

Italy's view on Turkey joining the Atlantic Treaty (1949-1952)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the difficult way in which Turkey and Greece negotiated their membership applications in the North-Atlantic Treaty and it analyzes the consequences of this foreign policy choice which placed these countries in one of the Cold War teams. Heavy emphasis was put on the reasons why the Italian administration considered and supported these states' demands for security. Essentially, this study tried to redraw the diplomatic effort, using documents from the collections of the Italian diplomacy (I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani), mostly from the recently published 11th/XI series, which discusses Italy's political and diplomatic view within NATO. It is also worth mentioning that this study also followed the attitudes and reactions of the government in Athens regarding the issue of the first expansion of the Atlantic Alliance, although the author placed emphasis on the more fleshed out policy of the Turkish Government, another reason being its influence in the Middle East and among the Arab states.

By February 1952, the Atlantic Alliance finished its first enlargement, the twelve original members of this collective security organization being joined by two Mediterranean states, Greece and Turkey. Given their decidedly important geostrategic value, offered by their geographic positions, the aforementioned states made the object of the Truman Doctrine, a program through which the United States supported the defense of a region considered vital in the security of Western Europe¹.

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¹ By the end of February 1947, the Italian ambassador at Washington, Alberto Tarchiani, noted that the State Department was starting to view Greece and Turkey as its first line of defense in Europe. This policy would evolve to become the Truman Doctrine, defined on March, 12 by the American president in *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Decima Serie: 1943-1948 Volume V (2 febbraio-30 maggio 1947)*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1997, pp. 160-162, [hereafter ***DDI X vol. V]; Beginning with March 1947, through the Truman Doctrine, Greece received economic and military help amounting to 300 million dollars, whereas Turkey received goods valued up to 100 million dollars. The aim of this aid was to fortify these two states against the communist threat. It is also worth mentioning that this was the first step in including the Mediterranean area in the American and British interests, from a military perspective, thus initiating a new direction for the American foreign policy. For more information on the impact of the Truman Doctrine on Turkey's economy and politics, see Joseph C. Satterthwaite,

The American aid offered to Greece and Turkey provoked strong reactions among the Italian diplomatic circles², and only the launch of the Marshall Plan would shift the interest of the administration in Rome towards the new financial instrument announced, in June 1947, by the new State Secretary, George Marshall.³

It should be mentioned that, originally, the Atlantic Alliance was thought out to be a defensive system dedicated to states on the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean; Italy, a Mediterranean country, therefore inclined towards a Mediterranean alliance, having been integrated in NATO opened the way for Turkey and Greece to demand the same treatment, especially considering that, after the experience of the established Truman Doctrine, the seemingly natural thing to do was to follow up with the integration of the two states in the new military organization.⁴

Furthermore, during preliminary negotiations for the treaty, when the French ambassador at Washington, Henri Bonnet, proposed that Italy should be considered as a member, the British fiercely opposed the idea, considering that the advantage of „strategic placement” that Italy had, could be also argued for both Greece and Turkey, thus – theoretically – offering these two the opportunity to be part of the new alliance.⁵

Initially, Turkey had no intention of being part of the North-Atlantic Treaty, aware of its geographic position being too far away from the Euro-Atlantic security zone covered by the Alliance; however unsuitable for the North-Atlantic Treaty, Turkey wanted to obtain immediate guarantees through a Mediterranean agreement or a treaty, this linked under NATO⁶.

The Truman Doctrine: Turkey, in “The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science”, vol.41, America and the Middle East (May 1972), pp. 74-84.

² The major economic and financial crisis Italy was going through could have easily become a point of speculation for politicians in Rome, who could have used the similarities between the three Mediterranean states to highlight the need for immediate financial help for the Italian peninsula, through the Truman Doctrine in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume III The British Commonwealth; Europe*, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1972, p.880, [hereafter****FRUS 1947 III*].

³ ****DDI X vol V*, p. 419.

⁴ Maria Antonia di Casola, *Grecia, Turchia e Patto Atlantico. Le ragioni di un'adesione ritardata* in „Il Politico” vol.54, no.2 (150) (aprile-giugno 1989), p.313; Moreover, the Marshall Plan had been extended to include the two Mediterranean states, and the inclusion of Turkey in the executive group of OEEC satisfied the Ankara Government, being also considered a personal victory for minister Necmettin Sadak in *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Undicesima Serie:1948-1953 Volume II (1 gennaio-30 giugno 1949)*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2006, [hereafter ****DDI XI vol. II*], pp. 412, 485.

⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume III Western Europe*, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1974, [hereafter ****FRUS 1948 III*], p. 329; In addition, Great Britain wanted to offer Italy a sort of „limited membership” within the Alliance, a way to solve the security issues of the peninsula; the offer, however, was found disagreeable during the negotiations in ****DDI X vol. II*, p.163; During a conversation with the Greek foreign minister, Konstantinos Tsaldaris, the head of the British diplomacy, Ernest Bevin, confessed that Italy should not be an original member of the Treaty, not only because of its military shortcomings, but also because its presence dimmed the Atlantic character of the organization in *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Undicesima Serie:1948-1953 Volume I, (8 maggio-31 dicembre 1948)*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2005, [hereafter****DDI XI vol I*] p.1151;****DDI XI vol. II*, p. 494.

⁶ Since September 1948, the new Turkish ambassador in Rome, Feridun Kemal Erkin, gave a declaration, of his own, to the *Associated Press* agency, in which he underlined the necessity of a Mediterranean Union, founded in association with another group of states, the Scandinavian one, in order to form a unique and

In 1949, the Atlantic Agreement was, essentially, a North-Atlantic Alliance, therefore it was illogical for Turkey to insist on participating, something recognized, not by chance, by the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Necmettin Sadak, on February 15, 1949, prior – then – to the actual completion of the alliance⁷.

Even the Greek Government took the same stand, that of signing an agreement between the Mediterranean states, in order to make the region seem unified. Furthermore, this consent given by the Greeks to the Turkish initiative was coming at a rather delicate time, considering the dissension between the two regarding Cyprus seemed to reappear, mostly because of the Greek press speculating arguments for the return of the island instead of conceding to Turkey⁸.

Meanwhile, the Turkish side was treading lightly in trying to enter the Atlantic Alliance,⁹ and found useful ground in the Italian political circles, where they were assured that if the issue of extending the alliance beyond the established geographic principle would have been discussed, and if Italy had been admitted to the alliance as an founding member, then their approach would have been supported.¹⁰

Therefore, the most important objective of the Turkish foreign policy in the post-war years was to obtain security guarantees from the US, and in this endeavor, a Mediterranean agreement or the newly founded Atlantic Treaty were considered valuable options.

This study aims to examine the difficult way in which Turkey and Greece negotiated their inclusion in the North-Atlantic Treaty and it analyzes the consequences of this foreign policy choice which placed these countries in one of the Cold War sides. Heavy emphasis was put on the reasons why the Italian administration considered and supported these states' demands for security.

efficient continental military unit. While Washington looked approvingly upon the opportune military alliance between Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, a Mediterranean treaty seemed useless, even naive, considering the discrepancy of interests, resources and even regions in the Mediterranean and The Middle East. Additionally, the Palestinian issue would have further complicated things. As a result, American military assistance, in combination with aid offered to Greece and Turkey seemed sufficient to stabilize the region, although this aid had to be continuously sustained (the Americans guaranteed that the funds would be granted at least until June 30, 1949, or until the Western Union would have expanded to include not only Italy but also Greece and Turkey) in ****DDI XI vol I,* pp.651-652, 687, 1026.

⁷ Just as true is that the admittance of Italy in NATO, therefore the inclusion of the Central-Mediterranean proved to the political figures in Ankara that the geographic principle was not the most important one when debating the membership to the Alliance in ****DDI XI vol. II,* pp.661-663

⁸ *Ibidem*, p.356.

⁹ It is worth noting the visit made by the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Sadak, to Brussels, before the conclusion of the Alliance, when he declared that Turkey had no intention of pursuing NATO in *Ibidem*, pp.419-420.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p.466; It should be said that the international actions of post-war Italy were characterized by political indecision, easily identifiable in its attitude towards military alliances, such as the North-Atlantic Treaty or the Brussels one, concerned with a hostile reaction from the Soviet Union. Besides these internal hesitations, Italy had to deal with those of the Western powers, regarding the role the peninsula would have to play. On the other hand, the Italians were concerned that, should they fail to be assimilated to a Western alliance, it would have gravely affected Italy's reputation and reduced it to second-rate power status, next to Greece and Turkey in Mihaela Mustatea, *Italia și construcția europeană: politica externă italiană în primul deceniu postbelic (1945-1955)*, București, Editura Universității din București, 2016, p. 185; The actual integration of Italy in the Atlantic Treaty dismissed these fears, but it also dimmed Rome's interest in a Mediterranean agreement in ****DDI XI vol.II,* p. 947.

Essentially, this study tried to redraw the diplomatic effort, using documents from the collections of the Italian diplomacy (*I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*), mostly from the recently published 11th/XI series, which discusses Italy's political and diplomatic view within NATO. It is also worth mentioning that this study also followed the attitudes and reactions of the government in Athens regarding the issue of the first enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance, although the author placed emphasis on the more fleshed out policy of the Turkish Government, another reason being its influence in the Middle East and among the Arab states.

Although wary at the beginning¹¹, the administration in Rome came to view the inclusion of Turkey and Greece in the Atlantic Treaty as a positive event, given the fact that it would have secured the South side of the Euro-Atlantic defensive system, while also protecting the Italian shoreline; other members of the Alliance opposed the enlargement because of the too large area to secure, especially considering the discrepancies between the original members and the two Mediterranean states (mostly the largely Muslim Turkey). Italy's support for these countries to be included in NATO was also linked with the head of the Foreign Cabinet, count Carlo Sforza¹², who was believed to have a plan to create a *junior partner*,¹³ in the quest to push the Southern line of Atlantic security, emulating a strategy already employed by France during the negotiations for Italy's membership in the Atlantic Treaty.¹⁴ An important part played the Italian ambassador in Ankara, Luca Pietromarchi, since the fall of 1950, who realized the strategic meaning Turkey had for the security of Western Europe.

Initially, France was against including Turkey in the Treaty, mostly because it didn't want the Alliance to look like it was surrounding the Soviet Union, so the French wanted to spare Moscow the hassle, preferring the idea of regional agreements, such as a Mediterranean one, separate from the North-Atlantic Treaty, but still under its supervision, agreements in which Paris could still be a deciding factor.¹⁵

¹¹ ****DDI XI vol. V*, p.503.

¹² The Italian diplomat was knowledgeable in Turkish realities, having held consular positions in Constantinople prior to the World War I.

¹³ The phrase was used by France during the negotiations, when supporting Italy's inclusion in the Alliance. The purpose was both military and political: securing American insurances for the defense of the Mediterranean and the North-African coast, a French dominion, while politically moving the axis of the Alliance from Northern Europe and the Atlantic; France then could have counted on a „junior partner” – Italy – who would have then became loyal and grateful towards Paris in Antonio Varsori, *L'Italia fra Alleanza Atlantica e CED (1949-1955)*, in Ennio Di Nolfo (ed.), R. Rainero (ed.), B. Vigezzi (ed.), „L'Italia e la politica di potenza in Europa (1950-1960)”, Milano, Marzorati Editore, 1992, p.591.

¹⁴ Maria Antonia di Casola, *op.cit.*, p. 319; ****DDI XI vol.II.*, p.465; For more information on Italy's inclusion in NATO, see Mihaela Mustatea, *op.cit.*, pp.184-194; Furthermore, within NATO's authorities, Italy was not welcomed in the executive committee, as the structure was considered limited, having only the US, UK, and France; in the other functions, Italy was allowed „*participation as appropriate*”, such as Western Europe Group, such being considered more of a Mediterranean state, rather than a Western one, a thing confirmed by becoming a member of the Southern Europe Group. Initially, this structure was named *The Regional Group of the Western Mediterranean*, then renamed *Southern Europe and Western Mediterranean Group*, so that the defensive plans for the Alliance would not be limited to Mediterranean aspects only, but include Italian continental aspects, too in Mihaela Mustătea, *op.cit.*, p. 289.

¹⁵ ****DDI XI vol.V*, pp.543, 546.

In February 1949, the ambassador Alberto Tarchiani affirmed that the State Department found it unnecessary to take on new responsibilities in favor of the countries left outside the Atlantic Alliance (it was the case of Greece and Turkey); this way, it was also postponed the idea of the Mediterranean agreement, linked with the Atlantic Treaty. As far as Washington was concerned, the obligations towards Turkey and the assurances that were to be formulated as a bare minimum to the Mediterranean states were enough to make them feel secure.¹⁶ Furthermore, it was reinforced that the signing of the North-Atlantic Treaty was not changing the established relations between Turkey (meaning the entire Eastern Mediterranean region) and the US, and the American commitments for economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey were still valid.

Finally, the State Department considered the idea of a debate to draft a Mediterranean alliance, an agreement reuniting the military weak nations, was not urgently needed, for it was more of a future possibility after the Atlantic Treaty had proved its worth.¹⁷

For Great Britain, however, a favorable formula would have been an alliance containing all states “from Pakistan to Greece”, put under London’s careful watch; this way, the Greek and the Turks would have been appeased, security-wise (even though the Arabs could have perceived this move as a British intrusion).¹⁸ This status was also supported by the determination of the Americans to let the UK take on a leading role in the region, considering London was bound by several agreements both with Turkey and some Arab states.¹⁹ Therefore, for Turkey, the best card to play at the moment was an alliance with the British, even though it felt that their Eastern politics were still traditional, rather anachronistic and insensitive to demands for independence of the Arab states.²⁰

Momentarily, however, given that the reaffirmation of the former treaty between the French, the British and the Turks from 1939 was not enough assurance of security, all London was able to offer to Turkey was the admittance in the Council of Europe.²¹ The French took a much more articulate stance. In the summer of 1950, at the proposition of France and with its support, Turkey was welcomed in the Council.²² Meanwhile, Italy’s interest in supporting the admittance of Turkey and Greece in the Council of Europe, according to the principle that all members of OEEC should be automatically given this membership, hid the Italians’ desire to move the non-military decisions from under the “Brussels Club”, as Brussels Treaty was also known, under the authority of the Strassbourg institution, where Italy had a bigger role to play.²³

¹⁶ ****DDI XI vol. II*, p.455; ****DDI XI vol. I*, p.1026.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p.813

¹⁸ ****DDI XI vol. II*, p.455.

¹⁹ ****FRUS 1950 vol. V*, pp.163-166; ****DDI XI vol. V*, p.54.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp.53-55.

²¹ ****DDI XI vol.II*, p.1178.

²² *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Undicesima Serie:1948-1953 Volume III (1 luglio 1949-26 gennaio 1950)*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2007, [hereafter ****DDI XI vol III*], p.110.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp.785,906; It should be said that the Italians believed the American aid had given Turkey too much ground, a rather irritating fact for Italy, who took international hierarchy very seriously and who viewed Turkey as a second-hand kind of power, unlike Italy, placed in the Great Powers’ corner. This impression was mostly based on the mechanics of the Italian-Turkish agreement, politically null, but for which the Turks demanded a signing ceremony in Ankara. In the end, in January 1950, the Turkish foreign

The Korean War's beginning, in June 1950, brought with it the debate on the necessity of a solid western military system, thus the issue of the remilitarization and integration of Western Germany in the Alliance. Perceived as a new phase of aggression from USSR, the Asian war fired a definite shift in the Euro-Atlantic strategy as far as integration projects were concerned, especially the military aspects of them. In other words, the Americans were looking for a way to allow the active military participation of Western Germany.²⁴ The project for a European military alliance was only vaguely defined, for a variety of reasons: because of the Americans' requirements, of the necessity to prevent Paris' involvement in the German remilitarization process and the firm belief that Bonn was not to be admitted in the Atlantic Alliance. The French were going to allow their former enemy to remilitarize only as part of a European army, put under the authority of a supranational organ, akin to ECSC's High Authority, remilitarization under NATO being considered unthinkable. In October 1950, the French Government presented the Pleven Plan, in favor of this sort of European military structure.²⁵

Without consulting or even informing the Athenian Government, on August, 5th 1950, Turkey made the first step towards its inclusion in the Treaty, by applying for membership of the Atlantic Alliance.²⁶

On August, 22nd, the Turkish embassy in Rome asked for the support of this endeavor from the administration at Chigi Palace. The Italian answer from August, 26th pointed out that, in theory, Turkey's admission in NATO would have strengthened the Mediterranean group in the Alliance, but without prior consultations with the rest of the members, Italy could not offer its' support, individually.²⁷

In the other European capitals, the answers varied: Brussels was in favor of Turkish membership of NATO, Paris was cautious, whilst at Oslo, Turkey's representing official did not formally announce anything. In Ottawa, however, the reaction was rather harsh, with the Italian ambassador, Di Stefano, noting that the Canadian Government was against the enlargement of the Treaty in the Eastern Mediterranean region.²⁸

Denmark was cautious too about Turkey's demand, considering the new political and strategic security risks, far away of Copenhagen's interests. If, however, the US and Great Britain would have been accepting of the matter, the Danish Government would have conceded to the Western Governments wishes.²⁹

As far as London and Paris were concerned, such a step initiated by Ankara not only meant additional responsibilities, but it was also considered overkill, considering the security engagements guaranteed by the renewed 1939 treaties a year prior were similar with what the North Alliance had to offer. The decisive factor was still Washington's take on Turkey's demand (at least for the Italian and Canadian Governments), for which the

minister, Sadak, who was in Europe for a Council of Europe reunion, stopped in Rome and signed the treaty in ****DDI XI vol. III*, p.553; ****DDI XI vol. IV*, pp. 4, 53.

²⁴ ****DDI XI vol.V*, p.205.

²⁵ For more details on the Pleven Plan see *Ibidem*, pp.62-66.

²⁶ ****DDI XI vol. IV*, p.409.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp.444, 462-463.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp.446-447.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp.454-455.

admittance for Ankara in the Treaty meant, unequivocally, the inclusion of Greece. For the moment, though, Washington suggested that no member state was to give individual answers to Ankara, at least until the issue would have been further discussed in the following North-Atlantic session in New York.³⁰

For the United Kingdom, Turkey's application for NATO membership raised a few problems: it would have ruined the entire concept of the Alliance, that of an economic and politic community with similar security interests and traditions, it would have brought more security risks to the fledgling organization, which was focused on the Euro-Atlantic region, it would have forced the hand of member states, by imposing expanding responsibilities in areas with little to no interest, and finally, it would have meant an alliance with a country whose borders were managed jointly with the Soviets. Furthermore, if Turkey was to be a member, it would have opened the door for Greece, too, even though Athens had not put forward an application for membership. The Foreign Office felt the only option was for the Americans to take responsibility for Turkey's moves.³¹

On the other hand, Turkey pointed out that only as a member of NATO could it exercise any kind of power in the Middle East, mainly with the relations with the Arab states, which could have leaned towards the Soviets, should the Western states show little interest in the region.³²

The Atlantic Council in New York, in September 1950, rejected both applications, giving to Greece and Turkey "associated membership" status, an action perceived as the first step to full membership. Meanwhile, this association seemed to appease the security demands of the two states, given they could participate alongside NATO members to a series of operations in the Mediterranean region.³³

On 2nd October 1950, the Turkish president, Celal Bayar confessed to the Italian ambassador in Ankara, Renato Prunas, that the refusal to include Turkey in the Alliance was more than unjust, it was a grave error given Ankara's status as devoted ally to the West, an ally laced in a vulnerable region and for whom security was a struggle, considering half of the Turkish Government funds were going to military spendings. The dignitary appreciated as positive, however, the new measures regarding the military-related discussions between the Mediterranean Group of the Treaty and the Turkish Military Staff, thinking them a way to correct the afore-mentioned error and, again, seeing them as the first step towards integration.³⁴

On 1st October 1950, the Turkish president, while inaugurating the first legislature of the National Assembly, declared that the fundamental objective of Turkey's foreign policy remained the organization of its own security, in a tentative collaboration with Greece, which had recently been called by the Mediterranean Group's Military Staff to give accounts on the status of preparations for the military plans meant to secure the region. At the same time, Turkey's aspiration to be part of the Atlantic Alliance, considered- among

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp.458, 460.

³¹ Behçet K. Yeşilbursa, *Turkey's participation in the Middle East Command and its admission to NATO* in „The Middle Eastern Studies“, vol 35, no.4, Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic, (October 1999), pp. 77-78; ****DDI XI vol V*, p.513.

³² *Ibidem*, pp.10-12.

³³ ****FRUS 1950, vol. III*, pp.1218-1220.

³⁴ ****DDI XI vol. IV*, p. 516.

others- the only tool to efficiently resist aggression, was not without ground, given the country's efforts in the cause of peace. Ankara had supported every European initiative as far as integration was concerned, showing attachment to the values of the United Nations, has sent a military unit in Korea response to the request of the Security Council, hoping this military effort (4500 soldiers) would facilitate its' admission in NATO.³⁵

Even the plan of the European army put forward by the French Government (the Pleven Plan), in theory, was seen by Ankara's Government as an alternative path for Turkey to follow for the membership of the European security system, guaranteed by the Americans. The delay caused by France caused a powerful resentment in the political circles in Ankara, where it was believed that without the military participation of Western Germany, considered a factor of stability in Europe (an idea forwarded by the Turkish president to Schuman), the European alliance was an impossibility, a sort of continental suicide. More so, the Italian ambassador in Ankara recognized that Turkey suffered by an "isolation complex", partly because of its' geographical position and its' experience during the war, trying now to get close to Europe, putting a lot of value on its' relation with Italy, an European country geographically closest to Turkey.³⁶

Athens was equally frustrated and unhappy, according to the Italian diplomat, Marieni, who told De Gasperi that the Greek Government was disappointed in not having become part of the Alliance, instead remaining an annex, even if under the tutelage and protection of the Western states; while its' international relations obligations were largely passive in this arrangement, Greece compared itself to Italy, who lost the war, yet who recovered an important position on the world stage (the Italians perceived this as arrogance from the Greeks, who often reminded of the fact that they were on the winning side in the war.³⁷

Since the fall of 1950, Turkey's strategy was a joint action with Greece, in an attempt to turn *de facto* collaboration with the Atlantic group in a partnership *de jure*; it was a new take on the Turkish view on Athens, Greece having been considered so far, because of its' military weakness and its' political state, an obstacle in Turkey's way to integration in the Euro-Atlantic system; therefore, Ankara preferred to act alone.³⁸ In addition, the new Turkish foreign minister, Fuad Koprülü, since his coming to power, has given a more dynamic tone to foreign affairs, in opposition to the excessive cautious that characterized the former government.³⁹

In February 1951, Turkey's strategic position started to be a major interest for the Western Powers, both from a diplomatic and military point of view. During the discussions between the Turkish officials and the Americans diplomats, held between 14-21st of February, there was a new element, that of the fact that the Americans were ready to support Turkey's and Greece's integration in NATO, and a final decision had to be reached within a maximum period of six months. In spite of this, there was no talk of a firm agreement that would have allowed the participation of Ankara in the alliance.⁴⁰

³⁵ ****DDI XI vol. V*, p.10; ****FRUS 1951 vol. III*, p.472.

³⁶ ****DDI XI vol.V*, pp. 11, 52-56.

³⁷ ****DDI XI vol.III*, pp.527-528.

³⁸ ****DDI XI vol.V*, p.10.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.512

⁴⁰ ****FRUS 1951 vol.V*, p.50-57.

On the other hand, in May 1951, the Italian ambassador to Athens, Adolfo Alessandrini, raised the issue of Italy's diminished role in the Atlantic Treaty, if Greece and Turkey were accepted as members, because Rome has not been able to lead the decision-making process in the Mediterranean region, this task has been given to the French and, even more so, the English. He admitted, though, that the enlargement of the alliance in this direction would have brought the attention of the West on an area rather ignored until then.⁴¹

On May, 15th, 1951, ambassador Pietro Quaroni sent a note to Carlo Sforza in which he announced that the State Department decided to support Greece and Turkey to join the North-Atlantic Alliance. Moreover, the Americans were going to pressure the French, for whom regional agreements were a better option, to reconsider their opposition to the enlargement. Regarding the Italians' attitude, they had looked favorably on the inclusion of the Eastern Mediterranean region under the protection of the Alliance from the beginning, having sensed that the indecision of the US could have negatively affected Turkey's evolution and its' influence over the Arab states; finally, since the Americans decided to include them in the alliance, it was good for Italy to follow their lead, and the exploration of further regional agreements to be postponed.⁴²

On June, 17th 1951, the foreign affairs minister, Carlo Sforza, sent to the officials of all NATO members Italy's point of view regarding Greece and Turkey's integration in the alliance. The document pointed out that, given the many delays in the creation of an alliance comprising all the Mediterranean states, the Italian Government was in favor of the "clear and simple" admission of the two states in the Atlantic Treaty, instead of looking for another formula to satisfy their security demands.

At the same time, the administration in Rome recognized the important role played by Asia Minor (read Turkey), as a stronghold in the defense of the entire Southern sector of the Alliance, having the same value as the Scandinavian region, which protected the Alliance in the Atlantic region. Furthermore, Chigi Palace declared that, in the eventual acceptance of other solutions, Rome would back them up just as surely. It was not to be ignored, said the Italians, the extraordinary circumstances of these two states: Greece, forced to stop the communism at its borders, while Turkey had to face intense pressure to accept a new systematization of the Straits. In addition, the neutral stance took by the Arab states was quite dangerous for Western Europe, these states lacking the consolidation required to keep centered in the face of the Soviet orbit's expansion. In the case of Turkey, refusing its application for membership would have revived the neutralism tendencies, in other words, a few politic circles thought that rather than unsuccessfully applying to the unrelenting Western States for security assurances, Turkey should become neutral. Finally, if the Eastern Mediterranean was to be included, Rome thought that the European defense system would have been completed, as a means to discourage the aggressive tendencies of the Soviets.⁴³

⁴¹ ****DDI XI vol.V*, p.542.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p.543; the Americans would have supported Turkey to enter the Alliance to avoid its' participation in the Tripartite Pact signed in 1939, renewed by the French and the English, mostly because of its' USSR clause in *Ibidem*, p.461.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, pp.643-645

Not only in London, but also in Paris, the applications were received with reservations, the first considering the imminent risk of worsening the political situation if the Treaty would have been extended in the Mediterranean (the declaration of the British foreign minister Morrison, May, 30th, 1951), while for the French worried about an open military clash with the Soviets. Moreover, Paris considered the addition of these two countries, in a region altogether different than the Atlantic one, would have weighted down the decision-making mechanisms of the Alliance (placing in a somewhat of an opposition the Scandinavian and Benelux Groups with the now heavily represented Mediterranean Group), based on the shared values and interests. It was not the first time when the geographical issue was used as a fundamental principle in considering new members for the Alliance.⁴⁴

Therefore, the two diplomatic offices preferred a Mediterranean alliance between the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy, with the participation of Greece and Turkey, an organization tied to NATO and placed under the command of General Eisenhower. An important fact to remark upon is the openness of this organism towards the Arab states, especially Egypt, next in line to pressure NATO for membership, after Greece and Turkey.

For the Italians, the enlargement of the Alliance came with fewer complications:

1. the American Congress and, by extension, the Parliaments of the NATO members would have accepted it easier than a new treaty;
2. Italy's participation in the Atlantic Alliance meant the guaranteed defense of European regions in its area of interests and to which Italy felt historically linked; a better option than a Mediterranean agreement, open to the Middle East, for the defense of which the Italians' responsibilities would have been too large compared with their interests.⁴⁵ A deal between NATO on one side, and Greece and Turkey on the other side, would have meant the insertion of the last into an organization with an uncertain judicial position and diminished prestige.⁴⁶

In Ankara, the hesitation (more like refusal) of the Western states to offer Greece and, especially, Turkey formal security assurances created a very tense atmosphere, the main culprit being identified as Great Britain, although it was only partially true, considering vocal resistance came from France, as it was already mentioned, from the Scandinavian Group, from the Netherlands and Portugal, too. For these governments, the better option was an agreement between all Eastern Mediterranean states, rather than enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance.⁴⁷ Especially for the Danish Government, the admittance of Turkey would have brought with it a strong and violent Soviet reaction, increasing tensions at a global scale and a risk of general military conflict.⁴⁸ Still, Ankara

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp.621-622; the French ambassador in Ankara, Lescuyer, would have said to Pietromarchi that France did not want to expand the Alliance, mainly to avoid the risk of becoming a global organization, such as the United Nations in *Ibidem*, p.567.

⁴⁵ ****Ibidem*, p.567-568

⁴⁶ *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Undicesima Serie:1948-1953 Volume VI (26 luglio 1951-30 giugno 1952)*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2015, [hereafter ****DDI XI vol. VI*], p.79

⁴⁷ ****DDI XI vol.V*, pp.463, 657.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p.687.

refused categorically a simple collaboration with NATO's Military Staff, the way it was discussed in 1950.⁴⁹

The Allies considered other formulas for alliances, such as bilateral accords between the North-Atlantic states and Turkey, discarded as ill-suited because of the American policy, as pointed out by the American representative, Charles Spofford, who declared itself in favor of collective accords. As far as a single Mediterranean pact was considered, while the idea had merit at least momentarily, it was impossible to act on it because of the Israeli-Arab dispute. The Italians kept supporting the two candidacies, because of both practical reasons and to continue the Italian-American unit, leaving the idea of a Mediterranean agreement to solidify at a later date. Furthermore, the Turks already left it to be understood that, should they become part of the Alliance, they wouldn't oppose a NATO military base on their national territory.⁵⁰

In the summer of 1951, the English stance started so often, so much so that on July, 10th the Foreign Office declared it accepted the inclusion of Greece and Turkey in the Alliance. Even if the enlargement only served political purposes, without solving the military issues in the Middle Eastern region, the British proposed the establishment of a NATO command center for the Middle East, under British supervision (which it would have included Standing Group and Turkey, while the Dominions, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa would have contributed with troops). The project did not include an American-commanded Greece.⁵¹

On August, 8th 1951, ambassador Quaroni declared that the French Government supported the admittance of Greece and Turkey in the Alliance, meaning France, Great Britain, and the US would have to come up with a practical way to make this enlargement possible. The only objection the French had was the inclusion of Turkey in the British-ruled special commandment for the Middle East. They viewed this proposal as a way for the British to augment their troops' presence in the Middle East with effective from the Dominions, to change their status from British to Atlantic troops, an exploratory move for the future inclusion of Egypt in the Alliance.⁵²

For the Italians, Greece and Turkey had to enter the Alliance as soon as possible and as equals with the rest of the members, but at the same time, to appease the Scandinavian states' objections, the Italian Government proposed to its partners to find an informal mechanism through which the original members could enjoy a sort of "freedom of action", a difficult thing to do in an alliance in which all the members have the same status. France still insisted that an alliance between the Middle and Near East was still necessary, a pact interested states, such as Italy, could have joined.⁵³

For the next session of the North-Atlantic Council, in Ottawa, the political agenda of the Ankara Government had to insist on the admittance of the country in NATO, under the same conditions as the other members, so as the issue of the Middle

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p.569.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, pp.660-661.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p.698, 704, 710.

⁵² ***DDI XI vol. VI, p.72.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p.73; the Italians had no objections regarding a Mediterranean Treaty, but they would have insisted to be in the commanding organism in *Ibidem*, p.79.

East wouldn't become a pressure point, not as a way for Turkey to stroke its ego, but more of a way to put distance between the country and the problem of the Near East, whose political situation and military tensions would have compromised Turkey's application for membership. Only after it became a member, could Turkey start discussing the security of the entire Middle East.⁵⁴

Moreover, the Italian ambassador in Ankara, Pietromarchi, recounted that on September, 7th 1951, the leader of the Turkish diplomacy, Fuat Köprülü, admitted that while Turkey wanted to remain a regional power, it strongly refused to be burdened with the responsibility of the security of the Middle East region, wanting to avoid antagonizing the Arabs, admitting that voting in the line of the Western states on the Suez Channel, Turkey received Egypt's hostility, along with those of the Arab states. The inclusion of Turkey in the Alliance had to deter and warn the USSR that Ankara was always ready to engage in a potential conflict, its military force having good moral and logistic levels (largest army on the continent), and the country's strategic position represented a threat to Moscow. In the Turkish official's opinion, his country was the only one in the region able to oppose the Soviet propaganda, having a degree of prestige and influence in the Arab world. In the issue of the Balkan agreement proposed by Yugoslavia, which would have included both Greece and Turkey, Ankara declined to discuss it until after its inclusion in the Atlantic Alliance.⁵⁵

At the seventh session of the North-Atlantic Council in Ottawa, held between 15-21 of September 1951, the twelve member states reviewed the issue of the first enlargement of the Treaty, to include Turkey and Greece. At the same time, the German problem was an important point of discussion, negotiations being held between the High Commissaries for Germany and the envoy of the German federal state, thus completing the talks held at the Paris Conference about the European army. It was decided that, during the next session in Rome, the dossier regarding Germany's role in the defense of Western Europe would be discussed in its entirety.⁵⁶

In the September 18th meeting, it was the first time examined the membership application of Greece and Turkey, the bulk of the reactions being on the positive side. All the states' officials, with the exception of the Danish one (foreign minister Biørn Kraft asked for permission to confer with Copenhagen before giving the final response regarding the enlargement), declared that they were in favor of the North-Atlantic Treaty's enlargement to include Greece and Turkey, thus deciding to officially hand out the invitation.⁵⁷

In the meeting from September, 20th 1952, the official from Netherlands mentioned the agreement of his government regarding the inclusion of the two Mediterranean states in the Atlantic Alliance, with the condition that they would enter the

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p.114.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, pp.145-147.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp.228-229; The general impression was that the session held in Rome did not solve the major issues, the idea of another session in Lisbon, in February-March, being the solution (the third reunion in five months); this would have been the final deadline for solving the German remilitarization problem (the Soviet press speculated about a crisis among the Allies, while the French opposed Germany's inclusion in the Treaty, an unfortunate move that would affect the defensive character of the Alliance, risking the end of any German agreement) in *Ibidem*, pp. 328, 411, 415, 418.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p.231

Treaty under the same conditions as the rest of the members, sharing the same obligations and rights as them. Additionally, Kraft mentioned yet again that Copenhagen conditioned this integration by Greece and Turkey's obligations towards the functioning of the newly discussed commandments, by dismissing the obstacles still present in the peace treaties. For Italy, this declaration was yet another opportunity to demand the adjournment of the military clauses in the peace treaty which, in theory, blocked the country from participating in military alliances.⁵⁸

After the debates, the Council recommended that all members' governments take the necessary actions to invite the Mediterranean states to join them, a process after which the US Government should be notified regarding the unanimity concerning the applications. Only after the instrument of accession was stored at the Government of the United States, would Article VI of the Treaty have been modified. At the same time, it was decided that a new protocol would be added to the Treaty, containing 4 articles, among which the most important were:

Article 1, in the name of all NATO member states, the United States Government invited Turkey and Greece to join the Atlantic Alliance, to become members of the pact, starting with the date at which the instruments of accession were stored at the US Government.

Article 2, at the moment when Turkey would become a member, Article 6 would be modified to include the Turkish national territory in the area covered by the Treaty, and defense mechanism stipulated by Article 5 would apply to Turkey, also.⁵⁹

As a first step, while waiting for the ratification of the protocol of accession by the members, it was agreed that two observers, one Greek and one Turkish would attend the sessions of the Council in Rome, in November,⁶⁰ and in December 1951 it was raised the issue of the two states' participation, as full members, to the Lisbon NATO reunion in February 1952; for that to happen, the national Parliaments were pressured to finish the ratifying process.⁶¹

Finally, it should be mentioned that the debate concerning the new Commandments brought with them new tensions within the Alliance, first between Turkey and Greece, then between the two and Italy. Nearing the meeting, in Athens, of the leaders of Military Staffs of France, Great Britain and the US, meeting that would have discussed the role Greece was to play in the Alliance, ambassador Alessandrini declared that Athens does not wish for an express inclusion, next to Turkey, in the Commandment for the Middle East, only in that regarding Southern Europe, placed in the responsibilities of the Americans. Alessandrini noted that the Turkish officials were skeptical regarding the future military collaboration with their Turkish counterparts. The idea was supported by the Italians, concerned that Turkey was gaining influence in the

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p.231; In this context and under the pressure of the Italians for the revision of the document signed in Paris, in 1947, on September, 26th 1951 was launched a Declaration signed by the British, the French and the Americans, regarding the revision of the peace treaty with Italy and which stipulated that, given the present situation, the document was outdated; it was also mentioned the need to cancel the military clauses and the paragraphs in which Rome had to explain its' policies to the winning powers in *Ibidem*, p.231.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p.232.

⁶⁰ ****DDI XI vol.VI*, p.343.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 431.

Mediterranean side of the Alliance, thanks to its' military might (a participant to the Korean war) and less to its politic moves. Meanwhile, there was a shared feeling that the Americans lean more towards Turkey, given that the campaign for the enlargement of the Treaty was mainly planned for Turkey's benefit.

Additionally, there were rumors coming from Ankara that the Turkish refused to support Italy in keeping the vice-command of the Commandment in Southern Europe. At the same time, the French noticed that the Greek opposed an Italian deputy for Admiral Carney.⁶² In a talk with the Italian ambassador in Athens, the Greek foreign minister, Sophokles Venizelos confessed that, while understanding the issues of prestige behind the Italians' requests to remain in command, admitted that the proposed solution would bring with it "the germs of dissension, necessary to be avoided"; moreover, such a project could not be presented to Greek public opinion. In his opinion, the best solution would have been the sectioning of the Mediterranean area in two zones, Western and Eastern, the first under Italian command, the second shared by the Greek and Turkish armies, under an American general or admiral directly subordinated to General Eisenhower.⁶³

Lately, Turkey is in a delicate moment of its foreign policy about relations with NATO, although its armed forces represent the second largest force of the Atlantic alliance after that of the United States. Its clear rapprochement to Moscow, the announcement made by Ankara to be interested in the purchase from Moscow of a missile system, the strategic partnership with Russia in the energy sector and the recent retirement of Turkish military from the exercises of the alliance created problems in the western military structure. At the same time, the delays in admission to the European Union and finally the instability of the Middle East (also the Kurdish problem and the referendum on the independence of Kurdistan from Iraq), all these show that Turkey is increasingly out of Atlantic Alliance and Europe, at least at the declarative level. Although after the failed 2016 coup attempt, some European officials have reiterated the fact that "Turkey is important for the whole of Europe"⁶⁴, but one fact remains, which means that the Ankara government has already a new (different) choice of camps which means a departure of Turkey from NATO and the beginning of a strategic partnership with Russia.

⁶² *Ibidem*, pp.253, 257-258, 299, 409-410, 52; Reminding the French that the Italians supported the project of an European army, but, recently, in the issue of NATO's permanent headquarters, when the French offered Paris, the authorities in Rome were asking for French support, even though ambassador Quaroni suggested that Chigi Palace should not bank on France, who would use its limited influence to name a French general in *Ibidem*, p.521; In June 1952, the Southern Europe Commandment was defined; it was located in Napoli and it was going to exercise its influence over Greece and Turkey, too, with 2 terrestrial commandments, one for Italy, in Verona, under Italian (gen. De Castiglioni) and another, for Greece and Turkey, under American command in *Ibidem*, p.788.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p.550.

⁶⁴ Nato General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg at the European Parliament in May 2017 and also in September 2016, in <http://www.eunews.it/2017/05/03/la-nato-la-turchia-e-un-alleato-importante-per-leuropa/84436>