, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Tsouderos, July 31, 1943.

413. W.O. 32/11430, Dodecanese, December 1942 to the loss of Leros, 1943: Report by M. O. 1. (Records).

414. PREM. 3/3/10A, W. Churchill to General Ismay, July 27, 1943; published in *Grand Strategy...*, vol. V, p. 91. According to General Ismay, the strategic importance of Rhodes was so great, that 'if this island were captured, the Germans would have to leave Crete and southern Greece' (PREM. 3/447/1, Record of 2nd meeting held in Cairo, on 5th November 1943).

415. PREM. 3/3/2, From Mideast to Air Ministry, [November 10, 1943], K. SAINSBURY, *Churchill and Roosevelt at War...*, p. 33, 36, 42, 45.

416. W.O. 32/11430, Dodecanese, Dec. 1942 to the loss of Leros, 1943: Report by M. O. 1. (Records). From 10 September to 17 November 1943 the losses were estimated to be 13 Allied and British warships sunk and a total of 400-500 naval personnel killed or missing.

disagreement finally blocked the immediate implementation of such a plan⁴¹⁷. Notwithstanding, the British would, in the end, after the Italian surrender, try to go it alone, suffering the well-known failures in Rhodes, Cos and, finally, Leros. The disagreement of the Americans, who demanded that absolute priority be given to the battle of Italy, the strong German 'Luftwaffe' and the inability of the R.A.F. to give adequate cover to the Royal Navy, the reduced participation of the Italians on the Allies' side, had been added to the consequences of Turkey's negative stance⁴¹⁸.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the active assistance of the Turks was deemed necessary once again for the capture of the Dodecanese. By late October, the use of the Asia Minor airfields had appeared necessary for the occupation of Leros, as a first step to capturing the Aegean Islands⁴¹⁹, and the Allied Headquarters hoped to ask them again to lend a hand in their assaults in the area⁴²⁰. On 2 November, in Moscow, Eden and Molotov, as Foreign Ministers, agreed that it should be suggested to Ankara to enter the war before the end of the year, as the most hopeful contribution to an early victory of the Allies⁴²¹. The question then arose, once more, as to whether Turkey's participation in these operations, and even the capture of some of the islands by its army, would not create serious problems with the Greeks? Ismay put this to Churchill who, on 30

417. *Grand Strategy...*, vol. V, p. 95-99. On the Roosevelt's recalcitrance to adopt Churchill's visions, GEOFFREY BEST, *Churchill and War*, London-New York 2005, p. 157. On the hope that Dodecanese might be taken with relatively small British forces from the Middle East, K. SAINSBURY, *Churchill and Roosevelt at War...*, p. 44.

418. PREM. 3/3/10A, Mideast to Air Ministry, October 27; Minister of Defense to Prime Minister, October 29, 1943.

419. PREM. 3/3/10A, Minister of Defense to Prime Minister, October 29, 1943; PREM. 3/3/2, Air Ministry, November 10, 1943.

420. PREM. 3/3/2, H.L. Ismay to Churchill, November 29, 1943.

421. *Grand Strategy...*, vol. V, p. 99-101, 194. See also, H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *Diplomat...*, p. 194. According him, Rauf Bey, the Turkish Ambassador to London, had also put forward similar ideas, in July 1943: '... Rauf mentioned Greece as an essential factor in future Turkish foreign policy... Speaking of the wider aspect of Turkish-Greek relations he said what did the Dodecanese matter to Turkey provided they were in the hands of a friendly power and were not a potential threat. All that mattered to Turkey, was the security against a potential threat she would have to seize other islands and so on. This would mean war with Greece. They had had many wars with Greece and what was the present position? Why have more wars with Greece when a friendly settlement was possible?'

November, duly answered: 'I think we might let them participate if all is well'⁴²². However, Eden, yet again, objected to the Prime Minister:

I do hope we shall not employ Turkish forces in assaults in any of the Dodecanese. The title to these islands being in doubt, the Greeks would be convinced we had given their cause away, and we should be storing up much trouble for ourselves. But this does not mean Turks cannot be given work to do. We can and should ask them to attack other indisputably Greek islands, which we could invite the Turks to win back for Greece⁴²³.

In this case, the Foreign Minister conveyed the spirit of the Foreign Office's conclusions, which Orme Sargent had read to him four days before:

Our feeling still is that the Turks should not participate in operations against the Dodecanese. Angora telegrams Nos. 1743 and 1701 hardly form a basis to refute any Turkish claim to Dodecanesian Islands which the Turkish armed forces may occupy. Turkish assurance given in these telegrams was that if the Germans attempted to surrender the Dodecanese to Turkey, the Turkish Government would hand them over to Great Britain because they hold that Great Britain in virtue of the Italian armistice had a mortgage on all Italian islands in Axis hands. These assurances were given when Turkey was neutral and probably had every intention of remaining neutral. In the event of Turkey coming into the war and capturing certain of the islands of the Dodecanese by military action a completely new set of circumstances would arise, to which the Turkish Government's earlier assurance would not necessarily apply. The temptation to keep the first fruits of belligerency and conquest would be very great⁴²⁴.

Indeed, it was then agreed in London that if the Turks ever launched attacks in the Aegean, it would be only on islands under Greek sovereignty, such as Samos,

422. PREM. 3/3/2, H. L. Ismay to Churchill, November 29, 1943; W. Churchill [note], November 30, 1943.

423. PREM. 3/3/2, Eden to Churchill, December 1, 1943.

424. W.O. 106/3260, Sargent to Churchill and Eden, November 26, 1943.

Chios or Lesbos⁴²⁵. It had already been established that such an action could not bring its future status into doubt since, according to the Bilateral Agreement of 9 March 1942, Britain was pledged to 'the complete liberation of Greece and the re-establishment of her freedom and independence'⁴²⁶. Consequently, if it was eventually found to be militarily impossible to capture both the Dodecanese and the Greek islands with British troops; the question of inviting the Turks to undertake the task and to operate against the latter could be considered in the light of then-existing circumstances, but these last territories should be handed over to the Greek government 'at the earliest possible moment and without waiting for the end of the war'⁴²⁷. In this case, Ankara and Athens ought, they hoped, to be able to come to an amicable agreement regarding handing back the islands to Greek administration immediately after their capture⁴²⁸. However, in the end, the British government decided that it was preferable that the operation against these islands too should be undertaken by their own forces, since the Greeks would undoubtedly dislike Turkish participation⁴²⁹.

In any case, as Eden stated, in the face of Ankara's recalcitrance London failed entirely to achieve its objective. The Foreign Minister had met Menemencioglu in Cairo on 5 November 1943⁴³⁰, while one month later,

425. *Ibidem*. Also, PREM. 3/447/5A, Turkish timetable memorandum by Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East, December 6, 1943.

426. For the relevant document, I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1941-44, 43/4, Greek-British Agreement on the Organization and Utilization of the Greek Armed Forces, March 9, 1942.

427. PREM. 3/310A, Air Ministry to Mideast, April 29, 1943.

428. W.O. 106/3260, Sargent to Churchill and Eden, November 26, 1943.

429. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 200 ff. The British attitude became the focal point of misunderstandings, mostly at later times. Thus, on 12 March 1963, Admiral Ioannis Toumbas, Centre Union Deputy for the Dodecanese, had made in the Greek Parliament some allegations about Anglo-Turkish plans for operations in the islands of Chios, Lesbos and Samos in 1944, which in his view proved that the Turks still have territorial design upon Greece. After an 'intensive search' in their Archives, the British had found nothing about such an incident. On the contrary, they certified that after the Germans evacuated Chios and Lesbos, in September 1944 the islands were taken over by the Greeks. This conclusion was confirmed by Admiralty. It was, namely, agreed the F.O. proposal that, even if Turkish forces were used, it would be better to ask them to take the Greek islands rather than the Dodecanese. (F.O. 371/169065 Barnes (Athens) to Jamieson (Foreign Office), March 23, 1963; Jamieson to Barnes, April 25, 1963; Military Branch (Admiralty) to Foreign Office, September 3, 1963).

430. A.M., 2BB, 7/1/5, L'entrevue du Caire (memorandum), November 29; La deuxième conférence du Caire (décembre '43), 1943.

during the Conference organized in the same city, Churchill and Roosevelt asked Turkey to allow the Allies use of its airbases. President İnönü pointed out that his country would not risk German reprisals by air and by land unless it was equipped sufficiently to avert the possibility of disaster. It then became obvious that there was a wide gap between Ankara's requirements and the Allies' abilities to meet them: this was confirmed when a British military mission visited Ankara, at the end of the same month. Although it found the General Staff's demands excessive, the latter stuck to its guns⁴³¹. Whereas, in Eden's view, Ankara had not 'lifted a finger' to assist them in their fight, the Allies, as Deringil put it, 'wanted in 1943 the benefits of support without risking their obligations'⁴³². The mission had remarked that 'the Turks entrench themselves behind these excessive demands in order not to go ahead', before cutting short negotiations on 4 February⁴³³; and a few days later *The Times* spoke of a 'crisis of trust' between the two sides⁴³⁴. On 28 February, the United Kingdom ambassador left Ankara and henceforth every delivery of materials to Turkey stops. Even Churchill will speak in the House of Commons, in plain words to Turkey, of his 'great disappointment'⁴³⁵. Immediately after that, the British Military Mission was withdrawn from this country and armament supplies were cut off⁴³⁶; Washington too adopted an attitude of aloofness towards Ankara. 'An analogous political cautiousness', Raphail stressed, 'is kept also by the American Ambassador, so that an unusual atmosphere of semi-tense relations has been created, which without of course upsetting unduly official Turkish circles, nonetheless annoys them considerably ... The two ambassadors, as time passes, instead of being mollified express ever

431. More extensively, A.M., 2BB 7/I/5, 'La tension turco-britannique de février 1944'; February 25, 1944; see also, De Larosière (Istanbul) to Ministère de la Marine, February 13 – March 9, 1944.

432. S. DERINGIL, *op. cit.*, p. 71-72.

433. On the crisis, extensively, A.M., 2BB 7/I/5, De Larosière, March 9, 1944.

434. *The Times*, February 9, 28, 1944.

435. The Parliamentary debates, 5th series, 400 (16 May to 16 June 1944), London 1944, p. 764-765. The British Prime Minister displayed – according to Menemencioglu – 'a lack of elementary tactfulness' (I.A.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/3, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 29 – June 2, 1944).

436. I.A.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/2, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2, 1944; see also, F.O. 371/169065, Jamieson to Barnes (Athens), April 25, 1963.

more hostile feelings towards the Turk officials, whom they accuse openly of insincerity and bad politics'⁴³⁷. Were the Allies, in these conditions, forced to postpone the operations in this area indefinitely? The answer could be affirmative⁴³⁸. Meanwhile, in his secret instructions, after abandoning, for the time being, the thoughts of such an operation, Churchill noted that he was 'no longer in the same hurry to get Turkey in', and added: 'This however will remain our purpose, and it is only the method that is changed'⁴³⁹. Obviously, he was referring to the employment of different means of pressure, including economic⁴⁴⁰. In fact, this attitude was maintained until the volte-face of the Turks in July and their breaking off of relations with Germany, in August 1944.

The issue of Turkey's entry into the war or of its possible participation in an Allied operation in the Dodecanese remained unchanged until the beginning of 1945. Greece was liberated from Axis rule in October 1944. Still, shortly before Liberation and after the severing of Ankara's diplomatic relations with Germany, Prime Minister George Papandreou had expressed to London and Washington his concern 'that there is talk among officials of the possible use of Turkish troops in the event of operations against the Dodecanese'⁴⁴¹.

437. The same paper had referred 1 September 1943 to the understanding that the allies had shown towards Ankara; the Americans adopted a similar attitude, S.D.R., MA, 5/5, D/T. 1246/1.

438. *Grand Strategy...*, vol. V, p. 176-177. Von Papen reached the same conclusion, considering that Ankara intended to avoid participation in the war (F. VON PAPEN, *Memoirs...*, p. 120-121).

439. PREM. 3/447/6, Churchill to Eden, January 24, 1944.

440. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 2/2, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

441. G. Papandreou to the London and Washington Embassies, August 2, 1944, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 103.

It is indicative that, in view of the cancelation of the Turkish participation in the military operations in the South-eastern Aegean, Sir Ronald Storrs, the former Governor of Cyprus during the 1931 revolt, expressed a strongly anti-Greek attitude: if the Turks had entered the war early in 1944, they might have been able to capture the Dodecanese. The British officials distanced themselves from these views: 'Sir Ronald Storrs does not of course represent His Majesty's Government in any way, and what he writes expresses purely his own personal opinion. I can give you the fullest assurance that we have never contemplated giving the Dodecanese to Turkey if she were to enter the war. The *Empire News*, in which the article was published, is, as you know, an unimportant Sunday newspaper, and I cannot help feeling that the best course is to ignore the article. If an official dementi were issued, I think that this might defeat its own end by drawing unnecessary attention to the matter'. (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Dragoumis Papers, 63, A.R. Dew (F.O.) to Romanos, August 12, 1944; even more explicit, Aghnides (London), August 1, 1944.)

Raphail informed Papandreou that, to his knowledge, no such project of common Anglo-Turkish action in the islands existed⁴⁴². Aghnides was similarly assured by Sargent that there was no truth in the rumour and that 'nothing had happened to change British policy regarding the Dodecanese'. As to the rumour about the use of Turkish forces in such an operation, the British Under-Secretary made it clear that 'obviously it could not be true because Turkey was not at war with Germany...'⁴⁴³.



442. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Dragoumis Papers, 63, Raphail to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 30, 1944.

443. F.O. 371/43755, Aghnides to Eden, August 4, 1944; Sargent [note], August 4, 1944.

CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL PHASE OF THE WAR

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1945 the greater part of the Dodecanese as well as Crete were still under German occupation; but the outcome of the war had already been decided. The Allies had prevailed on all fronts and the end of the conflict was in sight. Greece had been liberated in October 1944. Turkey was to declare war on Germany and Japan on 23 February 1945. Since spring 1944 the discontinuance of chrome supplies to Germany, the settlement of the difficulties caused by disguised German vessels passing through the Straits and, finally, the rupture with Berlin had undoubtedly contributed to the improvement of relations between Ankara and the Allies. The declaration of war, as a last step, was obviously a response to the decision taken by the 'Big Three' at the Crimea Conference, that nations at war with the Axis before 1 March would qualify for membership of the United Nations. Previously, Eden, in answer to a question by Attlee, had also declared to the House of Commons that only the nations that had fought in the war would have the right of participation in the Peace Conference⁴⁴⁴.

In a parallel way, it was only reasonable that Greece was to intensify as well as to promote openly her demand for the Dodecanese. Greek Prime Minister Venizelos sent a telegram to Churchill, asking for their immediate annexation to his country⁴⁴⁵. Climactic event in this direction was the official visit of the Regent, Archbishop Damaskinos, on board the battleship 'Averoff', to Rhodes, on 15 May 1945, a few days after the Germans' departure, and his assurance to the people of the islands that they will be forever part of Greece. 'You have received liberty and you will never be deprived of it. My pilgrimage is official recognition of the spiritual and intellectual ties uniting the Dodecanese with Greece'. The head of the enthusing inhabitants, the Mayor of Rhodes,

444. I.A.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/3, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 22, 1944.

445. It was reported from BBC news on May 12th: W.O. 106/3260, Peterson to Foreign Office, May 22, 1945.

had referred to this freedom as now 'officially recognized', with this visit⁴⁴⁶. Immediately after his return to Athens, the Archbishop himself was to confide to Leeper that 'he had never in his life seen such deep joy expressed by a whole population'⁴⁴⁷.

Was Turkey's entry into the war likely to disrupt the progress towards a settlement of the Dodecanese question or to create new conditions in the Aegean? Indeed, one wonders whether the declaration of war might create second thoughts in Turkish public opinion or even among the policy-makers, regarding a more active involvement in the Dodecanese affair. Some tendencies to such a course may well be strengthened. Another interesting sign would be the expression of a wish to participate in any operations against German forces in this area. The day after the Turkish declaration of war, an editorial by *The Times* characteristically noted:

... The pivotal position of Turkey in the Near and Middle East and the keen interest of her statesmen in a satisfactory settlement of Balkan and Aegean issues well qualify her for a part in the discussions which will shape the future of a highly important region ... The Turkish Armed forces may assist their allies to put an end to the nuisance caused by the continued presence of German garrisons and Fascist remnants in Rhodes and other Aegean islands⁴⁴⁸.

This remark by the leading British newspaper, but also similar ones by important papers in Europe and in the United States⁴⁴⁹, reflected also the anxiety of the Greek officials:

Just as it became known that Turkey was about to declare war on Germany, the possibility of the active participation of the Turkish army in the Allied operations started to be examined. There were many rumours ... but one of them attracted everybody's attention, namely

446. *N.Y. Times*, May 16 (Greece salute Dodecanese); May 19 (Greeks Hail Move by Regent in Isles). See also, A.S.D., Dodecaneso/B. 16, Sottosegretariato per la stampa e le informazioni to Min. degli Esteri, June 5, 1945. For more see, W.O. 106/3260, General Wavell to Under-Secretary of State (W.O.), June 1945.

447. W.O. 106/3261, [Leeper] to Foreign Office, May 19, 1945; also, Leeper to F.O., May 17, 1945.

448. *The Times*, February 24, 1945.

449. I.A.A.Y.E., C.O./1945, Diamantopoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 25, 1945.

the undertaking by the Turkish army of the operation to clear the Dodecanese, which were still occupied by the Germans. Important persons, holding high positions in the political or military hierarchy, MPs close to the government and serious journalists, regarded such a move by the Turkish army as natural⁴⁵⁰.

'I know from past experience', the new Foreign Minister, Ioannis Sophianopoulos, informed Aghnides, 'that such a military operation by Turkey would not be welcome'; and he also added, asking for British support: 'but this does not mean that we must not face the prospect of active Turkish co-operation'⁴⁵¹.

Without delay, the Minister in London asked the British government to refuse to consider a possible request by Turkey 'to liberate those islands of the Aegean which are still occupied by German forces'⁴⁵²:

It is obvious that such a request was designed to complicate the issue of the Dodecanese, through the creation of a Turkish title, with the object either of preventing the cession of the islands to Greece, or of ceding some of them to Turkey. We think that Turkey's belated entry into the war could not justify such unfairness towards Greece. Anyway, we imagine that no such operation against the islands is being contemplated and that the surrender of the forces on them should take place at the moment when the truce is reached⁴⁵³.

Should the Allies, nevertheless, contemplate the recapture of the islands by military operations – Aghnides concluded speaking to Alexander Cadogan –, it would only be fair 'to use Greek rather than Turkish troops, for that end'⁴⁵⁴. A similar representation was also made in Washington⁴⁵⁵.

The British and the Americans responded favourably to the Greek request. In his reply, Cadogan tried to ease Athens' worries: firstly, his government's

450. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1945, Sophianopoulos to Aghnides, February 26, 1945; Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 3, 1945.

451. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1945, Sophianopoulos to Aghnides, February 26, 1945.

452. F.O. 371/48342, Aghnides to Cadogan, February 24, 1945.

453. According to the cable he received from Athens, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1945, [Sophianopoulos] to [Aghnides], February 24, 1945.

454. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1945, Aghnides to Cadogan, February 24, 1945.

455. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y./1945, Diamantopoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 27, 1945.

policy regarding the Aegean islands remained as stated previously; secondly, the talks with Ankara on its entry into the war were not accompanied by any promise to give something in exchange, such as the liberation of the islands by the Turks; thirdly, even if they asked for such a thing, he did not think that the British government would consent⁴⁵⁶. On the same day, even before receiving information from London, the new Ambassador to Ankara, Peterson, reported to the Foreign Office: 'I assume we do not wish to draw the Turks into offensive action against German-held islands... [The] Turks are not in a position to take any action by themselves without sea and to some extent air support from us'⁴⁵⁷. For their part, the Americans pointed out to the Greek Minister in Washington that 'the fact of the Turkish declaration of war adds nothing, on the moral level, to the whole evolution of the Turkish attitude during the war, and the prestige of Greece is such that no worry should be created to the Greek people'⁴⁵⁸. On the next day, his counterpart in Ankara, obviously anxious, received similar assurances from both the Allied Powers: 'As concluded from my conversations with Ambassadors of Britain and America, there is no thought of the Allies seeking any active participation of the Turkish army in operations. Both also preclude the possibility of unilateral action of Turkey on islands'⁴⁵⁹.

This position was adopted and steadily applied in London and Washington. The Foreign Office noted additionally that although it seemed unlikely that the Turks would take such action without Allied help, it was in order to approach the Turkish government and to dissuade them from putting any such idea into practice: 'We should not want the Turks to attack any of these islands even without calling on us for assistance, as this would certainly lead to difficulties with the Greeks'⁴⁶⁰. The British military tended to reach the same conclusion: following consultations with the Chiefs of Staff, Laskey minuted to the War Office that he did not think that Turkey's entry into the war need affect Allied policy: 'It has been agreed that there will be no question of Turkey's undertaking military operations against the islands'⁴⁶¹. The French

456. I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y./1945, Aghnides (telegr.), February 26, 1945.

457. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to Foreign Office, February 26, 1945.

458. I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y./1945, Diamantopoulos, February 27, 1945.

459. R. Raphael to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 27, 1945, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 107-108.

460. F.O. 371/48342, P.F. Howard to Colonel C.R. Price (War Cabinet Office), March 6, 1945.

461. F.O. 371/48342, Laskey to Major Reid (War Office), March 14, 1945.

Naval Attaché, also stressing that 'the Turks are not taking part in any military operation', observed that 'they could, for example, attempt to liberate certain islands in the Dodecanese that are still occupied by the Germans, but the Allies do not want this, for fear that the Turks may later find the pretext for laying claim to the islands'⁴⁶². Moreover, even the Turks themselves hastened to make clear that they had no intention of taking any action in the islands. The Foreign Minister categorically disclaimed these rumours, 'which have worried our friends the Greeks', and added: 'They are wrong to worry, because the Turkish Government is not thinking of doing anything in Dodecanese'⁴⁶³. Two weeks later, Rappahl confirmed that the time for the participation of the Turkish army in a military operation had, in practice, passed without Ankara showing any intention to do so; as to the Dodecanese, he went on to note that 'there is no movement in this direction observable in Turkey, apart from the moving of small units which the competent British services have asked for, in order to guard more effectively the Turkish coastline opposite the islands still in German hands'⁴⁶⁴. How could one interpret this attitude? As Rappahl reported from Ankara, '[t]his entirely passive posture has surprised even British official circles here'. The Greek diplomat then wondered how it was possible for the Turkish government to refrain from seeking even minor military participation in order to strengthen its political position. His final conclusion was that Ankara dared not to go any further, because it realized 'that any action of the kind would not receive a favourable response in its circles, and the impression was that, given that relations with Soviet Russia were so confused, the removal of a single soldier or of a single artillery piece from national territory would be a crime against the country'⁴⁶⁵.

Since the Turkish government refrained from showing any interest in taking part in operations in the Eastern Aegean, it is possible to suggest that officially Ankara had definitely abandoned, as impracticable, any idea of putting forward a claim to the Dodecanese. Foreign observers noted, with some surprise, that even the information that Archbishop Damaskinos was on his

462. A.M., 2BB 7/1/6, Brebant (Ankara): Compte-rendu, 13 avril 1945.

463. R. Rappahl to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 4, 1945 in *The Dodecanese*, p. 108.

464. R. Rappahl to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 17, 1945 in *The Dodecanese*, p. 108-109.

465. *Ibidem*.

way to Rhodes 'to carry Greece's salute to the liberated Dodecanese', did not arouse any adverse comment in the Turkish Press⁴⁶⁶. Raphail referred to 'the severest guidance' that the government had given to the Press 'to avoid any relevant publication'⁴⁶⁷. A few days earlier, the Turkish Prime Minister himself had replied 'in a most absent-minded manner' when, during a secret session of the People's Party, an MP asked him to do 'whatever is needed to secure the Turkish interests in the Dodecanese'⁴⁶⁸. Finding it difficult to understand, due to idiosyncrasy and tradition, the arguments of the Greeks, which were based on an appeal to the principle of nationalities – overwhelming majority of the Greek element in the population, violent imposition of Ottoman rule for five hundred years –, the Turks countered these, cautiously because of circumstances, with the arguments that the Dodecanese were a natural projection of Anatolia and, furthermore, in 1912 had been taken away by 'coup d' état' from their legal sovereign, the Ottoman Empire..⁴⁶⁹

However, it is still necessary to assess the impact on the Turkish government of some unofficial movements aimed at advancing an interest in the future status of the islands. A first important indication of this could be found in a discussion of the acting Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, Ali Türkğeldi, with the British Ambassador, on 13 May. In view of Turkey's 'real interest' in the Dodecanese, he stressed the necessity of his government being consulted about their disposal; but, pretending that he was expressing only his personal views, he said also that 'though Turkey was greatly concerned about the disposal of all the Dodecanese those of undue importance to him were the group of five – Leros, Kalymnos, Cos, Nisyros and Symi – which were more or less in or close to the Turkish territorial waters and which bore strongly on Turkish security'. Without disavowing the assurances which had been given to Athens, he suggested that 'initial implications and significance of some innocuous general remark had been exaggerated'⁴⁷⁰.

466. A.A.E., Turquie/31, Maugras to Bidault, May 15, 1945; Regarding the profound impression created on the Americans, Grèce/59, Bonnet to Bidault, May 19, 1945.

467. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-1948, 2/2, Raphail to Foreign Minister, May 16 and 17, 1945.

468. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-1948, 2/2, Raphail to Foreign Minister, May 13, 1945.

469. See indicatively, A.M., 2BB 7/I/6, Brebant to Ministère de la Marine, August 30, 1945.

470. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to Foreign Office, May 13, 1945; also, W.O. 106/3260, Peterson to Foreign Office, May 13, 1945.

There is no evidence that the Greeks were informed about this conversation; but they had previously reacted saying that 'Greco-Turkish relations are surely more likely to suffer from discussions which might prove unsatisfactory than by His Majesty's Government taking the initiative in favour of Greece'⁴⁷¹. 'The Turks, not without sadness, saw Greece confirm her claims but the circumstances obliged them to hide their discontent', the French minister noted⁴⁷². Nevertheless, the British did not really seem to worry. Peterson himself hastened to point out that Türkgeledi was 'only a stop gap': '[he] was obviously merely carrying out instructions, did not seem unduly concerned and I came away with the impression that Turk [sic] felt entitled mildly to remonstrate in face of these press reports but that they will not be inordinately difficult if they are made party to discussions and not faced with "fait accompli"⁴⁷³. This assumption was affirmed two days later, when the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf also of his Prime Minister, told Peterson that he hoped that 'it would be realized that the future of these islands was of great importance to Turkey from the point of view of her security'; he also noted that 'Turkey had nothing but the friendliest sentiments towards Greece but would welcome an opportunity of expressing her own views on this question of the Dodecanese'. When Peterson replied that he felt 'no doubt at all that the islands ought to go to Greece', the Turkish official urged that their interests should not be forgotten and that his country 'should be allowed to engage in direct discussions with Greece'. The British diplomat's final conclusion was based on the general tone of these remarks: 'if Turkey is allowed to formulate her views, she will lay claim to one or two of the islands in addition to Castellorizo, but that she will not press her claims'⁴⁷⁴.

This exchange of views sheds ample light on the factors that shaped the final Turkish position, but also on the role of the United Kingdom. The general direction of British policy, as this clearly appears in the diplomatic correspondence of the previous years, was reaffirmed by Eden in his instructions to the Ankara Embassy on 3 April: 'It has always been our intention that all these

471. W.O. 106/3260, Leeper to F.O., April 5, 1945.

472. A.A.E., Europe 1944-1949/49, Maugras to Bidault, May 18, 1945.

473. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to F.O., May 13, 1945.

474. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to F.O., May 15, 1945.

Islands should go to Greece after the war⁴⁷⁵. Furthermore, the Prime Minister himself reaffirmed this position on 5 May: 'All we wish to do is to make it clear that at the Peace settlement His M's Government, in so far as they are concerned, will be prepared to support Greek claim⁴⁷⁶. Eden had expressed his preference, nevertheless, that the Greeks and Turks reach an agreement on this subject, before London gave official support to the Hellenic claim⁴⁷⁷. To this end, Peterson replied two days later that the Turks 'ought to be reminded in repeated statements that they have no claims to make on Greece nor questions outstanding with her⁴⁷⁸'; and he pressed this view on the Turkish officials again and again. Yet, on 17 May, a few days after Germany's surrender, the Foreign Office instructed him to inform Ankara that London had no intention of reaching an immediate decision about the future status of the islands or of handing them immediately to the Greeks; this was also stated explicitly in Parliament, on 16 May. Britain, the Foreign Office made clear, would insist on the advantages of promoting Greek-Turkish discussions on this issue: if the Turks were ready to assume that all the Dodecanese islands would eventually pass under Greek sovereignty, these discussions could well lead to a useful agreement. Nevertheless, the service government in Greece 'would be debarred by its very nature from making any concessions' whatever⁴⁷⁹.

With a view to supporting the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece, the British government, which still held the initiative on this issue among the Western Allies, also had to take into account the international political situation. According to the War Cabinet's decisions, tension over Trieste made it important 'that the future of the Dodecanese, like that of other disputed territories, should be held over until the Peace settlement; consequently, no statement could be issued in the immediate future pledging them to support Greek claim'. In Athens, it had been declared in early April to expect that the

475. See, above, p. 61.

476. PREM. 3/124/4, Prime Minister to Washington Embassy, [May 5, 1945].

477. F.O. 371/48263, Eden to Peterson, April 3, 1945.

478. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to Foreign Office, April 5, 1945.

479. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to Foreign Office, May 17, 1945. Leeper, indeed, argued that 'the present Greek government could not usefully enter into discussions with the Turkey about the future of the Dodecanese as its provisional character would preclude any sort of concession' (F.O. 371/48342, Leeper to Foreign Office, May 20, 1945).

British would champion the Greek cause publicly⁴⁸⁰. Nonetheless, the Regent, Archbishop Damaskinos, had to state, in parallel with the Allies, that the Greek claims 'must wait until the Peace Conference'⁴⁸¹. In the meantime it was indeed decided the allies would provide for a definite solution only in that context⁴⁸². Prior to this, the British had carefully made sure that no military initiative of the Greek side would be undertaken, which could be held as a 'fait accompli'. Indeed, the Greek troops that landed in the Archipelago in May 1945, had not been sent to the islands from the mainland, but were a contingent of the Allied force which had been operating in that area during the German occupation⁴⁸³.

The Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed to the British Ambassador satisfaction at having been informed on this in due time⁴⁸⁴. Was it then possible that even the postponement of a formal British declaration on the Dodecanese might encourage Ankara to put forward some, even minor, claims? There is no evidence that the Turkish government was reviewing its stance on this issue. It is indicative that in late July the former Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüşti Aras, who had joined the Opposition, suggested autonomy as a regime to apply in the Dodecanese, under the guarantees of Turkey, Greece

480. W.O. 106/3260, Leeper to F.O., April 5, 1945.

481. In a note, destined for internal use, after pointing out that 'the question of employing Greek troops in the Dodecanese has been raised on a number of occasions in the past, it was yet stressed: "We then thought that there was some possibility of an offensive against the islands being launched, and we promised the Greeks that we would recommend to the Military Authorities that Greek troops should take part in any attack. The position has now changed and apart from minor action, such as small scale raids or bombardments, there is no intention of attacking the German garrisons still on the islands. When the Germans surrender, the islands will be governed by a British military administration and the question of Greek troops forming part of the small garrison might well be raised. We could put this to the War Office, but I am almost sure they would oppose it on the same grounds as they are now opposed to having a Greek adviser on the Military Governor's staff. These grounds are that, so long as the administration has to maintain an official attitude of complete impartiality, they do not want to do anything to encourage agitation in the islands for a union with Greece;" (F.O. 371/48342, Laskey (note), April 9, 1945).

482. The Americans had appeared to endorse this view. See the exchange between London and Washington at F.O., 371/48342.

483. According to the Prime Minister's statement, on June 16, 1945 (PREM. 3/124/4). This was also stressed by the Italian side: A.S.D., Dodecaneso/B. 16, Cavalletti (Roma) to Ministero degli Esteri, April 16, 1945. Also, W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Leeper, May 16, 1945.

484. F.O. 371/48342, Peterson to Foreign Office, May 18, 1945.

and Great Britain⁴⁸⁵. His initiative coincided with the Soviet attempt to defeat the policy of building up a strong and independent Greece and Turkey, friendly to Great Britain⁴⁸⁶. Nevertheless, public opinion in Athens was particularly worried⁴⁸⁷. But, the Ankara officials noted that such views were entirely personal and without any official backing; even more, according to Peterson, 'they welcomed the opportunity after his opposition activities to show him up in bad light'⁴⁸⁸. Aras himself had emphasized that his views were 'entirely personal'⁴⁸⁹. Besides, it has been suggested that this idea was connected with his well-known sympathies for the Soviet Union⁴⁹⁰; and Moscow had let them appear in this contentious zone⁴⁹¹. So, Aras's initiative had to do with the Soviet attempt to foment disagreements between Athens and Ankara or even to prevent the annexation of the Dodecanese to Greece⁴⁹². Moreover, the possible promotion

485. It was an article published in the newspaper *Tan* on July 24 (A.S.D., D/B. 16). Moreover, Rüştü Aras repeated his proposals on August 8: A.S.D., D/B. 16, Ambasciata d'Italia to Ministero degli Esteri, August 9, 1945. For a general view, W.O. 106/3260, Peterson to F.O., Aug. 11, 1945. On the Turkish press reactions, I.Δ.A.Y.E., 8/5.

486. Sir ERNEST LLEWELLYN WOODWARD, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, London 1962, p. 558.

487. I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y., 6/4/1945. Also, A.S.D., D/B. 16, Ambasciata d'Italia (Ankara) to Ministero degli Esteri, August 6, 1945; for more extensive reference see, D/B. 16.

488. F.O. 371/50791, Peterson to Foreign Office, August 10, 1945. The article of the Turkish politician was not widely noted in the Turkish press (A.A.E., Turquie/31, Maugras to Bidault, August 4, August 19, 1945).

489. F.O. 371/50791, Peterson to F.O., August 10, 1945; W.O. 106/3260, Peterson to F.O. August 14, 1945.

490. See, A.S.D., D/B16, Ambasciata d'Italia (Ankara) to Ministero degli Esteri, July 31; August 17, 1945. On Aras' steady and strong pro-Soviet tendency, see also previous reports: I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/3, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 14, 24; July, 5, 10, 24, 1944.

491. See indicatively the information of the *N.Y. Times* and the *France Presse* agency: A.S.D., D/B. 16, Ambasciata d'Italia to Ministero degli Esteri, August 10, 17, 18, 1945.

492. A.A.E., Europe (1944 - 1949), vol. 59 (Îles du Dodécanèse), Baezen (Athens) to Bidault, August 1, 1945; Maugras to Bidault, August 4, 1945. Also, F.O. 371/50791, Peterson to Foreign Office, August 10, 1945. In a note which referred to the whole course of this issue for 1945, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that 'some Turkish newspapers have not ceased, from time to time, to mention the need to place emphasis on the security of the Asia Minor coast opposite of the Dodecanese', and also pointed to the Rushdi Aras article. Yet, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded that 'Turkey, as can be concluded by the latest statements of the Turkish Prime Minister to Turkish journalists in a secret meeting, does not seem to oppose the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece' (I.Δ.A.Y.E., 1946 Claims/75, Note on the Latest Activities of

of Rüştü was aimed at undermining the pro-western İnönü and Saracoğlu, to the advantage of a 'democratic government' called 'anti-fascist'⁴⁹³. The Greek Minister in Ankara accepted these scenarios:

I have the impression that this article is indeed a personal initiative of the well-known meddlesome former Foreign Minister, which does not correspond with the policy of the Turkish government, which Aras anyway opposes (...) Anyway, the publication of this article in *Tan*, a newspaper inspired by the circles of the Soviet Embassy with which Aras is in constant contact, makes me cautious. I think that after the reply of the [Turkish] Under-Secretary for the Press, we should avoid further noise in order not to push the Turkish Press into a general debate, which will produce no good and which may benefit (or even be desired by) Soviet propaganda⁴⁹⁴.

The Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry was even more outspoken. In a conversation with Raphail, a few days later, he expressed his strong disapproval at the publication of this article, written, as he said, by a 'half-madman', who, without understanding the real interests of Turkey, allowed himself to be inspired by Soviet circles: 'He did not realize that since the issue of the Straits and of Russian bases on the islands have been put forward, even the discussion of granting autonomy to even a part of them may entail most serious dangers'⁴⁹⁵.

Thus, Aras's article not only led to a reaffirmation of Ankara's consent to the granting of the Dodecanese to Greece, but also confirmed the connection of this issue with security, which was the maximum aim of the Turkish government. This is the picture which emerges also from the record of the conversation between the new Turkish Ambassador to London and his Greek counterpart on 28 October 1945:

the Ministry on National Claims (Directory of Political Affairs, Balkan Department), 7 December 1945). A.S.D., D/B. 16; see also, *La Turquie*, August 8, 1945. According to Aghnides, the Soviets tried to secure the cession of the Dodecanese to Turkey, in order to secure their claims on Kars and Ardahan! (A.Φ.Λ./A.Σ.Μ., Aghnides interview, June 1972).

493. A.M., 2 BB 7/1/6, Brebant: compte-rendu, April 13, 1945.

494. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 2/2, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 31, 1945.

495. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 2/2, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 6, 1945.

[He] was the first to mention the Dodecanese and appeared anxious because the final decision on this has been delayed. He persistently asked me whether I have any information on the role that the Soviet Union played lately in London in deferring a decision in our favour. When I replied that I had heard that Russia asked that the Dodecanese be discussed together with the Balkans, he remarked that this could unfortunately mean much. He also took the initiative of adding that Aras's article arguing in favour of autonomy for the Dodecanese, which was published some time ago, was certainly inspired. From this conversation I concluded that the officials here not only have no objection to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece, but also resent the delays on this issue, which hold dangers⁴⁹⁶.

In conclusion, it can be maintained with documentation that by the onset of the peace process the coincidence of positive views of the great majority of the parties interested in Eastern Mediterranean issues on the need to cede the whole of the Dodecanese to Greece had been secured. Protagonists in this were the two strong allies of Greece during the Second World War, Great Britain and the United States. The Italian diplomats familiar with the issue were already speaking openly of an 'Anglo-American decision' in favour of ceding the area to Greece⁴⁹⁷. On the morrow of the armistice, the indications of this positive interest had been reinforced. The fact that the Regent Damaskinos was accompanied by Leeper and General Scobie to Piraeus, on his departure for the Dodecanese, and that he was decorated by General Paget while in Rhodes, have been considered as indicative of the British attitude towards the Dodecanese question⁴⁹⁸. Furthermore, government officials must have known that the Regent had requested Churchill's personal permission 'to visit Rhodes in a Greek destroyer, to deliver to the people the greetings of the Greek nation and to celebrate Mass in the cathedral'. The British Prime Minister had in fact no objection to his visit; moreover, he asked Field Marshal Alexander to attend to Damaskinos's safety⁴⁹⁹. It was precisely

496. I.A.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 2/2, Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 28, 1945.

497. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Tarchiani (Washington), 28 Luglio 1945; Zoppi (Roma) to R. Ambasciata (Londra-Ankara-Mosca-Parigi), August 2, 1945.

498. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Sottosegretario per la Stampa e le Informazioni to Ministero degli Esteri, June 6, 1945.

499. PREM. 3/124/4, Leeper to Churchill, May 9, 1945; Churchill to Leeper, May 10, 1945. W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Leeper, May 10, 1945.

then that the pro-government Press in Turkey spoke of the 'docile and zealous' towing of the British line on the issue, given the more general benefits that Ankara awaited from London – among which its support against the USSR was also a priority⁵⁰⁰. The resignation at this time of Menemencioğlu, who was considered to have been largely responsible for Turkey's refusal to enter the war on the Allies' side, from the post of Foreign Minister, was considered indicative of these tendencies⁵⁰¹. Moreover, the confirmation, during the same period, of the information that Moscow, having adopted an enigmatic stance throughout the war⁵⁰², sought to secure naval bases in the Dodecanese, south of the Straits, was to strengthen this decision⁵⁰³. The radical opposition, furthermore, to the Greek government of the day strengthened its opposition⁵⁰⁴. In view of the revival of the traditional rivalry on a global scale between the Anglo-Saxon world and Russia, the annexation of the islands in the Southeast Aegean by a friendly Greece was an overtly desirable solution⁵⁰⁵.

The Western Allies were trying merely to find a procedural framework which would not damage Ankara's prestige when the latter consented to the decision to annexe the islands, probably demilitarized, to the Greek State. After all, the British had turned in this direction from early on⁵⁰⁶, even though they officially admitted that against such a proposal 'it could, of course, be argued that the mainland of Asia Minor is equally a menace to the Dodecanese'. However, in the event of a more drastic reaction being called for in order to accomplish this aim, London would not be prepared to step back. This became clear during the Council of Foreign Ministers, when Molotov appeared opposed to an immediate

500. A.M., 2BB 7/1/6, Brebant, June 7, 1945.

501. W.O. 106/3260, Winant (London) to Secretary of State, June 16, 1945.

502. Replying to a Greek demarche on the Dodecanese, on 24 February 1943, Molotov had limited himself to remarking that he was noting it (I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, A/Φ2/15, Politis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 27, 1943; March 19, 1943).

503. For relevant Soviet ambitions, see a report by the Associated Press in Ankara, F.O. Brien (*Il Tempo*, 5 agosto 1945); also, A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, R. Ambasciata (Ankara) to Ministero degli Esteri, 10 agosto 1945; R. Ambasciata (Londra), 3 agosto 1945; Tarchiani (Washington), 17 novembre 1945.

504. W.O. 106/3260, F.O. to Washington – Moscow Embassies, April 15, 1945.

505. A.S.D., Dodecanneso/B. 16, Sottosegretariato per la Stampa e le Informazioni to Ministero degli Esteri, 19 maggio 1945; Tarchiani (Washington), July 28; Zoppi (Roma) to R. Ambasciata (Londra-Ankara-Mosca-Parigi), August 2, 1945.

506. W.O. 106/3260, Peterson to F.O., April 6, 1945.

decision. According to the new British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, his Soviet counterpart probably had in mind a process of blackmail 'so that eventually, after Greek elections, a more amenable Government in Greece would agree to a Russian base in the Dodecanese as the price of cession'; and he concluded:

[We] have every interest in pressing for a speedy decision and no reason to oppose demilitarization. A failure to get the Islands for Greece, though they are now in our physical possession, would contrast unfavourably with Russia's ability to distribute ex-enemy territory to her satellites, would lower our prestige in Greece and elsewhere, and would weaken the Greek Government, who are already under attack for their failure to get anything out of the peace settlement, and who might be unable to carry on if even this indisputable claim is denied to them⁵⁰⁷.

A few days earlier, during a debate in the House of Commons, Churchill, answering Bevin, had given a sombre description of what was happening in the areas under Russian control⁵⁰⁸.

The decision of the British, in accord with the American government, 'to press for immediate agreement on the cession of the Islands (including Castellorizo) to Greece and their demilitarization', was the natural outcome firstly of a policy adopted early in the war and followed throughout its

507. F.O. 371/48342, The Dodecanese: memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, September 19, 1945. Indeed, in a new note he circulated on 26 October, Bevin considered that the time had come to act on the 19 September proposal; thus, the British government decided to hand the 'de facto' administration of the islands over to Greece. The Americans had no objection. The secretary of State, James Byrnes, left 'the same anxiety' (F.O. 371/48342, Foreign Office minute, December 13, 1945). The Turkish government had to be informed about it before the release of any declaration. The Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, did not appear to do anything which could prevent the British from proceeding with Bevin's suggestion (F.O. 371/48342, Bevin to F.O., November 7, 1945). The final decision on the issue had to be made by the United Nations. But it was decided that no immediate steps had to be taken for the transfer of the islands to Greece and that the decision about their future status 'must await the establishment of more stable political conditions in Greece'. Thus, the definite settlement of Dodecanese question took place in 1946, at the Paris Peace Conference, when the islands' union with Greece was decided. Yet, this solution was based on the fundament framework which had been created during and in connection with the events of the Second World War.

508. SIR ERNEST LLEWELLYN WOODWARD, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War...*, p. 568-569.

duration, and secondly of the regional realities which had emerged, during the war years. The other Western Allies had followed the same line⁵⁰⁹. A few days after the end of the war in Europe, Field Marshal Jan Smuts told Greek Foreign Minister Sophianopoulos that 'even if the formal cession of the Dodecanese to Greece has not yet taken place because of international complications, we still can be sure about the final positive outcome'⁵¹⁰. Moreover, among the factors that determined the final incorporation of the Dodecanese in Greece should be included also the effects of the rivalry between the Allied Great Powers, intensified by the passage of time. The counterbalancing hegemonic tendencies between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union had a crucial effect on shaping events. Faced with the danger of expansion of the Soviet zone of control into the maritime space of the Aegean, Great Britain and the United States opted for the solution of ceding all the islands to Greece. Moreover, as was deduced from recent statements by the Turkish Prime Minister to the representatives of the Press, in a private secret meeting, he did not show his country to be opposed to the ceding of the Dodecanese to Greece – despite the reference of some newspapers to the security need of the Asia Minor coasts opposite the Dodecanese⁵¹¹. Furthermore, the priority given to Greece over any other regional claimant was, to a significant degree, dependent on the role it had played during the war. Indeed, beyond the expected recognition of the doctrine of self-determination, which the Allies had constantly invoked, the sense of solidarity, as well as the respect for the events that had taken place during the war, would advocate, even in its final phase, in favour of choosing a solution capable of satisfying the Greeks⁵¹².

509. For France, A.S.D., Dodecaneso/B. 16, Benzoni (Paris) to Ministero degli Esteri, June 14, 1945. See Aghnides' extremely positive recollections of Bevin on the Dodecanese issue in A.Φ.Α.: Α.Σ.Μ., Th. Aghnides' oral statement, June 1972.

510. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., K.Y., 1945/2, Record Sophianopoulos-Smuts, June 6, 1945.

511. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Directory of Political Affairs, Balkan Department: 1946, Claims/75, Note on the Latest Activities on National Claims, December 7, 1945.

512. For the final course of the Dodecanesian problem, see also St. G. XYDIS, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947. Prelude to the 'Truman Doctrine'*, Thessaloniki 1963; R. HOLLAND and D. MARKIDES, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1850-1960*, Oxford University Press 2006, p. 189-212.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMPLIANCE OF ITALY

FULL APPLICATION OF THE POLICY to incorporate the Dodecanese in Greece was predicated on Rome too expressing her agreement. Italy, sovereign of the islands for over three decades⁵¹³, certainly did not have the competence or the power to determine their future fortunes: nonetheless, her compliance in contracting the final act was self-evident – typically and essentially. Her failure at the Albanian front, her essential inclusion among the ranks of the defeated, as well as the domestic transformation in 1943 played a decisive role.

Metaxas had, from early on, correctly assessed the role those factors implicated in the Dodecanese question were destined to play. When, in December 1940, there was thought to be a serious danger that the Italian garrisons in the islands would surrender to Turkey, he did not take it seriously like the British government⁵¹⁴. He pointed out that, in this case, the Allies could occupy the islands at once; on the other hand, he showed that he did not believe that Turkey would commit the ‘unfriendly act’ of occupying the Dodecanese⁵¹⁵. In fact, von Papen had drafted the proposal that Italy should proceed to concessions in this area to lure Turkey – as a bribe for remaining neutral. Specifically, he proposed, before, during and after the Italian attack on Greece, not only the guarantee of its security and territorial integrity, but also the promise of territorial exchanges, especially in the area of the Dodecanese⁵¹⁶. This was the idea that had reached the diplomatic circles⁵¹⁷;

513. R. SERTOLI-SALIS, *Le isole italiane dall'Egeo dell'occupazione alla sovranità*, Roma 1939; R. ORLANDI, *Le isole italiane dell'Egeo (1912-1947)*, Bari [1990]. Also, W.O. 106/3260, E.R. Warner, Italian title to the Dodecanese, August 1940.

514. PREM. 3/124/2, Commanders in chief to Chiefs of Staff, December 16, 1940.

515. W.O. 106/3260, The Dodecanese question 1940-1942, February 17, 1942.

516. *D.D.I.*, 9a s. (1939-1943), vol. VI, Roma 1986, p. 168-169 (De Peppo to Ciano, November 24, 1940). A.S.D., A.S.M.E., AP.1930-1945, Turchia, B. 30, Fasc: Rapporti italo-turchi, 1940, De Peppo (Istanbul), July 23, 1941.

517. *D.D.I.*, 8a s. (1935-39), vol. XIII, p. 359, De Peppo to Ciano, September, 1939.

however, in his memoirs he insists that such a proposal referred only to two small insignificant islands within the territorial waters of Turkey⁵¹⁸. In any case, the exact nature of his proposal has not been fully clarified by the recently published Italian diplomatic documents, but these do throw light on Ankara's position in this particular issue. In a conversation with von Papen, the Turkish Foreign Minister mentioned that Italy's good will towards his country would be confirmed by a settlement of the Dodecanese question, and 'mainly' of Castellorizo. Indeed, his declaration that in that case his government 'will put no obstacles in the way of the British forces which will be ready to occupy and administer the Archipelago' was reassuring for the Allied side⁵¹⁹. Even so, the furtherance of von Papen's initiative was to come up against the embarrassment of the Turks on the one hand and the unwillingness of the Italians to accept his proposals on the other⁵²⁰.

Believing in the power of the events, the correctness of Athens' choices was to be confirmed in the coming years. In vanquishing fascist Italy, Greece had made a first positive step in this direction. Emmanuel Tsouderos, as Prime Minister, continued to emphasize that 'the Dodecanese question remained an issue between Greece and Italy'⁵²¹. Even so, it would be reasonable in principle that the region's future would be dependent on the overall outcome of the dispute between the two States that had participated in the wider conflict. Even if the internal developments in Greece during the final phase of the war were not conducive to the country's decisive presence on the international stage, the stance of the allied Great Powers, the sensitive position of neutral Turkey and, in the end, the fall of the Fascist regime in defeated Italy, would contribute to the successful outcome of the demand of the inhabitants of the Dodecanese. The nature of the opposition between the sovereign power and the inhabitants precludes this interpretation⁵²².

518. F. VON PAPEN, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

519. W.O. 106/3260, Eden to Knatchbull-Hugessen, January 14, 1941.

520. *D.D.I.*, 9a s. (1939-1943), vol. VI, Roma, 1986, p. 168-169, 188 (De Peppo to Ciano, November 24, 1940; Ciano to De Peppo, November 27, 1940).

521. Tsouderos to the London and Washington Embassies, August 7, 1943 in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 211.

522. The following text is telling: 'When Mr. Crisford left Rhodes on the outbreak of war with Italy, he reported that practically all the inhabitants of the Dodecanese, other than the Italians, were anti-Fascist and potential 5th columnists, provided that they could be persuaded

Indeed, on the morrow of the armed clash and the capture of Greece by the Axis forces, von Papen hinted anew at the need for territorial concessions from Italy to Turkey. By now the agreement between Germany and Turkey, in June 1941, had proceeded, the Italian desire for contracting an analogous agreement between Russia and Ankara had been expressed, and the German invasion of the Soviet Union had taken place. The Axis powers – so the German ambassador believed – were already offering more than the British in order to satisfy possible Turkish claims in the direction also of the Aegean⁵²³. These

that the Allied forces were capable of defeating the regime which they loathed, but Italian propaganda had instilled doubts into their minds as to the certainty of an Allied victory. The Dodecanesians were waiting and praying for some evidence of the power of the Allied forces. The difficulty of getting Allied propaganda into the Islands was however great, as the Gestapo system adopted by the police was amazingly effective and efficient and the islanders were terrified of their masters. Politics could only be discussed in the most secret places. News did, however, circulate in a most mysterious way from island to island emanating from the Greek islands, Cyprus, Turkey and Haifa, and he considered that it should be possible to form a centre for the distribution of Allied propaganda through these channels. Traffic probably still continued between the Greek and Italian islands, and the crews of small vessels and fishing craft might be utilised for the distribution of leaflets in Greek. Up to the time of Italy's entry into the war, all Jewish traders and many of the better class Greeks had possessed wireless sets capable of picking up the English overseas broadcasts, and these listeners much appreciated the B.B.C.'s broadcast of news in Greek. Mr. Crisford understood, however, that after the outbreak of war with Italy, the Governor had forbidden the tuning in to foreign stations. If this was not the case, he suggested that broadcasts in Greek from London might be continued, possibly reinforced by Greek broadcasts from such centres as Jerusalem and Cairo. With regard to military operations, Mr. Crisford reported that the Italians were undoubtedly expecting to be attacked at Leros and Rhodes and had taken every precaution against invasion and sabotage. The inhabitants had been obliged to surrender every kind of weapon to the Italian authorities some time before Italy's entry into the war. All roads leading to military depots, air fields and harbours were barred to the Greek inhabitants and he thought that sabotage would be extremely difficult. On the other hand he considered that every possible means should be employed to impress on the Dodecanesians that their case was being sympathetically considered, and that the only possible chance of liberation lay in an Allied victory. The inhabitants anticipated that Leros alone of the Islands would be bombed because they thought that the Allies, knowing the sentiments of the Greek inhabitants, would spare the other islands, in order to avoid making victims among a people who were only too anxious to fight against the Italians'. (W.O. 106/3260, E.R. Warner: Italian title on the Dodecanese, August 1940).

523. A.S.D., A.P. 1930-1945, Turchia, B. 30, Fasc. italo-turchi, 1940, Embassy in Berlin, 19.6-1941; Discorso del 4 luglio 1941 del Presidente del consiglio alla Turchia; De Peppo to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23-7-1941.

intentions of the Turkish government seem to be confirmed by its position when, in the aftermath of the collapse of Italy, von Papen suggested to Ankara that Mussolini's Government should surrender the Dodecanese to Turkey. It was learnt later that Hitler had given his consent to his ambassador's proposal. However, Numan Menemencioglu replied that if the islands were surrendered to Turkey they would at once be handed over to Great Britain; even if the Badoglio Government had made such a proposal, his government could not entertain it because Italy's unconditional surrender had given the Allies a mortgage on all Italian possessions. Even before receiving information about this exchange from Menemencioglu, the Turkish Prime Minister had learnt that some such proposal was afoot; then, he made a statement in almost the same terms as those used by Numan to the German Ambassador. Nevertheless, on the eve of this gesture, Britain had expressed the opinion that the Turks were 'perfectly capable of accepting the surrender and occupying the islands, both to stake a claim on them and quite possibly force us out and prevent our using them in a way which might embroil Turkish neutrality or force Turkey to abandon it in our favour'⁵²⁴. Obviously, Ankara was adjusting her positions according to the prevailing international climate.

It was at this time that Count Sforza, in whom the British saw 'the chief political mind of the newly restored liberal Government'⁵²⁵, had made clear that the Italian side was very favourably disposed to the cession of the islands to Greece. On 12 August 1943, in the American magazine *Free World*, he admitted that his notions on integrity did not include the Dodecanese, since the Archipelago, by its own nature and history, was indisputably Greek⁵²⁶; additionally, on 6 September, in an

524. F.O. 371/37226, Knatchbull-Hugessen to F.O., September 27, October 2, 8, 1943; also, W.O. 106/3260, Foreign office to Minister of State in Cairo, August 7, 1943; F.O. 371/33165, Research Department, (Foreign Office), October 23, 1944; Raphail to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 5, 1943, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 101-102; E. TSOUDEROS, *op. cit.*, p. 183. Even later, von Papen offered the Dodecanese to Turkey on behalf of Mussolini, in exchange for the recognition of the so-called Italian Socialist Republic (F.O. 371/43851, Rocco (Ankara) to Italian Government, March 9, 1944); See also, W.O. 106/3260, Foreign Office to Ministry of State (Cairo), August 7, 1943.

525. According to the representative of Greece to the Advisory Council of Rome I. Politis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 19, 1944, in *The Dodecanese...*, p. 156. See also, I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943-44, 15/4.

526. I.Δ.Α.Υ.Ε., Cairo Government, 1943-44, 15/4, Haniotis (Washington) to Greek Government, August 13, August 14, 1943. See also, Dragoumis Papers, 64/5/70.

interview published by *The Christian Science Monitor*, and on 27 September, in an article published by *The New York Times*, he divulged that the new Italy would be glad to give the islands to Greece, as a practical gesture of regret for the criminal attack of October 1940⁵²⁷. Later, on 5 March 1944, he stated that the islands should be given to Greece after a plebiscite⁵²⁸; and on 21 August, as Minister without Portfolio in the Bonomi Government, he reiterated that 'Italy must not object to the union of the Dodecanese with Greece, if this is the wish of the inhabitants'⁵²⁹. In this endeavour, Sforza was soon to find a steady supporter in the person of Alcide De Gasperi. The leading Italian statesman, also Minister without Portfolio in the same government, was to condemn the old nationalist ambitions, he too foreseeing a dynamic role for Italy in the fold of the Western world, through a diplomacy, international and European, founded on the principles of democracy and the self-determination of peoples. In this capacity, he had made no mention of Greece at the first assembly of the Christian Democratic party, which he had founded on 25 July 1944⁵³⁰; however, as Foreign Minister, from 13 December, he was to take the lead in the faithful application of these principles. In the opinion of both men, the necessary restoration of friendship between Italy and Greece, within this framework, was affected by the solution of the Dodecanese question, on the basis of these principles⁵³¹.

527. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943-44, 15/4, Haniotis (Washington) to Greek Government, September 6, 1943; Lolis (New York), September 18, 1943. Similar public declarations by Count Sforza in the newspapers *Boston Globe* (October 6, 1943) and *La Razon*, in Montevideo, (January 27, 1944). For additional material, mostly telegrams on the Sforza statements, see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 1/4.

528. A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, BBC in greco, March 5, 1944. Similar public declaration: A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, October 11, 1944.

529. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943-44/15, Exintaris (Rome) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 22, 1944. See also the newspaper *Tò Φῶς* [Cairo], August 21, 1944. For a statement expressing Dragoumis' satisfaction see, I.Δ.A.Y.E.: Dragoumis Papers 63/14, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 21, 1944. For the importance that the Greek government attached to the Sforza statement see A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, Prunas ('pro memoria') October 12, 1944. Nevertheless, N.G. MAVRIS stressed that, according to Sforza Italy could not consent to this liberation without a 'compensation counterpart' (*Sforza vs. Sforza*, publ. by Dodecanesian League of America, 1943).

530. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/2, Kapsabelis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 25, 1944.

531. See indicatively, R. GAJA, *L'Italia nel mondo bipolare: Per una storia della politica estera italiana (1943-1991)*, Bologna 1995, p. 78-79. See also, C. SFORZA, *L'Italia alle soglie dell'Europa*, Milano 1947; G. PETRILLI, *La politica estera ed Europea di De Gasperi*, Roma 1975.

Athens' first concern was to elicit Italy's admission of the unjustness of its attack on Greece. The annexation of the Dodecanese, self-evident demand in the name of the principle of self-determination, as well as reasonable consequence of the events associated with the Italian aggression, was a parallel, more immediately tangible, concern. Meanwhile, after the initial official declarations on foreign policy, issued by the Badoglio Government on 27 April and elaborated more explicitly on 23 May 1944, a certain disquiet arose amongst the Greeks: Rome repudiated the entire foreign policy of the Fascists, which was declared to be contrary to the will and interests of the Italian people, and also condemned the invasion of Greece; but nothing was said about the Dodecanese⁵³². The Secretary General of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, at a private meeting with Ioannis Politis, chief representative to the Advisory Committee for Italy, confined himself to the same assurances; but nothing more⁵³³. Aghnides had visited Alexander Cadogan on 28 September 1941, and said that he imagined that it could not be the policy of His Majesty's Government to leave the Dodecanese islands under Italian occupation. "We certainly should not confirm Italy in her possession of them", answered the Permanent Under-Secretary⁵³⁴. In a new visit to the Foreign Office, Aghnides again raised the issue with Cadogan, asking him 'to give assurances to the effect that Britain's view on Greece's claims on the Dodecanese had undergone no change for the worse'⁵³⁵. Cadogan confirmed that the government's position in this matter remained as stated in his letter of 1 December 1942⁵³⁶; and some time ago, Leeper had observed that 'having regard to the part played by Greece in the war, it is clearly important not to adopt too negative an attitude such as would enable the enemy to argue convincingly in their propaganda that the Allies intend to leave the Dodecanese under Italian rule'⁵³⁷. In any case it was stressed that the attitude of the Dodecanesians themselves was 'so uncompromisingly hostile that it would be unthinkable' for Britain

532. See, *The Times*, May 25, 1944. Also, A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, Dir. Affari Politici (appuntamento), October 11, 1944.

533. A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, October 11, 1944.

534. F.O. 371/29932, Cadogan conversation with Greek minister, September 28, 1941.

535. I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943/A/Φ2/15, Aghnides to Papandreou, May 25, 1944.

536. I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943/A/Φ2/15.4, Cadogan to Aghnides, May 31, 1944.

537. PREM. 3/124/4, Leeper to Foreign Office, March 30, 1944.

to be associated with any proposal to restore the islands to Italian rule⁵³⁸. Churchill, in his message to the Italians on 30 August 1944, confined himself to noting the attack by the Fascist regime against only France and Britain⁵³⁹; nevertheless, he had in the meantime confidentially notified Foreign Office officials that the decision to govern the Dodecanese, if they were recaptured, 'would do nothing to remove Greek suspicions that we may after all give the islands back to the Italians'⁵⁴⁰. The United States had, from their side, done no more than reassure the Greeks that 'in the efforts to persuade the Italian people of the need in their own interest of overthrowing their present regime, no agreements of understanding were being reached with Italian leaders which involved questions in which the Greek Government was directly interested as, for example, territorial arrangements, the Dodecanese Islands⁵⁴¹. What would the existence of some economic interests or certain public works in the islands possibly mean when political issues of major importance were at stake⁵⁴²? The scant presence of the Italians in the Dodecanese was sufficient to declare their inability to keep them under their domination against the Greeks⁵⁴³.

In the end, the required reassurances were given to the Greek side by the successor Italian government. Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi himself, who was also Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke directly after assuming office in Rome, on 25 July 1944, of the responsibilities 'that fell on the entire, irresponsible Italian nation for the attacks against France, Greece, Yugoslavia and Russia, which had been conducted in a way guaranteed to increase the shame of the

538. F.O. 371/48342, (Middle East Defense Committee) Future of the Dodecanese (note), August 15, 1945.

539. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/2, Dragoumis (Cairo) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30-8-1944.

540. F.O. 371/43755, Churchill to Cadogan, April 26, 1944; see also, Foreign Office to Leeper, April 27, 1944.

541. S.D.R.: Roosevelt Library, Papers of S. Welles, Box 164, S. Welles (memorandum of conversation with Diamantopoulos), November 27, 1942.

542. See, among others, I.Δ.A.Y.E., Ankara Legation, 1943-48, 1/4, Circular to all Embassies, 'refutation of Italian claims on the Dodecanese question', October 17, 1945. On the Greek views regarding Italian contribution to the economic development of the Dodecanese see, I.Δ.A.Y.E., 8/2-3.

543. In July 1945 a total population of 6,000 Italians existed in the Dodecanese. They were mostly state employees, representatives of private companies and merchants, dependent on the purchases of the State (W.O. 106/3261).

attack'; and he had categorically rejected any territorial claims⁵⁴⁴. He was to express his views clearly on 4 November, when he condemned the aggressive policy of Fascism, of which Greece too was a victim, as well as the adoption of rules of expansive imperialism which nurtured it, and he underlined the devotion that Italy should show to the principles of the freedom of individuals and peoples⁵⁴⁵. It was then, early in November, that, more categorically but always secretly⁵⁴⁶, he assured the Greek government, through its Minister to Rome, that Italy no longer had any claims on the Dodecanese⁵⁴⁷. The Greek side had not asked for anything more from the Italians, as if it preferred to show that in this matter 'Italy no longer has a say'; expressing this view, Ioannis Politis had noted earlier and Exintaris had confirmed that, even among the Allies, this was not disputed⁵⁴⁸. Nevertheless, the Greek government representatives had in each case brought to Athens the Italian officials' desire to reinstate immediately relations of friendship and collaboration with Greece. However, the positive contribution of post-fascist Italy to the solution of the Dodecanese issue, as an indication also of its change of policy in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, had been regarded by the Greek government as a precondition for re-establishing relations between the two States⁵⁴⁹.

Indeed, London, after having possession of the islands, on the one hand did not seem disposed to extending Italian rule in the Dodecanese, and on the other was, in July 1944, already looking forward to the creation of a wider scheme: namely, a powerful tripartite front by Italy, Greece and Turkey in

544. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Rome Legation, 1944/2, Kapsabelis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26-7-44; see also, *Tempo*, 26-7-44.

545. *Discorsi politici di Ivanoe Bonomi pubblicati per Deliberazione del Senato*, 1954, p. 657-659.

546. There was no reference, even a later one, by Bonomi, to the Dodecanese question: IVANOE BONOMI, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto* (1964) *La politica italiana dopo Vittorio Veneto* (1953); idem, *Diario di un anno (2 giugno 1943-10 giugno 1944)*, Milano 1947.

547. I.Δ.A.Y.E., K.Y. 1944, 12/4, Exintaris (Rome) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 5, 1944; also, A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, Appunto (Pierantori), Nov. 2, 1944 (it is telling that in the Italian document there is no explicit reference to the Dodecanese).

548. A.S.D., Grecia/B. 26, Prunas ('pro memoria'), October 12, 1944; Appunto (Pierantori), November. 2, 1944. See also Exintaris' statement at *Italia Libera*, October 20, 1944. Earlier, Politis (Naples) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 19, 1944 (*The Dodecanese...*, p. 156-157).

549. I.Δ.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1944, 38/2, Skeferis, 4-8-1944; also, Cairo Government, 1943-44, 15/4, Tsouderos, August 4, 1944.

the Mediterranean, an area of vital importance for the British Empire⁵⁵⁰. The statements made by leading members of the post-fascist Italian governments in favour of the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece had, even earlier, been noted favourably in the House of Commons; 'so much the better', Eden had added to such a remark made by Ivor Thomas⁵⁵¹. Rome was aware of the favourable British intentions towards the Greeks⁵⁵². The British Minister of Foreign Affairs drafted a memorandum on the terms of the peace treaty with Italy, in late May 1945, but he did not submit it in its final form to the War Cabinet until July: in it he assumed that the Dodecanese should be given to Greece⁵⁵³; and the Prime Minister himself remarked:

There can be little doubt that the Italian Government have abandoned all hope of retaining the Dodecanese. But, so far as we are aware, they have never made an official statement to this effect, and in their present weak position and while the question of Trieste remains unsettled they could hardly be expected to do so.

He added:

Statements have been made in Parliament that the Italians' overseas Empire must be regarded as forfeit. This was primarily intended to cover the Italian possessions in Africa, but they have even less claim to retain the Dodecanese and it would be absurd for us to request from the Italian Government a statement on the lines suggested by the State Department. Nor would it be appropriate for the Italians to discuss the question direct with the Greeks, since it is not for them but for the Allies to decide the fate of the former Italian colonies...⁵⁵⁴.

550. I.Δ.A.Y.E., 38/2, Cairo Government, 1944, 38/2, Skeferis, August 4, 1944. Also see, St. G. XYDIS, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

551. Parliamentary Debates, [House of Commons] Official Reports, vol. 400 (no. 90), June 14, 1944, p. 1957-1958. (F.O. 371/43755, June 14, 1944 [extract of the record]).

552. See indicatively, A.S.D., D/B. 16, Sottosegretariato per la stampa e le informazioni to Ministero degli Esteri, May 19; June 6, 1945.

553. Sir ERNEST LEWELLYN WOODWARD, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War...*, p. 409.

554. PREM. 3/124/4, Prime Minister to His M's Ambassador Washington [May 5, 1945].

Clearly, Greece's entry into the war and the victorious confrontation of Italy's attack had contributed significantly to propelling the Dodecanese question in the direction of 'Enosis'. Nonetheless, as was to be proven in practice, the final resolution of the issue went beyond the development of relations between the two States, and was included in the more general balance of power in the region, as this was tending to be formed during the war and in view of peace. Those belligerent Great Powers that had been active in this sensitive zone, as well as more generally those countries in direct proximity, naturally took an active interest in the manner of the question's final resolution.

Behold the parameters with which the arrangement of the fortunes of the Dodecanese between Italy and Greece would be associated after the war. According to the State Department, no statement should be made by the power in military occupation – i.e. Britain –, at least until the Italian Government had been given an opportunity to renounce freely their claims to this area in favour of Greece. 'Military administration, similar to that which is envisaged for Venezia Giulia and for the province of Bolzano, would seem to be appropriate for the Dodecanese Islands until their final disposition in the general peace settlement or until the Italian and Greek governments may come to a direct understanding with regard to their future status'⁵⁵⁵. It was a perspective adopted by London and by Athens too. After all, the embarrassment, or even the unease that was understandably felt in certain Italian circles, was to be overcome thanks to the contribution of certain distinguished statesmen who were the first to chart the course of the new Italy within a radically different post-war world. Indeed, in the critical phase of the final management of the Dodecanese question, Alcide De Gasperi had taken hold of the reins in Rome⁵⁵⁶.

555. W.O. 106/3260, Halifax (Washington) to F.O., April 20, 1945; April 28, 1945.

556. G. BORZONI, *Renato Prunas diplomatico (1892-1951)*, Catanzaro 2004, mostly p. 483 ff.

CONCLUSION

GREECE'S CLAIM ON THE DODECANESE was founded solidly on the very principles that inspired the war effort of the Western Allies and were intended to prevail in post-war international politics. The final decision for the union of the Dodecanese with Greece was in accordance with the wishes of the greatest part of the population of the islands, as well as with the principles of the newly founded United Nations Organization⁵⁵⁷. Yet, the rules were not respected in other cases, which also had to do with Greek populations in other areas; it still remained to be shown that for the implementation of such principles a positive political climate needed to exist. Thus, Cyprus, inhabited by a Greek majority which aspired to union with Greece, remained under colonial rule. It is, therefore, necessary to seek out the special positive factors which were present in the case of the Dodecanese but not in that of Cyprus.

The firm attitude of the British and, to a lesser extent, the United States to the Dodecanesian issue was a major factor on the diplomatic level. Greece, attached since its creation to the implementation of the principle of self-determination, implemented a stable policy on this principle. At the same time, however, its participation in the war on the side of the Allies offered Greece additional advantages in its claim. But this choice did not automatically ensure the attainment of its aim and the Greek governments made persistent effort to this end. The following excerpt from a record of a conversation between Athanassios Aghnides and Orme Sargent, on 9 February 1943, is characteristic:

Sir Orme took my insistence as evidence of lack of faith in Great Britain's strong position after the war. For a long time we seemed to be unable to find common ground for agreement, he, Sir Orme thinking we lacked confidence in Great Britain, and I trying to make him understand that it was not Great Britain we ever suspected but human contingencies and situations which may be outside the control of the British at the end of the war⁵⁵⁸.

557. In a 'most secret' statement of the rival claims, the Greek claim was based on this criterion: W.O. 106/3260, The Dodecanese question [December 1949].

558. I.A.A.Y.E., Cairo Government, 1943, Record of conversation between Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Aghnides on February 9, 1943.

In fact, this policy reached a successful conclusion only when Greece managed to get substantial external support, military or diplomatic, from the Western Allies. This solidarity in the case of Britain and the insistence on implementation of the principle of self-determination in the case of the United States, led two of the Big Three to the decision to agree with the union of the Dodecanese with Greece. After the end of the war, their conflict with the Soviet Union made these two powerful States even more determined to stand by Greece on the Dodecanese question.

Turkey's attitude also had a positive impact on the Greek claim, to a degree that could hardly have been expected. The Foreign Office's decision, after Greece's entry into the war, to discourage any connection between the issue of Turkey's involvement in the war with the Dodecanese, also played a significant role in shaping Ankara's attitude. The Turkish government correctly sensed that London intended to favour the union of the Dodecanese with Greece, and this was combined with its desire to secure co-operation with Great Britain and with Greece after the war. In the minds of Turkish officials, bilateral co-operation with Greece, even on defence issues, was an important prerequisite for securing regional stability. Their desire to secure co-operation with the United Kingdom too was connected with another major aim, to acquire the support of a Great Power against the Soviets. The new State, well aware that it needed to spend several years on its internal organization, wanted the world conflict to pass without suffering major losses – to avoid, consequently, external threats. It is important to note that Turkish policy was shaped according to Kemalist strategic choices. 'Some of these islands are in a way parts of the Asia Minor littoral', wrote *Akşam* in 1946 and went on to say: 'And yet, although they were such strong factors, the fact that in our country no voices have been raised claiming possession is a proof of how deeply rooted in us is the policy of national agreement'⁵⁵⁹. Avoiding expansion into territories inhabited by non-Turkish majorities was a fundamental dogma of the policy to which Atatürk's immediate successors, his former associates, evidently strictly adhered. It is no coincidence that in later years, in Turkey itself, this policy during the Second World War was accused of being tantamount to treason or,

559. ZAL, 'The Dodecanese', *Akşam*, July 2, 1946.

at least, faint-heartedness⁵⁶⁰. This happened after opportunistic tendencies of expansionism and regional hegemonism were somehow adopted.

In discussing the final outcome of the Dodecanese issue, the decisive impact of Greece's participation in the war must be taken into account. The 1940-41 victory over the Italians, who ruled the Dodecanese, greatly prejudiced the solution of the problem after the war. The collapse of the Italian Fascist regime gave the new liberal Italian leadership the opportunity to declare a virtual resignation of rights in the islands. The Greek position was strengthened also by the fact that Turkey opted to remain out of the war. Winston Churchill had underlined in the House of Commons, in May 1944: 'The course taken so far by Turkey will not in my view secure for the Turks a strong position at the Peace which they would attend upon their joining the Allies'⁵⁶¹. And shortly before the Peace Conference in Paris, Feridun Cemal Erkin, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, who expressed the tendency of a return to expansionist policies, proposed to the Prime Minister that Turkey should lay claim to the Dodecanese, only to receive a clear answer: 'Since we did not take part in the Second World War, we have no right to the spoils of the war'⁵⁶².

The coincidence of these particular realities tended also to confirm a more general axiom that stamped the course of Greek foreign policy over a far longer period. Since its founding, Greece had had to face Turkey, a stronger power on a regional scale. The outcome of this confrontation, in both wartime and peacetime, was determined in large part by Greece's ability to secure international support strong enough to counterbalance any superiority of her powerful neighbour's strength. The advancement, moreover, of legal demands, a choice in both World Wars, increasingly accepted in the ranks of the international community and in accordance with the rules of international law, had not in itself been sufficient to produce this positive result but had undoubtedly been a contributing factor in this direction. One other decisive factor was the formation of favourable international circumstances and

560. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who in 1945-46 had suggested that Turkey persist in the claim over the Dodecanese, chose the moment of the summer 1976 Greek-Turkish war crisis to reveal details and to accuse the Turkish politicians responsible for the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece (see, *Tercuman*, July 28, 1976).

561. See, *The Cyprus Post*, May 25, 1944.

562. See, *Tercuman*, July 28, 1976.

Greece's ability to exploit these to its own advantage. The resolution of the Dodecanese question was associated directly with the exploitation of just such a conjuncture. Indeed, if the course of the Dodecanese question is compared with what happened in Cyprus a decade later, the axiom is confirmed by its converse.

These were the circumstances which allowed the settlement of the Dodecanese issue. It has been a settlement that has proved to be final and just, since after the union of the islands with Greece, the Dodecanese ceased to exist as an international problem.



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