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No. 1 of 6 copies; series A.

October 6, 1966

TO : S/S - Mr Read  
FROM : NEA - Stuart W. Rockwell SWR  
SUBJECT: Turkish Interest in Atomic Weapon  
Development

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I believe it would be preferable for S/S to arrange appropriate distribution of the attached September 30 letter and enclosure from Ambassador Hart reporting possible Turkish interest in atomic weapons development.

We have retained copies of these documents for our own use.

Attachments:  
Letter and enclosure

GROUP 3  
Downgraded at 12-year intervals;  
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series A.

EMBASSY  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ankara, Turkey

September 30, 1966

*P. Hart 10/3*

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

John M. Howison, Esquire  
Country Director for Turkey  
Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs  
Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

Dear John:

The enclosed memorandum to me from our Minerals Attache/Science Officer, Clarence Wendel, on possible Turkish ambitions to develop an atomic weapon is obviously a matter of considerable delicacy and for this reason we have decided not to report it in routine fashion by means of an airgram. I leave it to you to pass on this information to such people in Washington as you deem should have it. I am keeping distribution limited here to a few senior officers including General Evans and John Leavitt.

We will, of course, keep our eyes and ears open for any further signs of Turkish activity which might indicate preparations for atomic weapon production. My preliminary assessment is that the Turks are not preparing to follow in the footsteps of the French but are simply putting themselves in a position to jump on the bandwagon in case there should be further serious breaks in the line against proliferation.

Sincerely,

Parker T. Hart

Enclosure:  
Memorandum, September 26, 1966



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By BKM NARA Date 7/1/01

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TO : The Ambassador September 26, 1966

THRU : DCM - Mr. Martin

FROM : Science Officer - Mr. Wendel

SUBJECT: Reported TGS Ambitions for Development of Atomic Weapon

A source considered reliable from the Turkish Scientific Research Council by telephone requested an appointment at my office September 23. He appeared within a half hour and after mentioning a routine matter connected with an international conference, with obvious agitation, disclosed a matter which he had learned just the evening before from the General Director of the M.T.A. The M.T.A. Director (Alpan) had been asked to cooperate with General Tulga and Professor Omer Inonu (Professor of Physics at METU) in a Turkish program to develop an "Atomic Bomb". Source thought that such a program was one which would absorb too much of Turkish scientific and financial resources. Without noticeable rancor or desire to impugn the subject, he mentioned that Professor Inonu had been to Russia last summer. When I observed that this plan of General Tulga's was probably secret in view of its obvious military and political implications, he said he realized that but wanted me to know of it nevertheless.

Comment: Some indications support the possible credibility of this story:

1. Repeated Turkish assertions that a 200 mega-watt nuclear reactor is planned for Istanbul.
2. The emphasis and expenditures of the M.T.A. during the last six or seven years on uranium exploration resulting in indicated reserves of 300-600 tons of uranium in low-grade ore deposits.
3. The delaying and haggling tactics of the Turkish negotiators during discussions of the extension of the bilateral agreement on peaceful uses of atomic energy which primarily concerned the transfer of safeguards responsibility from the U.S.A. to the International Atomic Energy Agency

META - Middle East Technical University

MTA - Minerals Research and Exploration Institute

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General Tulga - Deputy Chief, TGS  
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under a trilateral agreement. Of particular interest were reservations expressed at times regarding the applicability of these safeguards to new reactor facilities -- a point which was not relevant to the present agreement and which, as the U.S. representatives suggested, could be covered by a subsequent power reactor bilateral agreement.

CAWendel:cm

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