Telegram from the Foreign Office, London, to the British ambassador in Ankara, M. Peterson[[1]](#footnote-1), 12 July 1945[[2]](#footnote-2)

Turkish Foreign Minister[[3]](#footnote-3) came to see me on July 11th accompanied by the Turkish Ambassador[[4]](#footnote-4).

(2) They emphasised sinister motives which in their opinion underlay the recent requirements put forward by M. Molotov to the Turkish Ambassador. They suspected that the fourth Russian requirement, which had not been defined, would turn out to be nothing less than a demand that Turkey should enter Russia’s orbit in respect of both her domestic and foreign affairs[[5]](#footnote-5). In any case Turkey would fight rather than cede territory or give bases.

(3) They were aware of the caveat which we have put in at Moscow[[6]](#footnote-6), and asked whether the question would be discussed at Berlin. I told them that it certainly would be, but I could not foretell how the discussion would develop. At any rate the Turkish Government would in no circumstances be faced with a joint fait accompli. I pointed out that a clear distinction could be made between the revision of the Montreux Convention by international agreement which had been foreshadowed for a considerable time, and the Russian demand now made for the first time for territorial changes and the grant of bases. I observed that the Soviet Government might well for tactical reasons be putting forward extreme demands, whilst prepared in the long run to accept something much less and more reasonable. The Foreign Minister did not demur to this.

(4) I advised the Foreign Minister to see the United States Ambassador while he is in London and explain to him the anxieties of his Government. Mr. Winant[[7]](#footnote-7) has since agreed to receive him.

[TNA, FO 371/48774]

Keywords: Turkey

1. Peterson, Sir Maurice D. (1889 - 1952) - British diplomat. Ambassador to Spain (1939 - 1940), Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs - Middle East/Far East (1942 - 1944), Ambassador to Turkey (1944 - 1946), Ambassador in USSR (1946 - 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The telegram was also sent to the British Embassies in Moscow and Washington, as well as to the Minister of State Resident in the Middle East. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Saka, Hasan (1885 – 1960) – Turkish statesman and politician, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1944 – 1947), Prime-Minister of Turkey (1947 – 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sarper, Selim Rauf (1899 – 1968) – Turkish diplomat, Ambassador to USSR (1944 – 1946), to Italy (1946 – 1947), Turkish representative at the UN (1947 – 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As the historian J. Hasanli has noted, soon after Molotov’s meeting with Sarper on 7 June, ‘against a background of Soviet pressure, Turkey tried to prompt British and American politicians to take action and so spread rumours to the effect that Molotov was threatening to introduce a further fourth treaty term, possibly more onerous than the previous three. The Turks suggested that this fourth term could be a demand to end the Anglo-Turkish alliance, or, as in Romania and Bulgaria, a demand that the Turkish regime adopt a “new direction” politically tantamount to a change in regime’ (Gasanly Dzh. SSSR – Turtsiia. S. 204–205). In combination with separate British anxieties, such rumours appear to have had their effect. A Foreign Office memorandum for the Chiefs of Staff (distributed on 25 August) contained suggestions that the USSR, having failed to secure its terms from Turkey through diplomatic channels, ‘will seek to manoeuvre pro-Russian Governments into power in Greece and Turkey. Once that objective is secured, they might well be in a position to put pressure on the Greek Government to give Bulgaria an outlet to the Aegean at Dedeagatach. This, if turned into a Russian base, as it would be, would be no mean substitute for Russian bases in the Straits themselves’ (Copy of a Letter from FO to COS, 25/08/1945 (in: C.O.S. (45) 551 (O)) // TNA, CAB 80/97). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This refers to Kerr’s letter addressed to Molotov and dated 7 July in which the Ambassador emphasized that the question of the Straits was not only an issue for bilateral Soviet-Turkish relations. Kerr reminded him of the discussion of the issue at Yalta and the upcoming discussions of it by the “Big Three” at Potsdam. See: Sitki Bilgin M., Morewood S. Op. cit. P. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Winant, John Gilbert (1889 – 1947) – US politician and diplomat, Ambassador to UK (1941–1946), US representative to UNESCO (1946–1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)