In short, the embassy entered the twentieth century with a deeply entrenched institutional pattern (even if it was creaking at points) and some equally entrenched attitudes towards its proper role. But the question of how, if at all, this pattern and these attitudes would need to adjust was put on hold in November 1914.
In the first week of August 1914 two developments occurred which sealed the fate of the British Embassy at Constantinople for the next ten years: Britain declared war on Germany, and Turkey signed a secret treaty of alliance with the German Empire. Relations between Britain and Turkey thereafter deteriorated markedly, and following the incursion into Egypt of Bedouin levies and the surprise Turkish naval attack on the Black Sea ports of Britain’s Russian ally, both of which occurred on 29 October, the British Embassy hurriedly made its final preparations to shut up shop. Some of its papers were burned, some were placed in a locked room on the top floor, and some were transferred to the American Embassy, which had agreed to take over protection of British interests. On 1 November, the Russian mission having left on the previous day, the British Ambassador, Sir Louis Mallet, who had been in his post for only a year, closed the embassy and, together with most of his staff, left Constantinople. Four days later the Asquith government in London announced that a state of war existed between Britain and Turkey.

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British interests in the Ottoman Empire had been placed in the charge of Henry Morgenthau, ambassador in Turkey of the neutral United States, whose mission in the Palazzo Corpi was very close to the British Embassy. This was a good move because the Turks had no desire to offend the US government, of which they had hopes for future loans and upon which they depended for the protection of their own interests.

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1 TNA, Mallet to Grey, 17 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146; Morgenthau, Secrets of the Bosphorus, p. 83.
2 The Americans asked the Italian Ambassador to look after British interests (as well as those of France, Belgium, Serbia, and the USA itself) in districts where there were no American officials, TNA, Page (London) to Grey, 14 Nov. and Spring-Rice (Washington) to FO, 18 Nov. 1914, FO371/2146.