

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC DIMENSION OF THE TURKISH-SOVIET STRAITS QUESTION EMERGED AFTER WORLD WAR II

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ABSTRACT

In this study, how the Straits Question known to be due to the policy of Tsarist Russia to stroke in warm seas with its historical dimension changed into a process in Soviet regime depending on the results of World War II is studied. In the study, economic reasons and results of the Straits Question that have not been carried out in previously made studies were reviewed as a whole without being isolated from the political and strategic aspects. As a result of the documents examined during the study, it was found out that the Soviet government, adding an ideological dimension, continues the imperialist policy and the passions of Tsarist Russia to dominate the Straits. In addition, it is concluded that Turkish-Soviet Straits Question had an accelerating effect on Turkey's political and economic integration with the capitalist Western world.

Key Words: Turkey, USSR, World War II, the Straits, Stalin

JEL Classification: N4 - Economic History; Government, War, Law, International Relations, and Regulation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish Straits are politically, economically and strategically one of the world's most important sea lanes. The term "The Straits" expressing Istanbul (Constantinople) and Çanakkale (Dardanelles) straits in the literature of international relations shows the importance of the Turkish straits across the world (İnan, 1986). The importance of the Turkish Straits results from its geographic location and strategic interests of the related states tied to this location. Geographic importance of the Turkish Straits is results from the facts that the straits are the only marine gateways between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and it they function as a bridge between Europe and Asia. Throughout the history, this situation due to the geographical location, has lead to conflicts between Turkey and the countries both coasting and not coasting the Black Sea in terms of political, economic and strategic interests. Straits seperating Turkey's land into two as Asian Turkey (Anatolia) and European Turkey (Thrace) resulted in the facts that Turkey's territorial integrity and independence are directly related to the legal regime which the straits are subject to. In Montreux Conference, representative of Romania, Nicolae Titulescu's expression "*Straits are the hearts of Turkey, but also lungs of Romania*" affirms the importance of the Straits (Bilsel, 1948).

The central point of conflict between Turkey and Russia which was coasting the Black Sea in the 18th century, was the Straits. Being located in the north of the Black Sea and the seas in the north of Russia being covered with ice for a long time during the year, Russia did not have the opportunity to exude to warm seas except the Turkish Straits because of the geographical location. Russian policy introduced for the first time by Tsar Peter the Great based on going to the Mediterranean Sea so to the warm seas via Straits in order to do trade and to be able to dominate the world was the beginning of the Straits question. The same policy being continued the same by the Russian tsars and tsarinas after Tsar Peter the Great has made the Straits the traditional Russian policy. (Mouravieff, 1966; Anafarta, 1968). Some European historians have suggested that the problem called «The Eastern Question» in history was a result of Turks settlement in Europe since the 15th century. However, historical data shows that the problem was the result of Russia's settling in the coast of Black Sea, and continous and devastating wars against the Ottoman Empire to achieve its imperialist goals. In other words, the Eastern Question is nothing else than Ottoman Empire's struggle with Russian imperialism, sometimes alone, sometimes with the help of Western governments. Russian historian Goiranof's expressing the whole Eastern Question with the sentence "*Who owns the Straits?*" reaffirms this view (Goryanof, 2006).

The Straits issue has led to severe diplomatic struggles initiated by the Soviet government in the last year and after the World War II and especially in the years 1945-1946 between USSR and Turkey, and the United States and Britain.

In this context, the analysis of the political, economic and strategic reasons and results of the Straits Question is the main discussion of this study. In the first part of the study, the importance of the Straits fort he related countries, and in the second part, Montreux Convention Regarding the Straits, in the third part, chronological process of the Straits Question after the World War II and in the fourth part, main reasons and results of the Straits Question are evaluated. In the study, economic reasons and results of the Staraits Question that have not been carried out in previously made studies were reviewed as a whole without being isolated from the political and strategic aspects. The documents examined within this research, despite the regime change in 1917, have shown that the Soviet government is the loyal heir of the traditional passion of dominating the Straits and the imperialist policy of the Tsarist administration. In addition, it is concluded that Turkish-Soviet Straits Question had an accelerating effect on Turkey's political and economic integration with the capitalist Western world.

2. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE TURKISH STRAITS

The world's very important geostrategic regions are Suez and Panama Channels, and Singapore, Istanbul and Çanakkale Straits. The states that have these strategic areas obtain important political, economic and strategic benefits and advantages. In this respect, in the struggle between the states, the desire to gain control of these regions have played an important role. Being a bridge between Europe and Asia and a gateway between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, Istanbul and Canakkale Straits have great strategic importance. The state dominating these Straits can have an effective location on the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, Anatolia and the Balkans. The security of both the Far East trade route passing through the Mediterranean and rich oil resources of the Middle East is closely related to the legal status of these straits. European states that started to deal directly with the Straits especially since the 18th century, have considered the Straits a trade gateway between Europe and the Mediterranean. However, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1868 which shortened the Far East roads in 25%, the Turkish Straits have been a gateway attracting the interest of the Pacific and the Atlantic countries and also having especially increasing economic importance.

The Turkish Straits have become a global issue after the World War II with the direct involvement of the U.S. (Ergin, 1968). The political, economic and strategic importance of the Turkish Straits varies according to the geographic locations and interests of the counties. Two cases during the process of Ottoman-Italian War of 1911, and the World War II. are sufficient to express the importance of the Straits for Russia. First, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei D. Sazonov, in his report to Tsar Nicholas II. dated November 23, 1914, noted that foreign trade volume of Russian Empire in the year of 1912 decreased 100 million rubles as a result of the Straits temporarily being closed to the merchant shipping during the Ottoman-Italian War of 1911. Second, Germans having embarrassing the transitions in the Aegean Sea during the World War II cut off the connections of the Western European states with their ally USSR. Although Western Eaurpean states established a link with Russia through the railways and highways extending to the North of the city of Bushehr in the Persian Gulf (the Arabian Gulf), this connection in inadequate amounts and under difficult conditions could not resolve Russia's difficulties (Atak, 1947).

Russia's political attitude on the Straits has been bidirectional. The security aspect is the idea that the Straits would be the base of an attack to the Russian Black Sea coasts. Russia, giving very close attention to the Straits in terms of its own security, the Russian diplomat Count Karl Robert Nesselrode in his report to Tsar Nicholas I. in 1839 said "*Historical events showed that all the attacks to Russia, from the front, that is, from the east of Europe, wasted away in the middle of the vast steppes and marshes... but the Straits is a strategic region threatening southwest of Russia's in every period.*" (Atak,1947). Russia's defeat in Crimean War (1853-1856) confirmed this claim. "*As long as the Straits are possessed by the foreign governments, there will always be the possiblity for Russia to be invaded from the direction of Black Sea.*" said Kucherov about this issue (Kucherov, 1949). The imperial direction is Russia's attempt to seize the Straits in order to penetrate into the Balkans, the Near East and the Middle East. This effort has been the policy Russia followed since the 18th century onwards. When felt vulnerable, Russia, following a passive policy about the Straits, brought the country's security and defense strategy to forefront. When felt strong, Russia, following an active policy about the Straits, followed imperialist objectives.

Straits have always had a different and important place in the UK government policies. The United Kingdom, having lost a large amount of its colonies in America in the last quarter of the 18th century, headed toward the east and started to follow a wide colonial strategy in India and Southeast Asia. Thus, the safety of the routes of India and Southeast Asia gained vital significance for the British policy, and the United Kingdom began to take a closer interest in the Straits. The opening of the Suez Canal increased the importance of the Straits for England.

Because ensuring the safety of the routes in India was possible by preventing the spread of Russia which headed to Mediterranean, Near East and Middle East directions. In this regard, the Straits were the key points (Ergin, 1968). For Italy, as a Mediterranean state, the Straits had the great importance. Dominating the Dodecanese Islands which were on the route of the Straits until World War II. increased the importance of the Strait for Italy (Baltalı, 1959). In addition, when considered economically, as shown in Table 1, Italian merchant ships had the largest share among the merchant ships crossing the Straits. France also had important interests in the Middle East until World War II. Although France actually retreated the Middle East during this period, though, strategic importance to the region continued and it dealt with the issues of the Straits Question together with the Middle East Question. The safety issue of transportation routes connecting the East to the West and the rich oil resources increased France's giving importance to the Middle East, so to the Straits even more (Baltalı, 1959).

U.S. was not closely interested in the Straits Issue as much as the other European states until World War II, concerned about the Straits only for economic purposes as Straits being commercial marine gateways. U.S. started to closely concern about the Straits and Middle East questions after World War II. U.S., after World War II, was interested in the Middle East not only to benefit from its oil but also to avoid it falling into the hands of the USSR. Because, a possible control of the Straits by the Soviet Union would cause the Middle East with its rich oil resources to be dominated by Russia as well as East and West's threatening and blocking off the trade routes through the Middle East and Mediterranean (Baltalı, 1959).

The regime which the Straits will be subject to was closely related to other Black Sea states such as Romania and Bulgaria except for Soviet Union to subsist as independent states. The interests of this states were in contrast to the interests of Russia. Romania and Bulgaria, being concerned about the increased supremacy of Russia in the Balkans and the Black Sea with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War II, did not support Russian thesis in the Lausanne and Montreux Conferences. Romania and Bulgaria, which were completely dominated by the Soviet Union after the World War II, to subsist as independent states in the future closely depended on the regime which the Straits will be subject to. Soviet Unions's restoring actual control on the Straits strengthened its dominance on Romania, Bulgaria and even on the entire Balkans (Baltalı, 1959; Pundeff, 1954).

Straits are of great importance as an international trade route. The information related to the merchant ships (excluding the Turkish ships) transitted the Straits or stevedored in the ports in the Straits during the period from August, 15, 1936 following the signing of the Montreux Agreement until the end of 1956 is given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Merchant Ships Stevedored or Transitted the Straits
(August,15 1936 – December,31 1956)**

Country of Origin	Stevedored (Number)	Transitted (Number)	Total (Number)	Net Tonalito (Tons)
Italy	4.116	5.338	9.454	15.965.049
U.K.	2.984	2.816	5.800	14.232.391
Russia	578	4.043	4.621	11.704.314
Greece	2.334	4.725	7.059	9.188.872
Norway	943	1.746	2.689	8.665.129
U.S.	1.517	504	2.021	8.102.228
France	389	480	869	3.500.431

Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rapport Annuel sur le Mouvement des Navires a Travers les Détroits Turcs, 1936-1956.

3. MONTREUX CONVENTION REGARDING THE STRAITS

Montreux Convention Regarding the Straits, regulating the transition regime of the Turkish Straits and the security of the Straits region displaced the Straits Convention of Lausanne signed on July 24, 1923. In the Straits Convention of Lausanne, it was agreed that:

- Recognition of the freedom of passage to the merchant ships through the Straits in times of peace and war (Article 2, Annex 1)
- Recognition of the freedom of passage to all the warships through the Straits except for the warships of the states in war with Turkey (Article 2, Annex 2)
- Demilitarization of some of the islands located in the Straits (Articles 3-9)
- The security of the Straits region being provided by the League of Nations (Article 18)
- Constitution of Straits in order to check whether the regularities stipulated by the Straits Convention and to supply an annual report regarding the situation to the League of Nations (Articles 10-16)

But the Lausanne Straits Agreement did not satisfy Turkey. Because, the demilitarization of the Straits region and the establishment of the Straits Commission had brought significant limitations to Turkey's security and the sovereignty rights on its territory. In addition, the collective guarantee which secures the security of the Straits region by the warranty of the League of Nations was completely theoretical. Because, it was necessary to apply to the Council of the League of Nations to function this warranty. However, in the date of the contract, Turkey and the USSR were not members of the League of Nations. In addition, the League of Nations although had a direct action against the violation of the regime of the straits, would have to reach a unanimous decision. Foreign warships entering the Black Sea freely also was not desired by the USSR (Akgün, 1994). In the 1930s, Treaty of Versailles system ended and the League of Nations, which established the regime of the Straits under its auspices, became inoperative with Hitler's coming into power, the failure of the Disarmament Conference, Germany's rearmament, invasion of the demilitarized zone of Rhine following the termination of Treaty of Locarno, inconclusion of the sanctions system applied after Italy's campaign to Abyssinia, Italy's beginning the construction of fortifications on Dodecanese Islands near the Turkish coasts, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations (Ergin, 1968).

Growing international tension and re-starting of the armament race had gradually increased Turkey's concern which rely on the demilitarization policies that were up-to-date at the date of the Lausanne Straits Agreement. With concerns about the Straits in this insecurity environment, in the diplomatic note sent to the states signed the Lausanne Agreement, dated April 11, 1936, Turkey pointed out that Turkey signed the 1923 Lausanne Convention under the conditions that they trusted in European disarmament and the warranty by four large states on the defense of the Straits; but that this situation changed, with the change of the attitudes of the guarantor states towards the League of Nations, the guarantee of the security of the strait had stopped to function; and Lausanne Straits Convention's not providing for the war threat except for the state of war and peace had banned Turkey from the requirements for self defense. Based on this evidence, the Turkish Government invited the related states to rearrange the security requirements and the transition regime of the Straits (Tosun, 1994). Seeing the guarantees of the League of Nations, transgressions by the members of the the League of Nations expected to be the guarantors had strengthened reasons of Turkey.

When introduced the proposal to the related States, Turkey was treated with a common understanding from all these States which started to take place in different poles. In the memorandum of British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated July 23, 1936, it was quoted "*Turkey's motion on amending the Straits Convention is considered to be right.*" In the meeting of The Balkan Entente Permanent Council on May 4, 1936 in Belgrade, a decision was made to support Turkey's proposal (Pundeff, 1954). Upon accept of Turkey's attempt by the other contracts of Lausanne Straits Convention without exception, the conference which would change the regime of the Straits convened in Montreux, Switzerland, on June 22, 1936. Montreux Conference began with the conflicts of interests between the states with and without coasts to the Black Sea. The states with the coast to the Black Sea, especially the USSR, wanted full freedom to their warships to pass through the Straits and restrictions to the passage to the warships of the states without the coast. The Soviet view in the Lausanne Conference, expressed as to keep off the Straits to the warships of states with and without coasts to the Black Sea, changed in the Montreux Conference, and was reversed to the former thesis of the Tsarist Russia as to open the Straits to their warships but to have them closed off to the warships of the other states. This demand showed that the policy of the Tsarist Russia, intended since 1774, to obtain control of the Strait and to reach the warm seas was resumed by the USSR.

On the other hand, the states outside the Black Sea, especially UK, while acknowledging the warships of the Black Sea littoral states to pass through the Straits, rejected the demand to keep the Straits closed to the warships of the non-littoral states. Because the Black Sea was not desired to be a closed sea only for the vessels of the littoral states. Great Britain insisted on the establishment of a militarized regime of the Straits controlled by the Straits Commission and allowing the freedom of passage to all warships, in order to ensure the security of sea lanes from the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, and with the concern not to be able to secure Mosul-Haifa Oil Pipe Line against the possible attacks from the Soviet bases in the Black Sea. Turkey desired as little harm as possible to its security and sovereignty while passage freedom through the Straits was ensured (BYEGM, 1936; Baltalı, 1959; Ergin, 1968).

With the Montreux Convention, signed on July, 20 1936, restricted rights of Turkey were extradited with the support of the Soviet Union and the sovereignty of the Straits region passed to the rule of Turkey. In the prologue of the contract consists of 29 items and 3 additional protocols, "*to arrange the transition from the Straits in the framework to protect the security of Turkey and the Black Sea littoral states in the Black Sea ...*" was set as goal. Principle of free passage through the Straits was accepted in the Convention (Article 1).

Also, International Straits Commission controlling the passage through the Straits was removed and the military control and defense measures in the Straits were totally left to Turkey (Article 24). Trade and passage of warships through the Straits were stipulated to separate status according to the state of war and peace with the Montreux Convention. State of war was subdivided according to the principles to be applied in cases of threat of war, and the wars Turkey went and had not gone. According to the Convention (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1936):

Commercial vessels

- Commercial vessels can pass freely through the Straits in time of peace (Article 3).
- In time of war, if Turkey is neutral, commercial vessels pass freely through the Straits (Article 4).
- If Turkey is the country in the war or considering itself under the threat of a close war, can bring some restrictions on the transition of the commercial ships through the Straits (Articles 5-6).

Battleships

- In time of peace, war ships of the Black Sea littoral states shall inform Turkey 8 days before the transition and the tonnage of ships passing through shall not be more than 15,000 (Articles 11-13-14).
- In time of peace, war ships of the Black Sea non-littoral states can pass through as long as they inform 8-15 days before the transition and not to exceed a total of 9 ships and tonnage of 10,000. Warships passing through in accordance with the Convention can not stay more than 21 days in the Black Sea (Articles 11.-13.-14.-18).
- In time of war, if Turkey is neutral, war ships of the warring parties can not pass through the Straits (Article 19).
- In time of war, if Turkey is the warring, the Turkish Government will be able to act freely regarding the passage of warships (Article 20).
- If Turkey is considering itself under the threat of a very close war danger, the Turkish Government will be able to act freely regarding the transmission of warships (Article 21).

Besides these, the period of the contract by which many technical matters were resolved, was determined as 20 years, and it was stated that any signatory state of the contract can apply for termination two years before the end of this time (Article 28). In addition, if requested, it was stated that changes could be made on some of the provisions of the contract every five years (Article 29).

Montreux Straits Convention was precisely the work of goodwill, cooperation and compromise. This work is the work of mutual concessions. Despite the contrasts between the mutual interests and the Convention, a great progress has been made to protect the common interest, and it has been provided that the national interests and the common would reconcile the interests of all states. In the convention, Great Britain made revolutionary concessions from its traditional policy of the Straits and Turkey from the national rights. UK, considering the political situation of Europe, aimed to make USSR its ally. Turkey had signed the contract with the hope that this contract would serve as the basis of a cooperation period on behalf of peace between USSR and the Western States, in bound with the treaty of friendship. In other words, the the concessions to the USSR were to tie this state to the front of peace and to include to the British-French-Turkish alliance (Ergin, 1968). USSR achieved brilliant results over the Straits that the Tsarist Russia could never reach.

The Convention limited the transition of warships of the Black Sea non-littoral states through the straits, and agreed on the transition of the ships of Black Sea littoral states coastal states except for some restrictions related to Turkey's security. In short, Russia's a few centuries-old dream had taken place. President of the Soviet delegation, Maxim M. Litvinov in his speech in the last session of the conference said "*The Montreux Conference, gathered to harmonize an international treaty to the changing new circumstances had greatly done its duty.*" Litvinov mentioned that instead of the old imperial Russia which was trying to use the Straits as base in its imperialist struggle and the conquest of new countries, there existed a new socialist state living in the bigger part of the Black Sea, and one of the very first actions of this state was to give up all the imperialist intentions completely (Baltalı, 1959). Brilliant results at the conference recorded in favor of the USSR were praised with the expression "*A very positive victory for Soviet diplomacy ...*" in the work called *Die Diplomatie in der Periode der Vorbereitung des zweiten Weltkrieges (1919-1939)* written by the Russian diplomat, Wladimir P. Potjomkin and personally published by the Soviet government (Vagts, 194).

4. CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRAITS QUESTION AFTER THE WORLD WAR II.

World War II. which broke up three years after the signing of the Montreux Convention issuing the regime of the Straits, led to deep international political, economic and strategic changes. Britain, one of the states closely interested in the Straits, although had come out of war winning, its financial status had greatly distressed.

In spite of being among the winners, France suffered from great political and economic crises posed by the defeat in 1940. Unlike Britain and France, the United States left the war economically powerful. The Soviet Union left the war victorious and with increased prestige in the international field (Baltali, 1959; Ergin, 1968). The Soviet Government, taking advantage of all opportunities of the current international conjuncture, was not late to change its behaviour against Turkey completely. In the meeting of the presidents of the U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union in Yalta on February, 10 1945, Stalin said that the Montreux Convention had fallen behind the events; because, the contract had been signed at a time when Western states had not felt friendly towards the USSR, Japan had been more effective than the USSR in the preparation of the contract, and the League of Nations to which the contract depended, was of the past. Stalin mentioned that giving Turkey the right to close the Straits not only in case of war but also in the threat of war by the Montreux Regime allowed Turkey strangle the USSR, and they could not accept the situation. Stalin demanded that the foreign ministers of the U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union to do a meeting dealing with the issue of the Straits. U.S. President Franklin D.

Roosevelt stated that he did not like the limitations between the nations, and the USSR should obtain the freedom to subside into the warm seas without facing any difficulty. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, agreeing the Montreux Convention should be changed, accepted Stalin's proposal that the issue to be addressed by the three countries foreign ministers as a reasonable idea. Churchill suggested that the Soviet Union should not remain dependent on a narrow gate in the Black Sea, but also guarantee should be given to Turkey that its sovereignty and territorial integrity would be guaranteed (BYEGM, 1945a). On March 19, 1945, the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov reported Moscow Ambassador of Turkey Selim Sarper that the Soviet government had abolished the Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Nonaggression, dated September 17, 1925 because of not being in line with the current conditions and the changes brought by the war. Turkish Government, in a written reply to Moscow, after stating the expectations to continue and strengthen the friendship and good neighborly ties between the two countries, reported that Turkey, instead of the abolished treaty, suggested a new treaty between the two countries more suitable to the two countries' mutual interests, and would consider the Soviet government's suggestions in this way with care and interest (BYEGM, 1945b).

Sarper-Molotov meeting held on June 7, 1945, Molotov said that Turkey should twice compensate in order to win the Soviet friendship. The first of these, because the USSR had got out of the World War I so weak, wanted back the provinces of Kars and Ardahan which Russia had to leave to Turkey in 1918. The second; Russia submitted that Turkey's power of defending the Straits successfully against an attack from the Mediterranean was insufficient, so military bases from the Straits should be given to the USSR, and both states should sign an agreement-in-principle to change the the Montreux Treaty between the two countries. Sarper, with the instruction from Ankara, notified Molotov that he absolutely refused the demands impossible to comply with the Turkey's territorial integrity and sovereignty rights (BYEGM, 1945c). In the Potsdam Conference held between July 17 and August 2, 1945, Stalin, again addressed the demands previously reported to Turkey, and proposed that the Soviet Union was considering to take back the provinces of Kars and Ardahan; because the borders in this region were located incorrect. Moreover, he declared that Turkey was not strong enough to guarantee free passage through the Straits, so the Straits should be defended under the Turkish-Soviet collective guarantee of security. Stalin wanted the Montreux regime be changed within the following principles (BYEGM, 1945d):

1. Freely passage of Russian war and merchant ships through the Straits at any time
2. Giving bases to Russia to ensure this passage
3. Signing a a treaty about the Straits only between Turkey and the USSR

U.S. President Harry S. Truman said that the concessions to be given in Turkey's eastern borders was the problem concerning Turkey and the USSR, but the Straits concerned United States as well as the whole world. Truman offered the passage through the Straits to be liberalized under the guarantee of an international authority established by the U.S., UK, USSR and France. He noted that the the task of this international authority should be to improve the use of the Straits and to ensure equal treatment for all nations (BYEGM, 1945d; Truman, 1955). British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, exhibited a harder attitude against the government of the USSR. Churchill, in contravention of the decisions taken at Yalta, criticized Moscow's demands on changing the Montreux Convention from Turkey without informing the two allied government, and said that such kind of claims could not be suggested unilaterally; land claims were under the authority of the the law and organization of the United Nations, so that it concerned all the members. He also announced that they would accept to change the Montreux Convention for the Russian trade and war ships to pass freely through the Straits, but the Straits regime was not an issue only between Russia and Turkey, and they would not accept the establishment of Russian bases in the Straits (BYEGM, 1945d).

Despite the efforts of Truman, in the Potsdam Conference, a consensus was not reached between the three allied governments about the Straits. At the end of the conference, three attendant prime ministers agreed that the Montreux Convention did not conform to the requirements of the day and should be revised. For this purpose, it was decided that the subject would be discussed through direct negotiations between Turkish government and each of the three governments represented in Potsdam. In addition, Truman took upon himself working on convincing the Turkish government about the benefits of the international control system (BYEGM, 1945d; Truman, 1955). Turkey, in the article sent to London and Washington on August 13, 1945, said *“The Turkish government appreciates the value and importance of the participation of the American guarantee to the freedom of passage and the preservation of peace in the Straits. The Turkish government decided to participate in the suggested Truman Formula as long as it will not hinder Turkey’s sovereignty and security, and exactly to end the disturbance posed by the Russian demands.”* (BYEGM, 1945d).

U.S. Ambassador of Ankara Edwin C. Wilson, in his visit to the Turkish Ministry of Affairs on August 1945, he exactly said by reading from the article in his hand: *“The U.S. government has been following the increased tension between the Soviet Union and Turkey with attention and concern. The government is of the opinion that against danger, fear and rush are not a behavior which will help to strengthen world peace. In this regard, the American government and the nation is following with admiration the courage and determination of the Turkish nation against the exposed pressure. The situation came out of the demands for land has exceeded the area of the Turkish-Soviet relations and lapsed in the area of the United Nations that the U.S. government will not allow violations.”* (Ergin, 1968).

In accordance with Potsdam decisions, the U.S. government, stating their views on the Straits Issue with the the note to Turkey on November 2, 1945, desired that the problem of using and controlling the Straits should be solved the way that it would promote international security, take into account the interests of Turkey and Black Sea littoral states, and it should be guaranteed that the Straits would be kept open to the trades of the countries. It was reported that the changes to to be made on the Montreux Convention should include the following principles (BYEGM, 1945):

- The Straits always be kept open to merchant ships of all states,
- The Straits be kept open only to the warships of the Black Sea littoral states,
- The warships of the Black Sea non-littoral states not be given the right to pass through the Straits, but in time of peace and with the permission of Black Sea littoral states, warships with limited tonality be exempted from this,
- In the new treaty to be signed, instead of the phrase «The League of Nations», the phrase «United Nations» be used and Japan be removed from the states to sign the treaty.

Istanbul deputy General Kazım Karabekir, served as Eastern Army Commander in Turkish War of Independence, in his speech on November 20, 1945 in Grand National Assembly of Turkey, said: *“To be dominated on the Kars Plateau is to lie in wait to invade Anatolia.... and the Straits are the throat of our nation. We would not set any hands against there. But, everyone should know that the Kars Plateau is the national spinal. We will again be destroyed if it is broken. If the Russians insists on demanding land, there is no doubt that we will fight.”* (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 1945).

Turkey’s Prime Minister Sükrü Saraçoğlu at a press conference on December 5, 1945 said *“... After three relevant governments notified their views on this issue to our government, and after reviewing various opinions, our own ideas will take shape. There is no doubt that American opinion is appropriate in terms of basis and worth to accept. We consider America’s take part in the conference to be held as a desire of our government and a requirement”* (BYEGM, 1945f). British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, in his speech in the House of Commons on February 21, 1946, said: *“... the border between Turkey and Russia was determined not by the victors or the defeated, but among Turkey, defeated in the World War I., and Russia, came out of the war not in very good situation although not its own flaws and errors. Therefore, it can not said to be an imposed border... We are ready to grant to change the Montreux Convention as their ally with Turkey and Russia, or to review among themselves without us. However, in doing so, we are concerned about keeping out of sight the international aspect of this sea route. I am not so sure that a state’s having bases in a particular region against another state will serve world peace... I feel the need to indicate that there is a treaty between us and Turkey. I would frankly like to say that we can not be willing Turkey’s being made into a colony. I want Turkey to be independent. I would wish for the renewal of friendship treaty between Soviet Russia and Turkey. I do not think this will contradict our friendship treaty.”* (BYEGM, 1946a).

On April 5, 1946, in the Missouri dreadnought of the U.S. -with two battleships- Turkey’s Ambassador of Washington Münir Erteğin’s funeral, who died on November 11, 1944, was brought to Istanbul.

Supreme commander of the Mediterranean American Fleet and the captain of the Battleship Missouri, Vice Admiral H. Rascol Hillenkolt said: *“This visit is the manifestation of good will of the United States against your country”*. The U.S. President Truman’s special representative Ambassador Alexander Weddel who was on the board, said: *“We came to Turkey with Missouri to indicate the great friendship between the two nations, with a sincere sign... by bringing Missouri, we wanted to make the highest gesture in the court of international courtesy”*. During the four-day visit of the American fleet in the harbor of Istanbul, Hillenkolt and Weddel went to Ankara by a special train and visited President İsmet İnönü (BYEGM, 1946b). U.S. President Harry Truman in his speech in Chicago on April 6, 1946, said that Near and Middle East’s were vast natural resources and the busiest land, air and sea routes passed through this region, and emphasized on the region’s economic and strategic importance. Truman suggested that the United Nations had the right to insist on the Near and Middle Eastern countries sovereignty and territorial integrity not be imperiled. Truman explained the close interest of America in Near and Middle East by saying *“We today announce the intention to prevent unjust aggression”*. *“For any country not be deprived of appearing on the international ports and sea routes due to the geographical position or any other reason, the U.S. government will insistently claim for the elimination of the artificial barriers in international sea transportations”* said Truman about the Straits (Dallek, 2008).

The Soviet government gave the first note on the regime of the Straits to Turkey on August 8, 1946. In the note, it was suggested that the Montreux Convention have become unable to provide the security of the Black Sea states and the Straits to be used against the Black Sea states with harmful purposes. In the justification for this claim, it was claimed that the Axis Powers had used the Straits against the USSR for military purposes in the World War II. and the Turkish government was responsible for this situation. In order to establish a new regime of the Straits in the Potsdam Conference, as a result of agreeing that relevant states would do direct bilateral talks with the Turkish government, it was notified that the USSR proposed a new regime to the Turkish government on the basis of the following principles (BYEGM, 1946c):

1. The Straits be kept open to commercial vessels of all states,
2. The Straits always be kept open only to the warships of the Black Sea littoral states,
3. The warships of the Black Sea non-littoral states not be given the right to pass through the Straits except for exceptional circumstances,
4. To accept that the authority of regulatory authority on the transition regime of the Straits is on Turkey and the Black Sea states
5. Establishment of a joint defense between Turkey and Soviet Union in order to prevent the use of the Straits against the Black Sea states with hostile purposes.

In the United States note to the Soviet governments dated August 19, 1946, it was objected to the Soviet proposal number 4, and claimed that the Strait regime also concerned other states, and the claim saying the regulation of the regime is only under the authority of the states bordering the Black Sea was not accepted. In addition, it was also objected to the Soviet proposal number 5, and it was stated that Turkey was responsible state to defend the Straits. It was stated that any attack against the Straits would constitute a threat in terms of international security, so it would be subject to the authority of the United Nations Security Council, and thereby despite the tight relations between the Straits regime and the United Nations principles and objectives, having no referring to the United Nations in the Soviet note was met with astonishment. In addition, it was confirmed one more time that the U.S. government was ready to participate in the international conference to amend the Montreux Convention (BYEGM, 1946c).

In the British note to the Soviet governments dated August 21, 1946, it was said that any change to be made on the Straits regime should be appropriate to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The Straits regime also concerned other states than the Black Sea littoral states, and that they could not accept the claim of Soviet government that the Straits regime concerned only the Black Sea littoral states and Turkey. It was stated that as the country possessing the Straits Turkey was responsible for the defense of the Straits. In addition, it was said that the UK government had found appropriate the demand to change the Montreux Convention, and was ready to participate in the works of the conference to be met for this purpose (BYEGM, 1946c). In the first responsive note of Turkey to the Soviet Union dated August 22, 1946, the defects posed to Turkey from the Soviet Union about the application of the Montreux regime, and the claim that the Montreux regime carried no conditions to prevent the use of the Straits with hostile purposes against the Black Sea states was refused. After the inequity of the charges posed to Turkey by the Soviet Union were proved one by one, it was suggested that a few tricky transitions clear of discrediting the the integrity of the Turkish government had arisen not due to the legal structure of the contract but due to the lack of technical expressions in the annex number 2 in the contract describing the warships.

Despite Soviet Unions's not making a complaint about the Straits during the World War II. and the benefits of the Axis states in case of using the Straits freely, but not being able to attempt it during the war was explained by Turkey's fulfilling the responsibility in the Straits with qualifications and integrity. It was reported that if necessary, the Turkish government was ready to prove its good will and honesty in the implementation of the Montreux regime in the presence of an arbitration committee. It was stated that the technical part of the Montreux Convention which does not meet the new requirements should be reviewed and adapted to current circumstances, but the procedure followed by the Soviet government about this issue had deficiencies. A conference to be convened in agreement with the United States, it was stated that examining and concluding the requests of the changes could not to be prevented. It was reminded that the first three proposals of the Soviet Union consisting of duplication of the proposals by the U.S. government had been essentially considered by the Turkish government under certain terms and conditions. However, it was stated that a proposal of the Straits regime issued only by the Black Sea states had not been denied as it ignored the termination procedure of the current contract and the interests of other states which had signed the contract. It was reported that common defense of the Straits with the Soviet Union was impossible to comply with the Turkey's sovereignty rights and the safety and certainly refused (BYEGM, 1946c).

In the second note from the Soviet government to Turkey dated September 24, 1946, the accusation that the Straits had been used against the Allied states by the Axis states in the World War II was repeated. It was claimed that this dangerous situation of the Straits constrained the Soviet Union to allocate a significant number of troops for the defense of the Black Sea during the war. As a justification to the refusal of the Soviet proposal No. 4 by the Turkish government was stated that the Black Sea was an enclosed sea and due to this nature, interests and the rights of the Black Sea states had the priority in the determination of the Straits regime. It was specified in the Moscow Treaty dated March 16, 1921 that monopolized authorizations on the Straits were chartered to the Black Sea states, it was accepted also in the Montreux Convention that the Black Sea states were privileged in the Straits. As a justification to the refusal of the Soviet proposal No. 5 by the Turkish government, the argument was repeated that 2,100 km long Soviet coast in the Black Sea spread into the important interior regions of the country, and the commercial passage and the security in the Straits could be achieved by the Turkish-Soviet common defense. It was claimed that this proposal by the Soviet government was in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It was suggested that Turkish views on the procedure of changing the Montreux Convention had not taken into consideration the decision taken in the Postdam Conference to make direct negotiations between Turkey and three allied governments (BYEGM, 1946d).

In the second note of U.S. and British governments to the Moscow on October 9, 1946, it was said that the decisions of the Potsdam were misinterpreted by the Soviets. In the U.S. note, it was said that "*The U.S. government does not think that direct negotiations to be held between Turkish government and each of the three states agreed in the Potsdam Conference will harm the participation of the other two states to the negotiations on changing the regime of the Straits. On the contrary, American government thinks that the Potsdam decisions are composed of a simple exchange of views with the Turkish government. This exchange of views was thought to be beneficial to a conference which including the U.S., all the relevant states will participate, in order to examine the issue of replacement of the Montreux Convention*". In the notes, it was reported that Soviet Russia's proposal number 5 on participating in the defense of the Straits had been rejected by the United States and Great Britain. In the note of the U.S., it was said that "*Our government is centered on the final idea that Turkey should remain primarily responsible for the defense of the Straits*". In addition, in the note of the U.S., USSR was clearly and firmly warned to avoid attacking the Straits. In the note of the UK, it was stated that "*The government of the Great Britain also declared that, the proposal on arranging the defense of the Straits by Turkey and the Soviet Union jointly is unacceptable. The British government is of the mind that Turkey, as being a land state, should continue to be responsible for the defense and control of the Straits.*" (BYEGM, 1946e).

In Turkey's second responsive note to the Soviet government on October 18, 1946, it was explained in detail that the claims were not true that the Straits had been used by the German warships during the World War II and Turkey had been ineffective on the control of the Straits. It was repeated that a few mentioned fraudulent passages had resulted from the omissions in the statements in the Annex number 2 of the Montreux Convention describing technical specifications of the warships. It was repeated that if requested by the Soviet government, the issue could be taken to an international arbitral tribunal. It was mentioned that with the control and dominance of Turkey on the Straits, no attack could have been done to the USSR from the Mediterranean so from the direction of the Straits during the World War II. It was said that because of the danger created by German and Italian ships settled in the coasts and ports of the Black Sea in 1942,

it is true that the Soviet troops had been directed to the Black Sea, but these had come to the Black Sea not through the Straits, but with trains or using the Danube River path. It was explained that based on the doctrine with a clear consensus about that the Black Sea was a deep sea, the Black Sea did not carry the the properties of an inland sea. It was confirmed that there had been commitments in favor of the Black Sea states in the Treaty of Moscow dated March 16, 1921. However, it was stated that the Soviet Union, by participating and signing the treaties in Lousanne and Montreux Conventions of its own free will, had accepted the provisions of these treaties had meant to have changed the commitments by the Moscow Treaty. It was suggested that the exceptions given to favor of the Black Sea states in agreement by Turkey and the relevant states, did not give the right to exclude the Black Sea non-states from the negotiations planned in order to change the regime of the Straits. It was specified that such a demand were inconsistent with the basic principle of the public international law ordering that the replacement of the provisions of international treaties was possible with the participation of all contracting states. It was mentioned that if Turkey's strength of defense the Straits against any attack was not enough to resolve the concerns of the Soviets, the Soviets had to rely on the collective security guarantees provided by the United Nations.

In the conclusion part of the note, it was specified that in accordance with the decisions taken in the Potsdam Conference, the United States, Britain and Soviet governments had notified their views to Turkey and as the views of the parties had adequately been clarified, there was no need for contacts made by note, so an international conference should be held. It was suggested that in the conference to be held, it was necessary to adopt the Annex number 2 of the Montreux Convention to the current conditions, to replace the new system brought by the United Nations organization instead of the the provisions relating to the League of Nations in the Straits regime, and to subtract Japan from the list of the participating states and instead to include in the United States (BYEGM, 1946e).

Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Peker, in a statement in The Daily Telegraph in October 18, 1946, said that Turkey did not have a reasonable ground for changing the the attitude taken against the Soviet demands about the Straits. He said that he found the attempts made by the United States and Great Britain satisfactory, direct negotiations about modification of the Montreux Convention as discussed in Potsdam could only be preparatory for a conference. He said that articles 4 and 5 of the Soviet note dated August 8, 1946 were contrary to the spirit of the Montreux and the sovereignty of Turkey. He said that, no matter how much conveniences be provided strategically, he believed the United Nations would not allow any state have demands on the territory or sovereignty of another state. He said that to keep redundant number of people under arms would prevent the government to implement some development projects in the economic and social fields, but for the sake of Turkey's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, the Turkish nation showed understanding of the situation. Prime Minister Peker said that the government selected the following five points as the base on the issue of the Straits (BYEGM, 1946e):

- To protect the sovereignty right of the Turkish nation and the integrity of the country of Turkey,
- Trust and loyalty to the allies of Turkey (the United States and Great Britain),
- Sincere commitment to the United Nations,
- Continuation of friendly relations with all the neighbors of Turkey, re-establishment of sincere friendship and mutual trust that had been established particularly with Soviet Russia during the Turkish War of Independence and had become a tradition between the two great world wars,
- Re-establishment of normal and mutual commercial relations with every side of the world.

President of Turkey, İsmet İnönü, in his speech in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on November 1, 1946, said: "... We recognize the need fort he correction of the Montreux Convention in accordance with the changing new requirements and within the procedures and the limits mentioned clearly by the Montreux. We take in good purpose that the contract would be negotiated in an international conference. We will respond positively to the changes considering the legal interests of all concerned within the principles assuring Turkey's territorial integrity and sovereignty rights. The Convention had been respected with the greatest caution by us in the World War II. It is unfair to claim that the Montreux Convention had been applied in favor of the Axis powers. We are not afraid our actions to be presented to the audit and provision of arbitrait. We see any kind of guarantee for us and all the relevant states in the Straits Question in the United Nations Convention." (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 1946).

Turkey's Foreign Ministry officials had repeatedly described to the U.S. Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson that because of the Straits Question, Turkey maintained a large army, and this constituted a major burden on Turkey's economic and financial situation. At the same period, the UK government appealed to the United States and requested that exposed economic difficulties left no opportunity to continue financial assistance to Greece, so these assistance should be maintained by the U.S. government.

In case of being deprived of the financial support, it was impossible for Greece to provide internal security distressed by the communist guerrillas (Ergin, 1968). In this tense and hopeless looking international period, the U.S. government took a historical decision. President Truman, on March 12, 1947, offered the congress for giving \$ 400 million as a Grant to the Turkish and Greek governments. Upon the acceptance of this attempt called the «Truman Doctrine» in international literature in the American Congress on May 22, 1947, \$ 100 million relieved to Turkey (Baltalı, 1959). After the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953, the declaration dated May 29, 1953, from the Soviet government to Ankara through the Turkish Embassy in Moscow started a new era in the course of the Straits Question. In the declaration prepared by Molotov, it was reported that the Soviet government's territorial demands and views about removal of threats towards the security of the Soviet Union from the Straits had aroused a sad influence in Turkey; for the purpose of the continuation of good neighborly relations, and strengthening peace and security, territorial demands from Turkey were abandoned. In addition, it was stated that it was possible to guarantee the security of the Straits by both the USSR and Turkey with acceptable conditions (Ergin, 1968).

Time of the Montreux Convention had been designated as 20 years beginning from the effective date of contract (November 9, 1936) (Article 28/2). However, for the functioning of the termination procedure, any state that had signed the contract had to demand to the French government two years before the expiration date of the contract (November 8, 1954) (Article 28/3). Soviet government, although had the authority to demand the initiation of the termination procedure on November 8, 1954, did not exercise this termination authority. Thus, this diplomatic war which was one of the strongest attempt in the history to seize control of the Straits, ended with no progress for the Soviet Union.

5. ASSESSMENTS ON THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES ARISEN THE STRAITS QUESTION

5.1. Territorial Demands of The USSR from the Eastern Border of Turkey

Inconsistency of the claims asserted by the Soviet government in the demand of Kars and Ardahan provinces from Turkey emerges when the process of determining the Turkish-Soviet boundaries are examined. In the 4th article of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, dated March 3, 1918, it was agreed that the status of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi provinces to be determined by plebiscite. The Soviet government agreed to withdraw its garrisons in the provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi, and to completely release people living in these provinces in all political preferences. In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in the plebisitte on July 14, 1918, of the voters, 19.446 of 20.016 in Kars, 22.602 of 22.654 in Ardahan, and 85.124 of 87.048 in Batumi voted in favor of Turkey. In the Treaty of Moscow dated March 16, 1921, where north-eastern borders of Turkey were determined, USSR agreed on retailing the Kars, Ardahan and Batumi provinces to Turkey.

However, in the negotiations of the Treaty of Kars dated October 13, 1921, which was the confirmation of the Moscow Treaty, as a result of Stalin's personally intervenning to retail the province and port of Batumi to Russia which had a great importance for the Russians as the destination of the Baku oil pipeline, Batumi was left to the Soviet Union with its port. In response, Stalin, drawing the boarder by following the thalweg of Arapçay and Aras Rivers, gave Turkey additional land in the south (Bıyıklıoğlu, 1958). In other words, the return to Turkey Kars and Ardahan provinces, as claimed by Molotov, did not occur as a result of the Soviet Union's being obliged to endure to waive their rights due to its weak situation after the World War I. On the contrary, the Turkey-Soviet border was drawn as a result of Turkey's waiving the province of Batumi in the long and careful negotiations with the participation of Stalin in person. The Soviet government after the World War II, did not demand Kars and Ardahan neither for having the right nor to expand. The real purpose of the Soviet government was to be able to establish its demands over the Straits to Turkey by raising the the issue of those two provinces.

5.2. Allegations of USSR on the Straits

Inconsistency of the Soviet claim that Turkey, having ignored the provisions of the Montreux Convention in the process of World War II, permitted the Axis powers to use the Straits arises out of the following statements:

Soviet leader Stalin in 1942, in a negotiation with the British ambassador of Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps said about Turkey: *“In those depressed days, Turkey had acted as the loyal and trust worthy guardian of the Strait. It is required to reward this great service and to bring Turkey in position that Turkey would be able to do the same service in a more successful way in the future. Turkey's territory in Europe is not enough to fulfill the expected task in necessary perfection. It is necessary to expand Hinterland. And this is also possible... Bulgaria has betrayed us in thedays of the disaster. It has to be punished. A single port on the Black Sea to Bulgaria will suffice. Other port and its environment should be given to Turkey as remuneration of its services and as a requirement of a task which can be fulfilled by Turkey.”* (BYEGM, 1942).

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in his speech in the House of Commons on February 11, 1943, about Turkey's role in World War II, said: "...Anything which will put Turkey in an awkward situation is not in on our politics. On the contrary, disaster for Turkey is a disaster for Britain and all the allied states. Turkey has remained as a strong obstacle against the attack of the Axis powers until now. Turkey, by doing so, even in the darkest days, has prevented the spread of the war to Turkey, Iran and Iraq, and has saved the extremely important Abadan oil wells from the menace." (BYEGM, 1943).

After Churchill's leaving the power, in the Tehran Conference held between 22 November to 1 December 1943 with the participation of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, it was explained that Stalin proposed that strategic areas of the Straits should be given to the USSR so as to be fortified and be transformed to naval bases (O'Sullivan, 2003). Germany threatened Turkey many times to join the war in their side in World War II. On not putting across this, Germany made promises of political and economic and strategic importance in no small part in return of Turkey's giving passage through the Straits and the German troop's making use of the Turkish bases for the operations to the South Caucasus and Iraq. The German government made the following promises to Turkey: 50% of the production of oil wells of Mosul during the war would be given to Turkey unconditionally, and after the war, preferential tariff guarantee from these oils would be given to Turkey. A 15-year Turkish mandate on Syria would be established, and Syria would completely be given to Turkey by the plebiscite at the end of the period. Limnos, Lesbos and Chios islands would be left to Turkey. A portion of Greek-Thrace would be given back to Turkey, and Turkey's western border would be expanded. However, Turkey chose to serve not as a step stone for Hitler, but as an indispensable stronghold of the Allied states in terms of Soviet Russia and the Middle East. Therefore, Germany embroidered for Turkey as "A nation with no political ambition..." (Atak, 1947).

American Professor Ernest Jackh, regarding Turkey's role in World War II, said: "We must confess that Turkey's armed neutrality in the World War II had served the state of the British, American and Russian armies in the Middle East and the Caucasus. If Hitler's armies had continued the series of vicories in Western Europe and the Balkans, they would have penetrated into Bulgaria, Greece and neighboring Turkey. Then, by moving to the east, they would be able to reach in a position to have the Caucasus and oils of Mosul through the rear gates of Russia and Iran. They would also have gone down to the Southeast, and flown into Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Saudi Arabia... They would have violated the Suez and Egypt eastern hemisphere, and would have cut the American-British-Russian land and sea connections between the Red Sea and Iranian Gulf, which was the center of world struggle. Then, they would have allied with the Japanese forces in the Indian Ocean. This connection would have been a chain around the world... If these events have occurred, the British and American attack and victory in North Africa would be doubtful, the invasion of Southern Europe would be delayed to an uncertain time." (Jackh, 2008).

In addition to the above statements, in view of Turkey's declaring war on Germany and Japan on February 23, 1945, it can not be in question that Turkey disregarded the provisions of Montreux Convention and allowed warships of Axis states to pass through the Straits. Especially the USSR's claim that these transitions occurred after the year 1942 when the war had begun to turn in favor of the allied states is strategically inept. In addition, the Soviet government's declaring its demands on the Straits in 1943 showed that the subject was not related to the passage of the warships of the Axis states through the Straits.

5. 3. Main Reasons of the Demands of the USSR on the Straits

What were the reasons referring Soviet Russia to aggravate the issue of the Straits as the age-old Russian ambitions on the Straits had come true with the regime established by the Montreux Straits Convention signed in 1936? Political events can only be analyzed accurately in their natural environment and as long as they are assessed with an appropriate viewpoint. Reasons of the Soviet government's raising the Straits Question during this period can only be interpreted properly as long as they are evaluated jointly with the conditions resulting from the World War II. In this respect, the reasons of the Soviet government's demands on the Straits can be summarized at five points listed below:

Soviet foreign policy trends after the World War II and the reasons for the Kremlin's policy towards Turkey is at a point related to the ideology of Bolshevik Revolution. According to the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, the safety of the Soviet Union can be achieved if and only with the realization of proletarian revolutions in the depending countries. The proletarian revolution is to overthrow the existing political structure in a certain in the country with violence, and instead to establish a government constituted and governed by the communist party (Hill, 1954). According to this view, Turkey as a capitalist state, was a threat to the security of the USSR, and the security could only be provided by a communist neighbor state. The talks between Saraçoğlu and the Soviet leaders in Moscow in 1939, apathy in the Turkish-Soviet relations especially after the victory of Stalingrad, the termination of the Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Nonaggression and Neutrality in 1945,

Soviet government's demand for land and bases from Turkey the same year, two Soviet notes in 1946 clearly shows that the USSR regarded Turkey a part of its own security zone. Changing the Montreux Convention unilaterally, Moscow's persistent attitude on establishing a regional pact with the Black Sea states were precautions thought to break Turkey's ties with the capitalist Western world (Açıklan, 1947). At the end of World War II, the Mediterranean Sea seemed to be the combat zone of the opposing interests of the great powers. USSR, during the last years of the war, was following policies aimed at the establishment of communist governments in Trieste on the Adriatic, and in Greece over the Aegean Sea. Also in 1946, Soviet Union demanded on guardianship on Libya. Moscow press's mentioning that peace depended on resolving the problem of the Mediterranean explained the Soviet Union's objectives of the war. Pressures applied to Turkey by the Soviet Union in order to dominate the Mediterranean Sea were supported by the implementation of the systematic conspiracies planned on Greece and Iran. In this context, by supporting Balkan communist guerrillas whose attacks had led to civil war, it was intended to establish a communist government in Greece. USSR, constituting a communist government in Greece which was a British outpost in the Mediterranean, expected to gain control of the Dodecanese Islands donated to Greece with the support of the Soviet government in Paris Peace Conference.

Moscow, by constituting a communist government in Greece, sought to destabilize the situation in Turkey and to use Greece as a springboard in the spread of Soviet influence to Italy. In addition, for the establishment of an obedient government to the Soviet Union in Tehran, troubles were created which resulted from the Soviet intervention and caused a major crisis in Iran. The goal of these policies followed by the Soviet government was to constitute government obedient to orders in the cord started from Poland in the north, passed through Greece and Turkey, and ended up in Iran. Against this power and passion of the Soviet Union, the American force began to settle in the Eastern Mediterranean to support the United Kingdom. The Straits were the region where these two opposing forces faced and the American power challenged the Soviet expansion. The Soviet Union believed that they could remove the fronting Anglo-American block by obtaining control across the Straits (Ergin, 1968).

The United Kingdom, struggling to find a realistic policy which will reconcile its own interests in the Middle East with the demands of the Arab states, had found a new formula that allowed the Arab states to draw a common foreign policy and to develop measures which would develop political and economic relations between them. The purpose of these efforts resulted in the establishment of the Arab League on March 22, 1945, was to start a new process which would provide the maintenance of the British interests on a friendly and safe housing base. However, nationalism movement prevailing in the Arab world during this period led the Arab League to follow policies in the opposite direction than expected by the London government. The Arab League who did not mediate to solve the existing problems between the Arab states and London with compromise had become a center of propaganda and war which inflamed unfolding of conflicts. The focus of the conflict was the desire of the withdrawal of the British Union countries. With the signing of the treaty in 1946 as to evacuate the Suez Canal, Britain began to withdraw from Arab states. The communist propaganda launched in the region by the USSR who seized the opportunity of Britain's actual withdrawal from Arab states made very important developments. The USSR, who skillfully took advantage of the Arab world's controversies with both the Western states as well as new Israel state, and the subject of the Arab nationalism, further strengthened the propaganda of communism.

The Straits were the region where the USSR wanted to settle who wanted to destroy the power of England on the Arab states and to speed up the communist flow to the south (Ergin, 1968). The Soviet Union, under the pretext of ensuring their safety during the World War II, settled in the eastern parts of Finland and Poland, a part of the Baltic region, and subdued the region of Bessarabia from Romania. After the war, the USSR settled in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria. Again based on the same idea of safety, the Soviet Union demanded for bases on the Straits. However, the idea of the safety zone put forward by the Soviet Union to justify the followed enlargement policy in order to obtain strategic border areas in the west did not base on solid principles. Because, when the situation of Europe after the World War II. and the Soviet Union's military strength were considered, it was nonsensical to argue that the security of the Soviet Union was under threat (Baltalı, 1959). The Soviet's idea of the safety zone was actually similar to Vital Space Theory advocated by Hitler. In the Vital Space Theory, the source of which is Prof. Karl Haushofer's geopolitics doctrine, the states are divided into two as static and dynamic. Vital Space Theory has been suggested to justify the enlargement policies of the dynamic states with rapidly increasing population in order to find new areas of life for the growing populations (Mattern, 1943). The fifth cause of the appeal of the Straits attracted the USSR was the oil of the Middle East. Because 56.6% of the world's oil reserves is in the Middle East (BP, 2010).

The USSR wanted to reach the rich oil deposits in the Middle East, and the way leading the Soviet Union to the rich oil wells of the Middle East was passing through the Straits (Padelford, 1948).

5.4. Factors Preventing the Demands of the USSR on the Straits to Come True

The termination of this diplomatic struggle launched by the Soviet government to seize control of the Straits with no progress is due to the reasons specified below: Because Great Britain had foreseen the Soviet Union's dangerous intention about the Straits, had demanded that the Straits Commission continue its duty in the Montreux Conference, the Straits also be open to the transition of the warships of the Black Sea non-littoral states, and the militarization of the Strait, the contract be valid for 50 years. In the 29th article of the Montreux Convention, it had been assumed that amendments in the provisions of a contract could be made every five years as long as relevant states demanded. The Soviet Union, being among the signatory states of the agreement, on condition to follow the rules determined by the contract, could request for the amendment of the provisions led to objections until November 8, 1946. However, the Soviet government's directly appealing to Turkey, and reporting their demand to establish bases in strategic points on the Straits had legitimised Britain's skepticism, and had the United Kingdom and the United States side against the Soviet Union, their ally in the World War II.

The adoption of the ideas put forward by Stalin in Yalta Conference by Roosevelt and Churchill, rather than the others, originated in the importance given by the United States and Great Britain to keep the Soviet Union in the coalition of the allies. Again in accordance with the same goal, Truman presented important proposals about the issue of the Straits in favor of the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet government's not benefiting from these opportunities offered in hope of achieving greater gains of Turkey was a major tactical error. The U.S.'s becoming prominent in the international arena after the World War II, although was underestimated by the Soviet government, became the biggest obstacle for the Soviet Union to overcome as soon as possible in the realization of the objectives on the Straits. The Soviet government could not realize that, at a time the world was directed towards the realization of the ideal of liberty secured by public confidence, attempting to subjugate the neighboring states and divide the world into separate domains under the leadership of a young and powerful state like the U.S was a violation to the history.

Any of the Black Sea states did not participate in the campaign launched by the Soviet government after the World War II with the claim of ensuring the security of the Black Sea littoral states. Moreover, when the Soviet diplomat, Georgiy V. Cicerin expressed similar demands in the Lausanne Conference, he met unanimous oppositions of the other Black Sea states. Because the Soviets dominating the Straits, when the Soviet military power, and its political influence on the Black Sea states such as Bulgaria and Romania are considered, would lead the Black Sea to become a Russian lake. The Black Sea states declared that they did not accord the right to the Soviet Union to speak on their behalf, and their ideas on the issue of the security of their territory in the coasts of the Black Sea was properly different from the ideas of the Soviet government (Pundeff, 1954). During the period of 1945-1947, keeping nearly 1 million people under arms against the threats of the Soviet Union on the Straits, and appropriating 41.5% of the budget to defence expenditure constituted a big burden on the economic structure of Turkey. Not having the necessary investments depending on this situation had aggravated the living conditions of the people (Baltalı, 1959). However, the demands of the Soviet Union against Turkey's independence and sovereignty aroused patriotic feelings of the Turkish nation; the Turkish government, despite all the adverse conditions, followed a tough policy against the Soviet Union, and explained that, if necessary, Turkey would not abstain to go to the war.

5.5. Similarities Between the Straits Policies of the Tsarist Russia and the USSR

When the reports prepared about the Straits during the period of Tsarist Russia and the demands of the Soviet Union on the Straits after the World War II are compared, it is clear from the following few examples that the political stance he successor to the USSR policy stance of the USSR partook of the Tsarist Russia's traditional policy of the Straits:

In the Capo d'Istra Plan prepared in 1828, it was stated: "*If Russia does not directly get Istanbul, Russia would need to supply military mainstays on the Straits to be able to control the passages in these waters.*" (Wellesley, 1828).

In the report prepared by Russia's Belgrade Ambassador Prince Nikolai S. Trubetzkoy and sent to Russia's Ottoman Ambassador N. De Giers on August 20, 1914, it was said: "*In case of Turkey's staying neutral in World War I, all the Black Sea littoral states are required to obtain the right to pass their warships through the Straits. In case of Turkey's participation in the war, Russian control should be established over the Straits by obtaining specific points in the Istanbul and the Dardanelles Straits.*" (Feridun, 1968).

Also, in the report sent to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei D. Sazonov by Trubetzkoj on February 26, 1915, it was said: *“Straits are not only a tool for the Russians, but also a goal legitimating the current war and self abnegation it brought... In my opinion, both our war with Germany and Austria and alliance with France and the United Kingdom is nothing else than of the means used to reach our national goals. In this respect, the invasion of the Straits either by us or our allies can not be considered different and trivial. About this subject, even our allies’s just joining us does not seem very nice to me... As for the solution of the problem, as long as we have established complete control over both Straits, I think the problem can be overcome. To the contrary, accepting the participation of our allies would mean the beginning of the end in terms of our mutual relations. So, the thing to be done is to definitively settle the matter in our favor, that is to take Istanbul and all the hinterland under our sovereignty. If this is not possible, it is to be contented with settling our control through the sea and land, and to leave the Straits to Turkey...”* (Feridun, 1968).

Sumner Welles said that the demands of the Soviet Russia about the Straits explained after the World War II were very similar to the content of the plans designed by Tsar Nicholas I and Tsar Aleksander II (O’Sullivan, 2003).

5. 6. Results of the Straits Question from the Point of Turkey and the USSR

The results of the Straits Question which was launched by the Soviet government in the last year of the World War II, and caused severe diplomatic struggles between on one side USSR and on the other side the alliance of Turkey, U.S. and UK especially in the years of 1945-1946, when evaluated separately from the point of Turkey and the Soviet Union, can be interpreted as follows: Intransigent policy of the Soviet government towards the Turkish Straits changed completely after the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953. In the declaration dated May 29, 1953 by the Moscow government to the Turkish government, it was reported that in order to protect good-neighborly relations, and strengthening peace and security, territorial demands from Turkey were abandoned, and the thoughts about the Straits changed. Within the context of the 28th article of the Montreux Convention, the Soviet government, although was entitled to request to terminate the Straits Convention on November 8, 1954, did not use this authority. The Soviet government, in the statements during this period, stated that cold war period unique to Stalin ended, and wanted to implement its policy to exist together in peace on the Straits. Coexistence policy expressed a situation which gave the opportunity to both capitalist and communist countries to live amicably alongside each other, to continue the life chosen without one’s interfering the other’s work, to engage in peaceful competition with the other states in social, economic and cultural fields.

Soviet statesmen Nikita Khrushchev, Alexei Kosygin, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan and Nikolai Podgorny, in their statements in various times, did not avoid to admit openly that the unjust policies followed against Turkey in the past and of which the responsibility belonged to the leaders of the past, had been a mistake. Moreover, they announced that they wanted to rebuild the honest and friendly relationship with Turkey established during the time of Lenin. With the protocols signed on October 30, 1964, a new period started between the two countries when economic and trade relations developed (Ergin, 1968).

In this process, Turkey demonstrated a political attitude on one hand trying not to instigate the possible reactions of the Soviet government by calculating their possible reactions unaggressively, and on the other hand, to strengthen the alliance with the United States and Great Britain which Turkey needed their help and support. Because, Turkey’s remaining alone against more powerful Soviet Union could lead to the conclusion of the process in a manner which could be counted as disaster for Turkey. British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin’s speech in the House of Commons on February 21, 1946, supporting Turkey, and the gesture of U.S. by sending the Missouri battleship to Turkey on April 5, 1946, were the concrete examples of the cooperation and solidarity between Turkey and Britain and the United States. In addition, the topics President Truman emphasized in his speech in Chicago on April 6, 1946 had a great importance in this process. Turkish, American and British notes given to the Soviet government being in agreement as to both content and date was an important indicator of this alliance formed. In this process, Turkey’s coming under the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan which were economic aid packages from the United States, and being the member of the IMF, WB, The Council of Europe, OECD and NATO has transformed Turkey to a complementary and inseparable part of the Western world (Boratav, 2009; McGhee, 1954).

6. CONCLUSION

Despite the contrasts between the mutual interests, the Montreux Convention which succeeded to reconcile the legitimate interests of the states with the high principles of international law had been an ideal regime which was capable of adapting to existing conditions in respect of its general principles.

Having been able to resist to the difficulties and depressions of the World War II which did not allow pre-estimation, and the Soviet government's not being having been able to contract a consistent criticism to the legal structure of the convention confirm this claim. The domination the Straits by Turkey prevented the spread of the World War II to new fronts. Contrary to the claims of the Soviet government, the Straits dominated by Turkey, even for the USSR, were not a source of danger, had acted as a true security member. Turkey had proven to be in a position to successful play the role of guarantee of peace and the role of balance in the Straits.

While the scope and priorities changed depending on the results of the Montreux Convention and the World War II, important similarities on the base of the principles were recognized between the political attitudes of the Tsarist Russia and the USSR towards the Straits. The aim of the imperialist struggle began with Tsar Petro I. in the XVIII. century was to reach the warm seas, and to have the opportunity to dominate the Straits or to obtain the opportunity of free passage in order to spread the influence of Tsarist Russia to the Balkans, the Near and Middle East. The Soviet Union, getting hold of a large part of the Balkans under its influence after the World War II., for a larger expansion movement designed towards the Middle East and, the Red Sea by crossing the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Indian Ocean, determined the Straits as the transition station. Despite the regime change took place with the Bolshevik Revolution, and anti-imperialist statements published by Lenin in the Declaration of Peace on November 8, 1917, and by Litvinov in the Montreux Conference, the Soviet government continued the passion to dominate the Straits and the imperialist policy of the Tsarist Russia, even adding an ideological dimension. In other words, the imperialist policy of the Tsarist Russia developed into the expansionist-doctrinal policy of the Soviet government after World War II.

The reasons driving the Soviet Union to the control of the Straits led the American and British governments to show interest not only in supporting Turkey against oppression, but also in protecting its sovereignty and independence on its territory. Especially American government's anticipating the Soviet goals in 1946 aiming to destroy American and British presence and some political, economic and military interests in the Middle East caused the U.S. and the UK to support Turkey's behaviour about the issue of the Straits. This process brought Turkey in a position of a fortress in the protection of the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries, and a pioneer in the defense of the Mediterranean and the Western world in terms of American and British governments. In response to the inconclusive diplomatic struggle of the Soviet government on the Straits, Turkey's balanced foreign policy based on alliance with the West and the friendship with the Soviet and development of good neighborly relations has given good results. This process has made an impact which accelerated Turkey's political and economic integration with the capitalist Western world.

Historical process of Russia's political attitude towards the Straits was expressed by the claim of Napoleon Bonaparte saying "*The policy of a state lies in its geography.*" However, this claim formed only a part of the the truth in the Turkish-Soviet Straits Question. There are also other elements of the policy as important as geographical factors. The Soviet government's political attitudes in a period the nations, day-by-day, head for more freedom, cooperation and solidarity involved tactical errors in terms of assessment and perspective. It is a fact not to be kept out of sight that Turkish-Soviet Straits Question had emerged during the Stalin's government and ended with the death of Stalin, and Stalin's political attitude towards the Straits had not been adopted and even criticized by the Soviet governments after him. So, the assessments should not be generalized, but must be limited to the period of Stalin's government.

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