To Build a Navy with the Help of Adversary: Italian–Turkish Naval Arms Trade, 1929–32

D LEK BARLAS and SERHAT GÜVENÇ

Italian–Turkish relations in the inter-war years oscillated between antagonism and friendship. In 1935, Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras described the evaluation of Italian–Turkish relations in stages of ‘warmth’, ‘cooling off’ and ‘frost’.¹ The ‘warmth’ in the relations came with Aras’ meeting with Benito Mussolini in Milan in 1928. The ‘cooling off’ corresponded to the period between 1932 and 1934. The ‘frost’ set in with Mussolini’s notorious speech on the future Italian expansion into Africa and Asia in 1934. Before 1928, relations between Fascist Italy and Republican Turkey were no less antagonistic than the later ‘frost’. Aras’ statement on the evolution of Italian–Turkish relations in the inter-war period confirms the existence of elements of continuity and change. This duality was obvious to outside observers too. French diplomats went so far as to describe Turkey’s attitude towards Italy as amidadversity (amity adversity).²

The ebbs and flows in the bilateral relations influenced the naval situation in the Aegean and, to a lesser extent, in the Mediterranean after 1928. Italy’s supply of naval arms to Turkey during the period of ‘warmth’ should be considered on two levels. On the first level, it was an extension of Rome’s bid for improved status in the wider great naval power game of the inter-war years.³ On the second and lower level, it had regional emphasis regarding the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. On this level, Italy hoped to exchange arms for influence with (or over) Turkey. In practical terms, Rome viewed Italian–Turkish naval arms trade as a means to facilitate Turkey’s transformation into a pro-Italian actor in the Eastern Mediterranean naval balance.⁴

This article aims to outline political and strategic motives in Italy’s supply of naval arms to Turkey under favourable credit terms. This arms trade is significant because it underlines a short-lived yet profound change in Fascist Italy’s view of Republican Turkey. In the first half of the 1920s, Turkey was mainly a target for Italian colonial expansion. By 1927, it
appeared to the Fascist leaders more as a minor power worth winning to the
Italian side in the context of the great naval power balance in the Eastern
Mediterranean. The naval arms trade offered a logical and reliable
instrument for penetrating Turkey politically and militarily. Historical
experience suggested to the Italians that this great power tool had been
employed successfully by Britain and Germany in the Ottoman Empire.
However, Italian policy failed to produce the desired outcome. The present
article will thus also attempt to address factors that accounted for the failure
of the Italian ‘arms for influence’ strategy towards Turkey.

In May 1929 the Turkish Navy ordered two destroyers, two submarines
and three submarine chasers from Italy. The Italian shipyards successfully
out-bid their British, French and American competitors in a world of
shrinking arms markets. Without doubt, the private shipyards pursued
commercial objectives in bidding for Turkish naval tender in the 1920s.
Documents in Italian and British diplomatic archives reveal a set of
political and military factors that were decisive in the conclusion of the
contract. Particularly the timing of the order suggests a politically and
strategically motivated arms trade relationship for both sides. The Italian
government’s financial commitment to the otherwise financially risky and
commercially unattractive Turkish naval tender secured contracts for the
Italian shipyards.

The Turkish naval order was placed around the time when the inter-war
international disarmament movement had lost much of its momentum. This
movement was focused on naval arms limitations with some initial success.
The major naval powers, the United States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan,
signed the Washington Treaty in 1922. The treaty imposed limitations on
capital ships (battleships and aircraft carriers). This category in warships at
the time formed a measurable index of power. One important consequence of
the Washington Treaty for the Mediterranean was that Italy’s claim for naval
parity with France was formally recognized. The treaty fixed equal force
levels for these two Mediterranean powers. Having secured parity with
France in capital ships, Italy turned its attention to submarines and lighter
units. Such units suited best the contingencies Rome expected in the Adriatic
and the Mediterranean: ‘[To] block French access to the Yugoslavs in the
Adriatic, [and to] prevent a French blockade of the vulnerable Italian coast.’
Rome also realized the need for political and naval partners to strengthen its
position in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. In this geography, Turkey and
Greece were the most likely candidates for co-operation.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Italians and the
Ottomans (and then Turks) fought more than co-operated. In 1911, the
Italians attacked Tripoli, an Ottoman possession in North Africa. This attack sparked a short war at the end of which Italy not only invaded Libya but also occupied the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean. They fought again on opposing sides in the First World War. After the war, the Italian troops landed on Antalya. When the Turkish nationalists initiated an independence war in 1919, Italian–Turkish relations took a different turn during this late liberal period in Italy. By that time Italy was already alienated by its First World War allies over the spoils of war. A major source of Italian resentment was the British policy that favoured the Greek occupation of the Ottoman territories which had also been offered to Rome. The disgruntled Italians withdrew from southern Anatolia. They then began to supply arms to the Turkish nationalists in their struggle against the Greeks.7

In 1922, Mussolini ascended to power in Italy. The Lausanne Conference was one of the first major diplomatic challenges for Mussolini. He personally showed up at the conference. His presence was meant to convey a vocal statement to Turkey, Greece and to Italy’s allies from the First World War. First, the victorious Turks had to be warned not to claim the Dodecanese Islands. Similarly, Athens had to be deterred from demanding transfer of these islands as consolation after the failure of its Asia Minor bid. Thirdly, the Fascist regime was determined to prevent a recurrence of the Paris Peace Conference, where its wartime allies ignored liberal Italy’s demands.8

After the Independence War, the new Turkish government bought more arms from Italy. For instance, Turkey ordered 16 Savoia S-16 flying boats from Italy.9 It is interesting to note that at the time, the new Turkish government had by no means a favourable opinion of Italy or its Fascist ruler. Indeed, an informed Turkish observer claims that the Italian factor carried such a weight in Turkish calculations that Ankara was designated the new republic’s capital because it was located beyond the range of Italian bombers operating out of the Dodecanese Islands.10 This obviously did not form an obstacle to buying arms from Italy. Ironically, when Italy gradually and increasingly figured as a threat to Turkey, the Turkish naval air units counted on their Italian–built flying boats in monitoring the military build-up on the Dodecanese Islands.

This military build-up was the major concern for the new Turkish state, particularly when it had to deal with France, Britain and Greece over a series of issues that defied settlement in Lausanne. The major bones of contention were Mosul with Britain, the Ottoman debts and the Sancak of Alexandretta (Hatay) with France, the population exchange and the status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate with Greece. These issues continued to shape Turkey’s foreign policy in the early 1920s. Feeling already encircled by the great powers, the Italian policy added fuel to Turkish fears. When
Turkey and Britain came to grief over the oil-rich Mosul, Rome sided openly with London. For the Italians, territorial disputes with France and Britain and the revolts in Eastern Turkey exposed the new republic’s vulnerability. Rome was poised to stake territorial claims if the new regime collapsed. To this end, the Italians were planning to take advantage of the Dodecanese islands as a staging post for invading Turkey. Referring to a conversation with the Italian Consul-General at Mersin, a British diplomat wrote later: ‘[he] was at no pains to hide his belief that at no distant date the flag of Savoy would be waving in the fertile Cilician plain.’

The aggressive policy the Italians staged earlier in Fiume and Corfu convinced the Turks that it was their turn to face Italian aggression. Italian diplomatic papers indicate growing Italian interest in Turkish defensive measures along the Western coast in 1924 and 1925. However, as new regimes in Italy and Turkey consolidated domestically, they gradually reoriented their foreign relations. In 1926, Mussolini replaced the entire Foreign Ministry bureaucracy to incorporate *tono Fascista* (Fascist tone) into the Italian foreign policy. The extent to which Italian foreign policy with *tono Fascista* differed from the liberal era is debatable. The continuity school that points to similarities in aims pursued and means employed in both periods dominates the literature on the Italian foreign policy. The minority view sees a somewhat unique Fascist foreign policy with its objectives set from the onset. The former school dominates the Turkish diplomatic historiography also. The Turkish version of continuity school overlooks one significant element of change in the perceived continuity in the Italian policy of expansionism. The ‘warmth’ stands in stark contrast to the earlier (1924–27) and later periods (after 1934) in the inter-war years. This change came with the Italian realization that the republican regime in Turkey was not doomed to disintegrate or fall into the great powers’ hands in the foreseeable future. Moreover, a strategic necessity contributed to the Italians’ change of heart about Turkey. The Adriatic presented a critical situation for Italian security. Given its limited resources, Rome could ill afford to divert its attention elsewhere. The Turkish leaders expected the Italian policy towards Turkey to improve as Rome shifted its attention from Anatolia to the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Hence, Turkey began to matter for Italy in the regional rivalry with France in the Mediterranean and the Balkans.

Greece formed another important pillar of this new Italian policy. Turkey and Greece had an interdependent relevance to the Italian strategic calculations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The French entente system would be countered by forming an Aegean bloc between Italy, Greece and Turkey. However, the post-Lausanne Turkish–Greek problems were major stumbling blocks to the realization of the Italian strategy. Consequently, the
Italian policy not only sought simultaneous improvement of its relations with Turkey and Greece but it also promoted reconciliation of Turkish–Greek differences. This policy depended on voluntary adherence of Turkey and Greece to the Italian sphere of influence. Rome needed appropriate instruments to draw the two difficult neighbours into its orbit.

The troubled relations between Turkey and Greece featured a significant naval dimension. Until 1929, the better trained and equipped Greek Navy enjoyed an unchallenged edge over the Turkish Navy which was a motley collection of antiquated vessels inherited from the Ottoman Navy. Ankara did little, if anything, to improve its naval standing in the Aegean until 1927. A number of reasons accounted for this lack of interest in naval modernization.

The first and foremost was the lack of funds. The navy, particularly a large surface fleet, was an expensive investment. Turkey had to spend a big chunk of its public funds on national defence. Naval modernization was likely to absorb a substantial portion of the defence budget. To the army-dominated General Staff, this would mean allocation of scarce resources on a low-return service, as they could not see any decisive role for a navy in the defence of the republic.

The budget argument worked in tandem with the Turkish military culture in precluding naval modernization. The first generation of the republican military leaders had been involved in overwhelmingly defensive land battles from the Tripoli War in 1911 to the end of the Independence War in 1922. In all these conflicts, the naval force performed peripheral roles at best. Literally, the Turks were used to fighting without a navy. Their experience in battles of retreat in quick succession left a lasting psychological impact on their individual and collective memories. Their deep-seated conviction on the peripheral nature of naval power was not likely to change soon. Consequently, the early republican military mind saw a coastal defence function for the navy. In practical terms, the navy was to operate as an extension of the army. The heavy reliance on the army was evident in measures envisaged against an Italian assault on Turkey. The navy was tasked principally with delaying the waves of an Italian invasion force from landing ashore. Lacking appropriate means of forward defence by necessity or choice, the Turkish staff plans assumed, expected and probably wished that the fate of such invasion would be decided in land battles fought on the Turkish mainland. Hence, submarines and sea mines were the weapons of choice and offered an affordable alternative to the expensive surface vessels that the naval officer corps long yearned for.
The last hindrance to naval modernization was the international arms trade system of the inter-war years. The new system mirrored the post-First World War international power configuration. Britain and France maintained their productive capacities as leading arms producers. Both became increasingly sensitive to the political implications of arms transfers, yet for different reasons. London viewed the arms production and trade issues through the disarmament prism, while Paris stuck with classic balance of power considerations in arms trade decisions. Another European arms producer, Germany, was left out of the system until 1934. The United States also emerged as a major supplier. However, there was a strong public aversion to arms production and trade after the First World War, particularly in Britain and the United States. Consequently, the temporary absence of Germany, coupled with British and American policies of self-imposed restraints, resulted in a supplier vacuum in the international arms trade system. Italy willingly stepped in to fill it.

These systemic changes inevitably influenced the Turkish arms procurement patterns. Initially, Germany and the Soviet Union remained principal suppliers for naval arms. The first new naval order for the Turkish Navy was placed in the Netherlands in 1924 for two submarines. The deal was a strong manifestation of the German connection. Thanks to the one million Reichmark subvention provided under a secret German fund for the construction of these German-designed types, Ankara could buy new submarines without much drain on its thin finances. They were constructed at the Rotterdam yard of Ingenieurskantoor voor Scheepsbouw (IvS). Seeking a way around the restrictions on the German arms industry under the Versailles Treaty, the IvS was set up by Krupp Germaniawerft (Kiel), A.G. Weser (Bremen) and Vulkanwerft (Hamburg and Stettin) in Rotterdam as a submarine design and consulting bureau. The Turkish order was the first order for submarines ever placed in this new shipyard. In addition, the cordial relations between Ankara and Moscow secured the flow of such critical items as sea mines after the Independence War. When Turkey needed heavier and more sophisticated arms, these two traditional suppliers’ capabilities were not sufficient. The Soviets had not yet developed an across-the-board production capability to meet the Turkish demand for modern weapons and Germany was subject to the Versailles restrictions in building large warships. Thus Ankara needed a new supplier to obtain affordably priced (or subsidized) modern weapons.

In 1927, the Italians and the Turks made a series of diplomatic overtures. The Italian diplomatic papers indicate a constant sounding from both sides for a high level Turkish diplomatic visit to Rome in 1927. These overtures marked a departure from the Italian pursuit of colonial expansion into Turkey by military means. A report from the Italian
Embassy in Turkey to the Foreign Ministry had already identified 1927 as the critical year. The report concluded that it would be difficult to pursue colonial expansion into Turkey after 1927 as the new Turkish regime began to consolidate domestically and acquired effective means to defend itself. This plan did not seem to have received serious consideration. Instead, Rome sought ways to improve its relations with Turkey and Greece simultaneously.

In April 1928, Rome and Ankara finally came to terms with each other. Turkish Foreign Minister Aras met with Mussolini in Milan. The Milan meeting served as an icebreaker in a process that eventually culminated in the Italian–Turkish Treaty of Neutrality and Reconciliation in May 1928. In June 1928, Mussolini expressed the new Italian view of Turkey: “From now on, Rome must recognize Turkey as it is, given its strength and population.” Mussolini’s speech marked the elevation of Turkey’s standing from a potential colony to a sovereign state which had to be won to the Italian side through economic, political and military penetration. Seeking economic penetration in regions particularly beyond the British or French control predated the Fascist rule. Due to lack of appropriate military means during the Liberal Italy, it was developed as a second best option to conquer territories rich in natural resources. The change in Italian policy indicated that Fascist Italy had settled for the second best option in dealing with Turkey.

The change was so dramatic that the British diagnosed the Italian–Turkish accord as bringing the ‘lion’ and the ‘lamb’ together. They linked the new mood in Italian–Turkish relations to questions pending with France and Greece. There is no doubt that anti-French motives provided a common ground for Italian–Turkish reconciliation. Around that time, Turkey was at odds with France over settlement of the Ottoman debts. However, as the British noted, the Turkish stand towards Italy was not of unreserved confidence.

The restoration of Italian–Turkish relations had a significant impact on the Turkish armaments programs. In 1928, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a bill authorizing a ten-year naval armaments programme. The ten-year appropriation for shipbuilding and procurement of arms and ammunition between 1927 and 1937 totalled 25 million Turkish Lira (TL) with annual instalments not exceeding TL 3 million. Until then, the most prominent naval modernization effort had been the re-conditioning of the battle cruiser Yavuz (ex-German Navy Goeben).

The Italian shipyard Odero had offered to supply destroyers to the Turkish Navy before the ten-year naval programme was adopted. In December 1926, the Italian Air and Naval Attaché in Turkey, Lieutenant Commander Maroni, identified the Odero destroyers offered to the Turkish
Ministry of Marine as perfect vehicles for Italian penetration to Turkey.\textsuperscript{38} Around the same time, Italian Ambassador Orsini also urged the Italian Foreign Ministry to encourage Italian shipbuilders to take advantage of the recent opening up in Turkey by bidding individually or collectively for the coming Turkish naval programmes.\textsuperscript{39} In 1928, the German naval advisors’ arrival in Turkey intensified Italian interest in Turkish naval matters. The Italians did not miss the obvious link between the delivery of the German-funded Dutch-built submarines and the arrival of the German naval advisors. It may have reinforced the conviction that the supply of naval hardware would entail the provision of training by the supplier and hence facilitate military penetration. In this frame of mind, Mussolini expressed his disappointment over the absence of any Italian military or civilian experts in Turkey. He particularly regretted that 43 German, 17 French, two Austrian and one English advisor were then employed in the Turkish military service but not a single Italian was even in civilian service in Turkey. He also encouraged the Italian Ministry of Marine to invite Turkish military and naval missions to promote the Italian arms industry, while cautioning them not to show any secret facilities or weapons to the visiting Turks.\textsuperscript{40}

In response to Mussolini’s remarks, Maroni reported that it was long established great power practice to exert military influence on the Ottoman Empire through military/naval advisors. He pointed to the current fierce rivalry between France and Germany, each with a large number of advisors in the Turkish military service. Italy had been absent in this rivalry until a few months before. This was due to Rome’s indifference before the First World War and then because of Turkish suspicions.\textsuperscript{41} Historical experience suggested to the Italians a strong link between arms transfers and the presence of foreign military/naval advisors. They concluded that the supply of arms was a tested great power method of gaining economic, political and military influence in Turkey.\textsuperscript{42} With the first signs of warming in Italian–Turkish relations in 1927, the Italians were further encouraged by the noticeably positive attitude towards Italian shipyards in Turkish military circles.\textsuperscript{43} It seems safe to argue that the political significance of the Turkish naval tender for the Italian government far exceeded its commercial significance for the Italian shipbuilders. Rome was willing to provide a financial guarantee for the tender that no other foreign government could match.

This guarantee was significant, as the financing of the Turkish naval order was the key question. Turkey had not recovered economically from the devastation of the wars. It was also struggling to settle the Ottoman debts.\textsuperscript{44} Ankara could afford to order ships only under long-term financial facilities with favourable terms. Rome agreed to provide Italian shipbuilders
with a financial guarantee for up to 70 per cent of the value of a possible Turkish order.\textsuperscript{45} Maroni drew attention to the political and military significance of the Italian government’s guarantee for the contract. First and foremost, it decisively demonstrated lack of aggressive motives in Italian approach to Turkey. Secondly, it proved Italy’s genuine interest in, and its wholehearted commitment to, strengthening Turkey militarily.\textsuperscript{46}

The British shipbuilders were among the most serious contenders for the Turkish naval tender. Like their Italian rivals, the British bidders combined their efforts to meet the diversity of vessel types the Turkish tender involved. The most prominent tie-up was the one between two large British shipbuilders: Vickers-Armstrong and J.I. Thornycroft & Co. Ltd. Unlike the Italians, the British did not find the Turkish payment proposal financially acceptable. Ankara’s proposal involved a ten-year payment schedule according to which two per cent of the contract value was to be paid upon signature of the contract, another two per cent in 1929–30, then five per cent in 1930–31. The balance was to be paid in seven years with Turkish treasury bonds, around 13 per cent each year. The British shipyards’ financially acceptable minimum was 20 per cent of the value of the contract during the construction period of three years, the balance payable in treasury bonds over six years from the contract date. They accurately predicted that they might lose the tender to the Italians who enjoyed government backing.\textsuperscript{47} The disarmament-oriented British government was not able or willing to furnish similar financial guarantees to the private arms producers competing for overseas markets.

The Italians enjoyed a psychological edge over the British shipbuilders too. In 1927, the Italian shipbuilder Ansaldo made an important gesture that tilted the scales further in favour of the Italians. This was related to a financial dispute that dated back to the Ottoman Empire. In 1907, the Empire had ordered a protected cruiser from Ansaldo. Shortly before the outbreak of the Tripoli War, the Italian government commandeered the cruiser, *Drama*, on the grounds of non-payment. The cruiser was commissioned by the Italian Navy as *Libia* in 1913.\textsuperscript{48} Ansaldo never returned the payments the Ottoman Empire had made for the cruiser. However, on the eve of the Turkish naval tender, Ansaldo turned surprisingly accommodating and agreed to repay the Turkish government £70,000 sterling for the disputed *Drama/Libia* cruiser.\textsuperscript{49}

The Italian move sharply contrasted with the British shipbuilders’ uncompromising stand in a somewhat similar dispute a year before. In 1926, the Turkish government sought unsuccessfully to settle another Ottoman left over financial dispute with the British shipbuilders. When the First World War broke out, the two dreadnoughts ordered in Britain for the Ottoman Navy faced a similar fate as the *Drama*. The British
commandeered the *Re*’adiye and *Sultan Osman* dreadnoughts built by Armstrong for the Ottoman Navy. After the war, the British shipyards did not return the payments for these two ships. Indeed, Turkey was barred from claiming compensation for the two dreadnoughts under the Treaty of Lausanne.\(^5\) The legal remedies the Turkish government sought against various British companies were unsuccessfully concluded in 1926.\(^6\) Hence, Ansaldo’s move in settling the *Drama/Libia* dispute was wisely timed and executed. It must have helped the Italians to eclipse their British competitors in the first major naval contact for the Turkish Navy.

A number of problems continued to delay Turkish naval modernization. The major problem was the battlecruiser *Yavuz*’s reconditioning. Fraud charges and technical problems led to a significant delay in that project.\(^7\) This prompted the British to comment that ‘the Turkish Government is really seeking a means of repudiating the contract because it is now realized that as a fighting unit the ex-Goeben is and will always be of little use’.\(^8\) This statement captured precisely the essence of Chief of Staff Marshal Fevzi’s [Çakmak] opinion of the navy. The Marshal’s scorn for expensive naval programmes was internationally known. The fraud charges resulted in the abolition of the Ministry of Marine. This was definitely a gain for the army and army-dominated Turkish General Staff in the inter-service rivalry. A slowdown in expensive naval projects was not surprising or unanticipated. Maroni noted that only Prime Minister smet [nönü] could and did convince the Marshal of the pressing need for new warships.\(^9\) In September 1928, a large-scale Greek naval exercise off the Dardanelles set the seal on the fate of naval modernization. The Turkish Navy responded by a similar exercise, personally commanded by President Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk]. In view of the pending Turkish–Greek disputes and Greece’s naval superiority, the naval modernization became imperative.\(^5\) Consequently, the *Yavuz*’s re-conditioning gained momentum and the shipbuilding programme was revived.\(^6\)

There is no definitive account of the original scope of the new shipbuilding programme. The historical data suggest that the 1929 order represented a substantially reduced level than the original intention. Turkish naval officers had long set their sights on the dreadnoughts.\(^7\) However, in the 1920s, Turkish naval policy remained modest: ‘[as] Turkey has to allocate the bulk of its income to domestic development, it is imperative to dispense with unrealistic [naval] programmes’ said Turkish Minister of Marine Ali hsan (Eryavuz).\(^8\) German advisors devised an order of battle that provided for a squadron of eight battleships and a flotilla of eight destroyers.\(^9\) Their idea of the size and composition of the Turkish Navy was neither new nor original. It mirrored a concept that dated back to the time of Admiral Alfred Tirpitz. When tasked
with developing a strategy for the German high seas fleet in 1890, Tirpitz had ‘determined that a line of eight ships was the most effective tactical unit; if more ships were available, a second line of eight could be formed, to work in unison with or independently of the first eight’.60 However, the new Turkish state lacked the financial resources to develop even a single line of eight ships. Consequently, the capital ships (battleships) were dropped from the agenda. The programme was then cut to four flotilla leaders (destroyers), six submarines and six motor-launches (submarine chasers).61 The Italian shipyards anticipated the Turkish naval order to include four to six destroyers, four submarines and four to six submarine chasers in 1927.62

After the Italian shipyards submitted their bids in December 1928,63 there were frequent contacts between the Under Secretary of the Turkish Navy, Captain Mehmet Ali, and the Italian Naval and Air Attaché, Lieutenant Commander Maroni. On 9 December 1928, Italian Ambassador Orsini reported Maroni’s conversation with Mehmet Ali about the tender. Maroni was led to believe ‘the contract may be split between the French and Italian shipbuilders, although the French designs are technically inferior and Turkey’s political relations with France do not warrant such a deal’.64 A week later, Mehmet Ali visited Maroni in his residence to discuss matters of significance to Italian–Turkish naval relations. During his visit, he assured Maroni that the contract would be awarded to the Italian shipyards. Mehmet Ali admitted that the present political climate worked in Italy’s favour. The Italian attaché then brought up the issue of German naval advisors in Turkey. This was an issue of significance second only to the supply of warships in terms of offering a venue for the Italians to penetrate the hitherto inaccessible Turkish military. The Under Secretary confirmed that ‘their contacts will terminate in coming April and will not be renewed as the General Staff has not been very satisfied by their performance’. The attaché then offered the services of Italian officers in their stead, adding ‘in case the duty officers are not preferred, retired Italian navy officers may serve as instructors in the Turkish Navy’. Captain Mehmet Ali promised to relate this offer to Deputy Chief of Staff General Asm [Gündüz]. He also expressed his gratitude for permission granted to the two Turkish navy officers to visit the Italian warships.65

On 24 May 1929, the conclusion of the Turkish naval tender in favour of the Italian shipbuilders was made public. According to a Turkish daily, Cumhuriyet, Italian and British bidders had pulled down their bids to financially affordable levels, yet the Italians won the tender because the British bidder was found politically unreliable. The notorious ‘merchant of
death’, Basil Zaharoff, was serving on Vickers’ board of directors. Italian shipbuilders were asked to submit an accelerated delivery schedule to finalize the agreement.\textsuperscript{66} Next day, the Italian Foreign Ministry officially notified the Ministry of Marine in Rome that the contract to supply warships to the Turkish Navy was finalized.\textsuperscript{67} The order included only two destroyers, two submarines and three submarine chasers, well below the highly inflated numbers advertised previously.\textsuperscript{68}

The Turkish orders from the Italian shipyards represented the high water mark in Italian–Turkish relations in the inter-war years. The Italians were quick to conclude that the naval contract also signified a substantially modified view of Italy in the Turkish military mind. The new cordial atmosphere in Italian–Turkish relations produced immediate consequences of military significance. In 1929, the Turkish General Staff changed the location of the annual large-scale military exercise from Izmir in the west to Diyarbakır, near the Iraqi and Syrian borders in the east.\textsuperscript{69} The shift in Turkish threat assessments was obvious. Also in 1929, the Turkish Navy sent its first junior officers for training to Italy.\textsuperscript{70} In 1929, Italy seemed on the verge of garnering a stronghold for itself in the Turkish military. The growing Italian connection with the Turkish Navy led some foreign observers to conclude that ‘an Italian mission is about to take over [from the Germans] the supervision of rejuvenation of the Turkish fleet’.\textsuperscript{71}

In addition to closer naval relations with Italy, the period of ‘warmth’ in Italian–Turkish relations witnessed intensified military, political and social contacts. In June 1929, four Italian destroyers visited Istanbul. On board the destroyers were 20 Italian journalists.\textsuperscript{72} This visit was a precursor to a more daring and politically significant venture. A squadron of 35 Italian seaplanes visited Istanbul. The squadron was led by Italy’s famous aviation hero, Air Minister Italo Balbo. When they arrived in Istanbul, Balbo and his aviators were received exceptionally warmly.\textsuperscript{73} Around the same time, the Turkish Ambassador in Rome, Suat [Davaz], was in Turkey. In his comments to Cumhuriyet, he stated that a large number of Turkish civil servants were training in Italy. He also announced that a group of Turkish scouts were to visit Italy in September. Last, but not least, Italian–Turkish relations would soon be solidified by a credit agreement.\textsuperscript{74} The dramatic turn in Italian–Turkish relations since 1928 was evident in many aspects of their relations. The ‘warmth’ also unleashed vocal expressions of admiration of Italian Fascism by Turks.\textsuperscript{75} For instance, the Chairman of Turkish Association of Journalists, Hakk Tarık, highly praised the Italian aviators in his speech during the dinner organized for the 20 Italian journalists. He went so far as to refer to them as ‘the heirs to the victorious Carthaginians’ so as to endorse the Italian Fascists’ claim for imperial heritage in the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{76}
Regarding the Mediterranean naval situation, the Turkish naval order in 1929 did not threaten to upset the balance per se. Its impact was likely to be more prominent in the Black Sea and the Aegean. Turkey’s neighbours moved to adjust their shipbuilding and deployment plans in response. Interestingly, Ankara’s most trusted partner, the Soviet Union, was concerned about the Black Sea naval balance after the Turkish naval modernization. Hence, they deployed one battleship and one cruiser from the Baltic Sea to augment the fleet in the Black Sea in December 1929/January 1930.77 The prospective Turkish fleet expansion worried the Greeks most. Here Italy faced a problem. The Italian policy was originally aimed at seeking simultaneous improvement in relations with Turkey and Greece. The supply of new warships was meant to serve as an instrument to this end. In the short-run the plan failed to serve the intended objective. It actually ran the risk of deepening the Turkish–Greek rift. Rome had to find a way to tune the plan to the objective. The opportunity arose soon with the new Greek shipbuilding programme.

When the Yavuz’s reconditioning and new Turkish naval acquisitions looked imminent, the Greek government discussed measures to counter the Turkish naval modernization programme. During the discussions, the head of the British naval mission to Athens, Captain Turle, suggested expansion of the naval air power and reinforcing the fleet by light naval units.78 However, to the Greek public, the prospects for Yavuz’s return to active duty warranted a far more credible response. In search of a publicly acceptable match for the Yavuz, the Greek government turned to a cruiser, Salamis, that had lain incomplete in the German shipyard Vulcan Works in Kiel since 1914.79 Pointing to the poor shape of the country’s finances, the British naval mission in Greece and the British government tried to dissuade the Greek government from such an expensive venture.80 Amidst a heated debate in the Greek press, the Venizelos government decided to order two destroyers as an urgent measure to preserve the naval balance in the Aegean.81 Thus began a naval arms race between Turkey and Greece.82

The British were quick to grasp that Greece’s choice of supplier for new destroyers would be a political one. In spite of the strong British naval influence in Greece, from the onset the British shipbuilders were aware that a Greek contract was not a sure win for them. They were informed that Greek Prime Minister Venizelos ‘will use order for Destroyers as means of securing Italian, French or British diplomatic support in Conference at The Hague with a view of revising German Reparation Schemes which sacrifice Greek interests’.83 In October 1929, it was evident that Venizelos was personally more inclined towards Italy as the supplier for new destroyers.84 The Turkish naval order put the prospects for an Italian-brokered Turkish–Greek reconciliation in the Eastern Mediterranean at risk.
However, the Greek order for destroyers put the Italian strategy back on track. Improved relations with Ankara and Athens were evident on the Italian Navy’s strategic war plans for 1929–31. In case of a war against Yugoslavia or against Yugoslavia and France, the Italian Navy assumed Turkish and Greek neutrality in the Eastern Mediterranean.85

In March 1930, the Under Secretary of the Turkish Navy, Captain Mehmet Ali, visited Italy. Mehmet Ali’s visit coincided interestingly with the London Naval Conference.86 While the delegates from the major naval nations were discussing the extension of naval limitations to lighter units such as cruisers, submarines and destroyers,87 Turkey ordered two more destroyers from Italy. During the conference, France stood firmly against the Italian demand for parity with France in lighter naval units. The French–Italian antagonism undermined the entire venture. While the conference was still in progress in March 1930, a Turkish daily quoted the Chicago Tribune which pointed to Italian–Turkish co-operation as a major cause for French concern and the principal reason for the Italian–French rift in the London Naval Conference.88

Portraying improved Turkish–Italian relations as the principal cause of the Italian–French differences may be an exaggeration. At any rate, however, the Turkish and Greek destroyer orders from Italy caused French suspicion. To make matters worse for the French, Athens ordered two more destroyers from Italy.89 The total of eight destroyers under construction in Italy for Turkey and Greece constituted a major naval asset with significant impact on the Mediterranean naval situation. France felt particularly uneasy about the fact that in case of hostilities in the Mediterranean, Italy could easily add these eight destroyers to its fleet and form a new flotilla with them.90

The Italian success of securing contracts for war materials prompted British interest also.91 Italy’s share had been consistently growing in foreign markets. Italian naval arms exports accounted for 24 per cent in submarines and 17.8 per cent in warships in the inter-war years. By 1939, Italy ranked in both categories second only to Britain.92 The Greek orders seemed to have caused more concern to London than the Turkish orders. The former placed orders in Italy in spite of a British naval mission serving in Athens. The mission had access to the classified details of the destroyer contact. To explain Italian willingness to build warships for foreign governments, the British naval intelligence report from Athens speculated:

The anxiety of the Italians to get tenders for destroyers unquestionably appears to be greater than that dictated by financial considerations ... The self-imposed heavy penalties for delays in completion and failure to reach contract speed indicate either ... extreme confidence in their ability, or ... a desire to commence
building ships which could, in the event of hostilities breaking out between Italy and other countries, be commandeered, and added to the Italian Navy.93

The British identified the subsequent Turkish destroyer order from Italy as politically motivated. It was viewed as a by-product of the loan of £1 million sterling to Turkey by the Banca Commerciale.94 The overall financial magnitude of the new order (60 million lira or £645,000 sterling) also surprised the British, who thought the Ottoman debts would render such an expensive venture financially unacceptable for Turkey. In hindsight, the timing of the Turkish 1930 order for destroyers suggests a link with the London Disarmament Conference and with Turkish–Greek diplomatic negotiations on freezing naval arms in the Aegean. It may be argued that Ankara rushed to secure these destroyers before the London Naval Conference placed restrictions on the production and trade of lighter naval units, including destroyers. Secondly, there had been proposals and counter-proposals by Ankara and Athens for naval arms limitations in the Aegean since January 1928.95 In 1930, the Turkish–Greek negotiations looked promising in resolving the post-Lausanne problems. It is possible that Ankara wanted to complete its fleet modernization before a Turkish–Greek agreement froze naval force levels.96 Two factors support this argument. First, in spite of vocally expressed dissatisfaction with the first two destroyers ordered in Italy, Ankara decided to stick with Italian shipbuilders without going through a lengthy tender process for new units. Secondly, the new Turkish contract demanded an extremely short delivery period of 12 months.97

In 1930, Rome had reasons to be optimistic about its Eastern Mediterranean project. It had secured naval orders from Greece and Turkey. Particularly, subsequent Turkish and Greek orders for additional units were placed directly in Italy without opening international tenders. This may be taken as a precursor to emerging dominant supplier status for Italy in the Turkish and Greek arms markets in the early 1930s. On the Italian–French rivalry in the Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, Turkey stood closer to Italy than France, however without any political or military commitment. It should be noted that Ankara always avoided attaching itself to any great power or joining any bloc in the inter-war years. In the late 1920s, it was not interested in the formation of an anti-French bloc either. Short of declaring any support to Italy, Turkish decision-makers identified France as the main cause of European problems. For instance, after his visit to Geneva, Turkish Foreign Minister Aras said to the British: ‘the root of uneasiness in Europe was of French hegemony’. Even though he ruled out the emergence of a
bloc against France and the states in its orbit, Aras claimed it was the French policy which made this a possibility.\textsuperscript{98} Ankara was particularly resentful of the French foot-dragging in ratifying the French–Turkish Treaty of Friendship, Reconciliation and Arbitration of February 1930.\textsuperscript{99}

In 1930, Turkey and Greece finally worked out their differences and concluded a treaty. They also signed a protocol to end the naval arms race in the Aegean. In his address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Turkish Foreign Minister Aras expressed Ankara’s gratitude to Signor Mussolini and Signor Grandi for their help in the Turkish–Greek reconciliation.\textsuperscript{100} In 1930, Rome could justifiably claim that it enjoyed some degree of political influence in Turkey and Greece.\textsuperscript{101} The Turkish–Greek reconciliation was certainly a reward for the Italian attempts to bring Ankara and Athens together into the Italian orbit. However, after 1930, Turkey and Greece gradually parted company with Italy. In addition to major political changes, a number of events proved that the Italians lacked the naval technology and economic resources to foster a patron–client relationship through the arms trade.

In the inter-war years, Italian naval policy was aimed at autarchy at any cost. This goal was the natural outcome of the pursuit of improved great power credentials and naval parity with France. It inevitably required a steady flow of naval contracts to Italy’s ‘infant’ shipbuilding industry. Consequently, Italy’s naval budgets were largely allocated to building new units, with little money left for upkeep, sea trials, gunnery practice, or training. Domestic contracts were supplemented by vigorous marketing efforts for international tenders. The naval pragmatism was so great that Italy saw no problem in assisting even the ideologically hostile Soviets with their naval programmes. In the end, this emphasis on quantity over quality damaged the Italian reputation in shipbuilding.\textsuperscript{102}

A typical common design failure in Italian naval architecture resulted from the choice of straight flat bows on warships.\textsuperscript{103} Lieutenant Commander Münir had already cautioned the Turkish Navy on possible flaws in this design in a report after his visit to Italy in 1929.\textsuperscript{104} A Turkish naval architect, Lieutenant Junior Grade Ata Nutku, identified stability problems related to this design feature in two Turkish destroyers, \textit{Kocatepe} and \textit{Adatepe}, built by Ansaldo.\textsuperscript{105} The construction of other naval units for Turkey in Italy was not free of problems. Three submarine chasers, \textit{Do an}, \textit{Mart} and \textit{Denizku\textsuperscript{u}}, built by SVAN in Venice had problems meeting the contract speed of 34 knots. Indeed, these boats had difficulty in attaining even 31 knots as of December 1930. Based on information provided by an official of Vickers-Armstrong, the British Consul at Venice reported ‘it would … appear highly improbable that the SVAN will succeed in meeting its engagement’.\textsuperscript{106} The additional two destroyers, \textit{Zafer} and \textit{T naztepe}, built by
Del Tirreno, proved not to be immune to the stability problems that plagued the Italian inter-war destroyer designs.\textsuperscript{107} The Italians themselves discovered gun installation problems in the destroyers, including those built for Turkey. The cracks in gun mounts were cosmetically covered by a welding operation overnight.\textsuperscript{108}

Such engineering and technical failures eroded the hard-earned Italian reputation in Turkish military and naval circles at the zenith of the ‘warmth’ in Italian–Turkish relations. To appease the Turks, Italian Ambassador Aloisi gave personal assurances to Tevfik Rüştü Aras that they would be solved to Turkey’s satisfaction. He drew attention to the Italian shipyards’ willingness to meet Turkish demands even if they meant additional costs to them. He singled out Ansaldo for its financial sacrifices to meet the Turkish Navy’s extra requirements not covered in the contract.\textsuperscript{109} Aloisi also urged Rome to make sure that the first units were delivered on schedule. Prime Minister Smet nönü was particularly keen to introduce the new units to the public on the Bosphorus on 15 May 1931, shortly after the general elections.\textsuperscript{110}

However, the deliveries could not be made on time. The three submarine chasers were the first to arrive in September 1930, their arrival delayed due to speed problems. As expected, these boats could never reach the contract speed of 34 knots in the Turkish naval service.\textsuperscript{111} The two first destroyers, Kocatepe and Adatepe, were supposed to be delivered in the spring of 1931.\textsuperscript{112} In their case, the notorious stability problems slowed the delivery until October 1931.\textsuperscript{113} Even at that time, their problems were not fully rectified. British Ambassador Clerk wrote:

In order to get here in time to meet Ismet Pasha on his return from his visits to Greece and Hungary, the two destroyers left Italy without their fire control installation … Prime Minister decided to take delivery of these vessels for political reasons, notwithstanding strong opposition from the Turkish naval experts in view of the vessels’ unsatisfactory behavior at trials.\textsuperscript{114}

The last units under the 1929 contract, the two submarines, Sakarya and Dumlupınar, were delivered later in November 1931. Unlike the destroyers and submarine chasers, no significant problems were reported in connection with them.\textsuperscript{115} The final naval delivery was for the additional destroyers, Zafer and Tanziepe. The 1930 contract provided for delivery in 12 months. When they arrived in Istanbul in June 1932, the delivery term had been exceeded by more than a year.\textsuperscript{116}

Italy’s financial limitations seriously undermined its pursuit of political, military and economic influence in Turkey. The World Economic Crisis in 1929 aggravated the financial problems in Italy. For instance, in 1931, the
Del Tirreno shipyard that was building *Zafer* and *T naztepe* destroyers demanded an adjustment of the payment basis in view of changes in the exchange rates. These two destroyers could be delivered only after Turkish Prime Minister Smet nönü’s visit to Rome in May 1932. In addition to the renewal of Italian–Turkish Treaty of 1928, this visit culminated in a new credit agreement between Italy and Turkey for 300 million liras. However, Rome turned out be unwilling or unable or both to release the cash portion of the credit. Related to the Turkish naval orders, the union of Italian shipyards requested the Italian Foreign Ministry to reserve one third of this credit against payments for the Turkish naval units constructed in Italian shipyards. It was suggested that another third would be allocated for the additional Turkish naval units and naval aircraft under construction in Italy. The protracted negotiations on the conditions for the release of the credit frustrated both the Italians and the Turks. The Italian diplomats in Turkey accused the Turkish government of acting with a ‘Balkan mentality’ in dealing with the great powers on economic issues.Haunted by the Ottoman debts experience, Ankara was extremely sensitive about the (particularly political) terms attached to foreign loans. Turkey then turned to Paris for fresh foreign loans in December 1932. This turn, the British argued, was aimed at playing off the great powers against each other. In practical terms, this tactic was expected to extract maximum benefits from France while exerting pressure on Italy. Rome interpreted this Turkish move as turning its back on old friends. Ankara should not have been that particular about the terms for credit from old friends.

Without doubt, the poor Italian naval technology or financial difficulties contributed to the deterioration of Italian–Turkish relations. The ‘warmth’ in relations, however, was already drawing to an end as Italian and Turkish views of the Balkans and the Mediterranean evolved in increasingly divergent directions in the first half of the 1930s. To begin with, Turkish–Greek co-operation went out of Rome’s control. Ankara and Athens began to promote political and economic co-operation among the Balkan states to preserve the *status quo* rather than to serve as Italian proxies in the Peninsula. It was difficult to imagine that the Italians would approve such independent moves in the region, as Greek Prime Minister Venizelos confided to French diplomats in 1933.

A number of major political events caused Italy and Turkey to drift further apart. In 1932, Italian foreign policy took another sharp turn with accentuated *tono Fascista*. Moreover, in 1933 the rise of Hitler’s Germany, intent on ridding itself of the Versailles restrictions, provided the balance which Mussolini was seeking to act against the pro-status quo powers in Europe. An obstacle to his revisionist policies was the League of Nations. He advocated the League’s substitution with a new kind of great
power concert to promote the peaceful development of minor states. In this frame of mind, Italy opposed Turkey’s admission to the League of Nations in 1932. The uncompromising Italian stand against Turkey’s admission adversely influenced the bilateral relations. In addition, Mussolini’s four-power pact proposal in 1933, urging the four great powers, Britain, France, Italy and Germany, to co-operate at the expense of minor powers, caused Turkey’s apprehension.

Domestically, the Turkish political leaders could not help but admire Italian Fascism’s social achievements at home in the inter-war years. However, they were reserved admirers at best because they were never sure of Fascist Italy’s intentions regarding Turkey. Italy was Turkey’s neighbour by virtue of its possession of the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean. This proximity made the Turks particularly suspicious towards Italy. Without this geographical dictum, a Turkish naval officer argued in 1936, Turkey would have no reason to fear Italy. By 1933, however, Italy figured again in Turkish threat assessments as the ‘enemy number one’ in the Aegean and the Mediterranean. The new situation was immediately reflected in the Italian–Turkish naval arms trade. In 1933, the Turkish authorities insisted on charging customs duties on the ammunition and fire control installations delivered on board a merchant ship. These items were intended for the two Ansaldo-built destroyers. Usually, such items were exempt from duties. This unusual demand led the Italians to conclude that Turkey was indeed seeking a pretext to refuse the delivery. The Italian Embassy in Turkey warned Rome that other Italian shipyards and suppliers might face similar difficulties in Turkey in the future. The warships that were supposed to serve as instruments of Italian influence in Turkey became demonstration vehicles of Turkish disdain for Italy. Clearly, the Italians were no longer favoured arms suppliers in Turkey.

The Italian–Turkish antagonism came full circle when Mussolini made his notorious speech on the future expansion of Italy into Africa and Asia in 1934. This speech convinced many Turks of Italy’s continued expansionist designs on Turkey. Ankara then sought to strengthen its navy. Athens followed suit. About five years previously, both countries had ordered warships from Italy to gain the upper hand in the Aegean naval arms race against each other. Now, Turkey approached Britain for more ships against the Italian menace in the Aegean.

Even if Italian–Turkish political relations had not gone astray after 1934, it is difficult to imagine that the arms trade would have promoted the Italian military influence in Turkey. German and British experiences with the early republican Turkish military tended to support the above argument. Although
German military/naval advisors were received more enthusiastically and warmly than any others, there is no evidence that the German advisors in the Turkish service enjoyed a degree of influence comparable to that of their predecessors in the Ottoman service. From the onset, the Turkish military was determined to avoid a recurrence of the Ottoman experience. They were particularly sensitive about how the advisors’ status and role could be perceived (or misperceived). The British had similar experiences with the impenetrable Turkish military, even though Turkey was involved in naval co-operation with Britain against ‘pirate’ submarines in the Mediterranean after the Nyon Conference in 1937. Turkish military openness proved to be selective and pragmatic. The Turks reverted to their reserved attitude after a brief period of openness with the British as soon as the crisis in the Mediterranean had ceased to be vital. There is no evidence to suggest that the Italians would have fared better than the Germans or the British in gaining decisive influence over the Turkish military. Considering the inter-service rivalry and the Navy’s diminished status vis-à-vis the Army, the Navy actually offered little opportunity to gain influence in Turkish armed services. Finally, it should be kept in mind that the Turkish strategy in the inter-war years dictated avoidance of military alliances between powers of unequal strength. Hence, Italy’s great power status, however real or pretended, made it an unsuitable military partner for Turkey. In the final analysis, the naval arms trade ran little, if any, chance of overriding political and military concerns that characterized the guarded Turkish approach to the great powers of the time.

At any rate, the Italian-built naval units were a quantum leap for the Turkish Navy in the 1930s. Although the submarines and submarine chasers were average units, the destroyers were particularly appreciated for their high speed and fire control equipment in Turkish service, notwithstanding the stability problems. Ironically, the Italian–built warships provided the backbone of the Turkish Navy against the Italian threat after 1934. As such, they offer perfect symbols of the duality in Italian–Turkish relations of the inter-war years. Originally aimed to solidify the amicable state of Italian–Turkish relations, they turned into ultimate instruments of adversity between the two countries.
NOTES

Dilek Barlas gratefully acknowledges the grant provided by the Agnelli Foundation to support her research in the Archives of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Italian Foreign Ministry). Both authors would like to thank Deniz Harp Okulu Komutanı (Turkish Naval Academy) for providing access to the Ata Nutku Collection, Gareth Winrow for his comments on the previous version of this article, and Turgay Erol for supplying most of the Turkish naval publications cited in this work.

7. The Italian arms supplied to the Turkish nationalists ranged from ammunition to fighter aircraft. The Turkish nationalists’ shopping list for arms included even submarines, although they could never be delivered. Mevlüt Çelebi, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Türk–italyan İlişkileri* (Ankara: Dileri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, 1999), pp.281–96.
13. Archivio Storico Diplomatico (ASD), Pacco 1704/7859, series reports by Savino (Antalya), 26 Aug. 1924, 5 and 8 Sept. 1924. See also the report on the sea mines off Anatolian coasts, ASD, Pacco 1714/7889, Turchia 1925, Montagna (İstanbul) to the Governor of the Dodecanese Islands (Rhodes), 21 Jan. 1925.
16. For a very recent example of this school, see Y. Güçlü, ‘Fascist Italy’s “Mare Nostrum” Policy and Turkey’, *Belleten*, Vol.63, No.238 (Dec. 1999). It should be noted that Turkey does not figure prominently in general works on the inter-war Italian foreign policy.
17. ASD, Pacco 1729/7939, Turchia 1927, Orsini to Foreign Ministry, 1 May 1927.
22. A columnist noted for his knowledge of Turkish naval affairs, appropriately dubbed ‘civilian admiral’, Abidin Daver, claimed that the certain strand in Turkish military advocated abolishing the navy altogether. ‘Donanmamızın hiç somut Pa anın Muvaflak Oldu u En Büyük Eserlerinden Birirdi’, Camhuriyet, 25 Aug. 1930.
23. See S. Deringil, Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War: An Active Neutrality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.58–70. For instance, Chief of Staff Marshal Fevzi [Çakmak’s] views did not only shape the military strategy but also had significant impact on the development projects in that period. His deputies, General Asım [Gündüz] mentions Çakmak’s opposition to the building of roads and bridges heading to the coastline. To the Marshal, absence of such facilities was to render Turkish hinterland inaccessible in case of a sea-borne assault on Turkish mainland. The Marshal also instructed cabinet ministers not to keep large amounts of public money in border regions. This policy was justified by constant reminders that a significant portion of the Ottoman treasury had to be left behind in the provinces the Empire lost during the First World War. A. Gündüz, Hat ralar m (Istanbul: Kervan Yayı̇nları, 1973), p.219.
24. This seems to be a rather durable conviction. See PRO FO 371/19039, E1213/1213/44, Telegram from Lorraine, 10 Feb. 1935. Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] is also claimed have challenged Mussolini into a land battle in the mid-1930s: ‘I have a proposition to make to … the Duce. We will allow him to land Italian soldiers in Antalya. When landing is complete, we will have a battle and the side wins will have Antalya.’ Quoted in Güçlü, ‘Fascist Italy’, p.817. Notwithstanding its questionable accuracy, the above account is a typical manifestation of the deep-seated belief in decisiveness of land battles in Turkish military culture. See also A. Mango, Atatürk (London: John Murray, 1999), p.504.
26. Krause (note 4), Arms and the State, p.16.
28. See Krause (note 4), Arms and the State, pp.72–8.
32. ASD, Pacco 4171/584 Turchia 1927, Plane de l’expansion coloniale, 9 June 1927.
35. PRO FO 371/13085, E3218/43/44, Clerk to Chamberlain, 25 June 1928.
36. PRO FO 371/13085, E6167/43/44, Edmonds to Chamberlain, 31 Dec. 1928. This dispatch was circulated to the Cabinet. Montegale’s hand-written comments affirm the perceived anti-French motives in Italian–Turkish rapprochement: ‘The Turks and Italian no doubt find the Francophobia, now common to both of them, a great bond of union.’
38. ASD, Pacco 1727/7988, Turchia 1926, Maroni to Navy Headquarters, 6 Dec. 1926.
40. ASD, Pacco 1720/17271, Turchia 1928, Mussolini to Italian Embassy (Turkey) and Mussolini to Ministry of Marine, 23 Nov. 1928.
41. ASD, Pacco 1727/7975, Turchia 1928, Maroni to Navy Headquarters, 3 Dec. 1928.
43. ASD, Pacco 1720/7939, Turchia 1927, Maroni to Navy Headquarters, 3 June 1927.
44. Barlas (note 8), Etatism and Diplomacy, pp.114–23.
47. PRO FO 371/13817, E1855/189/44, Department of Overseas Trade Memorandum, 15 April 1929.
48. Libya served with the Italian Navy until 1938. Langensiepen and Güleryüz (note 21), The Ottoman Navy, p.65.
53. PRO FO 371/13085, E252/43/44, Clerk to Chamberlain, 12 Jan. 1928.
54. ASD, Pacco 1727/7975, Turchia 1928, Maroni to Navy Headquarters (Rome), 17 Dec. 1928.
55. PRO FO 371/13085, E252/43/44, Memorandum by M.H.S. MacDonald, 5 Jan. 1928.
57. See Büyük turul (note 51), Cumhuriyet Donanması , pp.21–3; Büyük turul, p.102. See also R. Metel, Atatürk ve Donanma (Istanbul: Deniz Bas mevi, 1966), p.57.
58. Cumhuriyet, 14 March 1926, quoted in Büyük turul (note 51), Cumhuriyet Donanması , p.25.
59. Ibid, p.32.
63. ASD, Pacco 1727/7975, Turchia 1928, Orsini to Foreign Ministry, 4 Dec. 1928.
64. ASD, Pacco 1727/7975, Turchia 1928, Orsini to Foreign Ministry, 9 Dec. 1928
66. ‘Bahri Sipari leri talyanlar Ald lar’, Cumhuriyet, 24 May 1929. Basil Zaharoff was born an Ottoman subject around 1850. He figured as a prominent arms salesman. He sold arms to both Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Zaharoff symbolized the archetypal ‘merchant of death’ for his lack of morals. He was later portrayed as ‘a figure of historical importance; for he was not merely a master of salesmanship and bribery, but an operator who understood the connections between arms and diplomacy, between arms and intelligence, and who could serve as both salesman and spy’. A. Sampson, The Arms Bazaar: The Companies, the Dealers, the Bribes, from Vickers to Lockheed (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p.49.
68. ‘Yeni Gemilerimiz’, Cumhuriyet, 2 June 1929. The Evening News claimed ‘portentous rumbling in the mountain spread over several years has brought a forward a very small mouse’. ‘Turks Order More Warships’, Evening News, 29 May 1929, newspaper cutting in the Venizelos Archives, Athens, Folder 173/53, 1929, VI–VII.
69. ASD, Pacco 1728/2319, Turchia 1929, Orisini to Foreign Ministry, 3 June 1929.
71. ‘Italy to Develop Turkey’s Fleet’, Morning Post, 6 June 1929, newspaper cutting in the Venizelos Archives, Athens, Folder 173/53, 1929, VI–VII.
74. ‘Roma Seferimizden Beyanat : Talebecerimiz Çok şi Çal yor’, Cumhuriyet, 8 June 1929.
75. Examples of Turkish admiration of Fascism’s achievements in organizing the society may be found in Falih Rıfkı Atay, Fas”ist Roma, Kemalist Tiran ve Kaybolmuşa Müadde (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaas, 1931), pp.5–53; and Moskova–Roma (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1932), pp.73–109.
78. ‘Turkish Naval Plans’, Times, 29 May 1929, newspaper cutting in the Venizelos Archives, Athens, Folder 173/53, 1929, VI–VII.
79. The cruiser Salamis was ordered by Greece in 1913. It could never be completed after the First World War broke out. In 1927, the shipbuilder Vulcan demanded compensation for building costs from the Greek government. Greece’s reluctance led to a dispute which was subsequently submitted to arbitration. Norwegian Admiral Scott Hansen suggested Greece’s purchase of the cruiser with minimum armaments installed to settle the issue. Athens did not consider this suggestion until May 1929. ‘Yunanlar Salamisi Al rlar’, Cumhuriyet, 15 June 1929.
80. PRO FO 371/13656 C4148/752/19, Foreign Office Minute, 11 June 1929; PRO FO 371/13648 C4304/14/19, Lorraine to Foreign Office, 17 June 1929.
82. The press in both countries featured extensive reports that exacerbated public fears for failure to keep up with the other side. The Greek press accused Turkey of preparing to take over several Greek islands in the Aegean once the Yavuz was recommissioned. For a summary of Greek press coverage see PRO FO 371/13656 C7131/752/19, British Legation (Athens) to Henderson, 12 Sep. 1929. For Turkish response in press, see ‘Bahri Sipari larmız Harp için De il, Harbe Mani Olmak çıdır’, Cumhuriyet, 13 June 1929; A. Daver, ‘Sahte Bir Tela’, Cumhuriyet, 15 June 1929.
83. PRO FO 371/ 13648 C6078/14/19, Yarrow and Company Limited to Foreign Office, 7 Aug. 1929.
84. PRO FO 371/13648 C7796/14/19, British Legation (Athens) to Henderson, 7 Oct. 1929.
85. Rimanelli (note 14), Italy Between Europe and the Mediterranean, p.528.
86. ‘Deniz Müste ar talya’dan Geldi’, Cumhuriyet, 19 March 1930; PRO FO 371/14567 E1017/206/44, Rendel (Foreign Office) to Admiralty, 27 Feb. 1930.
87. Fanning (note 5), Peace and Disarmament, pp.106–32.
94. PRO FO 371/14567, E1242/206/44, Clerk to Henderson, 28 Feb. 1930.
96. For a different interpretation of the link between Turkish naval modernization and Turkish–Greek negotiations, see Mango (note 24), *Atatürk*, p.486.
97. PRO FO 371/14567, E1792/206/44, Graham to Henderson, 7 April 1930.
98. PRO FO 371/14351, C9143/3519/62, Clerk to Henderson, 8 Dec. 1930.
101. ASD Pacco 1732/8022, Turchia 1930, Aloisi to Foreign Ministry (Rome), 28 July 1930.
103. Ibid., p.571.
105. Ata Nutku’s personal papers are kept in a special collection in Turkish Naval Academy Library. His unpublished manuscript ‘Ansaldo Destroyerleri’ includes detailed engineering notes on these stability problems and corrective measures. ‘Ansaldo Destroyerleri’, Ata Nutku Collection, Turkish Naval Academy Library, Tuzla, Istanbul.
109. ASD, Busta 3/6, Turchia 1931, Aloisi to Tefvifik Rü tu Aras, 7 March 1931. A detailed list of these extra requirements can be found in Ata Nutku (note 105), ‘Ansaldo Destroyerleri’.
110. ASD, Busta 3/6, Turchia 1931, Aloisi to Foreign Ministry (Rome), 11 March 1931.
114. PRO FO 371/15366, E5325/7/44, Clerk to Foreign Office, 21 Oct. 1931.
118. ASD, Busta 6/8, Turchia 1932, Cantieri Reuniti Dell’ Adriatico to Foreign Ministry (Rome), 5 Aug. 1932.
120. PRO FO 371/19089, E6237/55/44, Turkish Financial Situation and Financial Policy, 1 Dec. 1932.
121. ASD, Busta 6/8, Turchia 1932, Director-General, Office 1 to Under Secretary of Foreign Ministry (Rome), 14 Dec. 1932.
123. Blinkhorm argues that the 1929 depression dictated additional three years of caution in Mussolini’s diplomacy. M. Blinkhorm, *Mussolini and Fascist Italy* (London: Routledge, 1984), p.44.
128. ASD, Busta 6/48, Turchia 1933, Cavallero (Ansaldo) to Foreign Ministry (Rome), 18 March 1933.
129. ASD, Busta 6/48, Turchia 1933, Aloisi to Foreign Ministry (Rome), 29 March 1933.
130. PRO FO 371/17964, E3270/44, Clerk to Simon, 9 May 1934.
131. PRO FO 371/17964, E7047/2462/44, Minutes on ‘Turco–Greek proposals for strengthening of their naval forces’, 23 Nov. 1934.
133. PRO FO 371/20861, E1578/315/44, Minute, 12 March 1937.
134. Deringil (note 23), *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.64.