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A SPECIAL SITUATION IN THE STRAITS: THE TURKISH STRAITS CRISIS OF 1945 AND 1946 AND THE COLD WAR

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The thesis focuses on the Turkish Straits crisis in 1945-1946, and America's role in the crisis. The Turkish Straits crisis revolved around Soviet demands for joint control over the Turkish-held Bosphorous and Dardanelles. It argues that the Soviet policy in regards had been the same since 1921, and that the creation of that U.S. foreign policy towards the Straits did not reflect history, but a new cold war mentality within the Truman administration. The thesis demonstrates that as early as 1921 the Soviets had made clear that they wanted greater control over the Straits. Furthermore, during World War II the U.S. and Britain, disappointed with Turkey's neutrality, repeatedly hinted to the Soviets that they would receive greater rights to the Bosphorous and Dardanelles when the war ended. At the end of the war the U.S. had no policy towards the Straits, and its initial attempts to create one failed. Discussions at the conference at Potsdam, and Soviet actions, demonstrated that by 1945 the crisis over the Turkish Straits had begun but that the U.S. was conflicted over how to react. Policy makers had grown uneasy about the Soviets by 1945 but wanted to negotiate a solution that rewarded Soviet sacrifices in the war. Finally, it will demonstrate the change in U.S. foreign policy in regards to the Straits in 1946 and from where those changes emerged. America's final policy was far more aggressive than any previous policy, and its creation represented the first assertive Cold War-inspired policy that recommended force if necessary. The U.S. changes in foreign policy in regards to the Straits were the first time cold war mentalities created foreign policy. Overall the thesis will maintain the critical importance of the Straits in the start of the Cold War, and how the evolution of U.S. policy represented the change not in the crisis of the Straits but in the mindset of American policy makers.