

## ARTICLE

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# Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Tevfik Pasha: His Contribution to Ottoman Diplomacy in a Challenging Era (1895–1909)

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### Abstract

*This paper seeks to examine Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's training as a Foreign Service officer and his experiences in embassy missions as well as his activities during the political and diplomatic developments of the era in line with the foreign policy objectives of the Ottoman government. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha (1845–1936), led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as its Minister for more than thirteen years. He held the post for the longest term during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II and was one of the most influential figures in Ottoman diplomacy. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's effectiveness in major foreign policy events, his role in decision-making and implementation processes, his communication with Abdulhamid II on diplomatic matters and his relationship with the Ottoman and foreign ambassadors of the time, reveal the characteristic details of Ottoman diplomacy during the era.*

### Keywords

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abdulhamid II, Ottoman diplomacy, foreign policy

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## Introduction

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha is one of the most prominent figures in Ottoman diplomacy, having served as an ambassador abroad for many years and as the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the last thirteen years of the era of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909). During the reign of Abdulhamid II, the Sultan had a dominant role in the management of foreign policy and decision-making processes, such that the Sublime Porte was left a very limited space, unlike during the *Tanzimat* period. However, there are a considerable number of instances in which Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, trusted by Abdulhamid II, influenced the Sultan's decisions. Certain implications can be drawn from Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's role in the shaping of foreign policy as a man of duty who acted meticulously in the implementation of the decisions taken.

In this article, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's training as a Foreign Service officer and his experiences in embassy missions will be examined in order to analyze his activity during the political and diplomatic developments of the era in line with the foreign policy objectives of the Ottoman government. His contribution to foreign policy decisions as Minister of Foreign Affairs and his conducting of foreign affairs will be addressed within the framework of the communication networks established with Ottoman diplomatic representatives abroad, foreign embassies in Istanbul, the Sublime Porte, and the Sultan himself.

## Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's Training and Experiences as a Foreign Service Officer

Toward the end of the *Tanzimat* period and onward, the post of Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not in stable condition. More than twenty people served as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Ottoman government between 1871 and 1885. However, between 1885 and 1909, only two people dominated the office: Süleymaniyeli Mehmed Said Pasha (1885–1895) and Ahmed Tevfik Pasha (1895–1909).<sup>1</sup> While Carter Findley defines the long periods of unchanging ministers of foreign affairs during the reign of Abdulhamid II as “stagnation,” there is consideration in the literature that this situation created a “stable appearance” in the administration of the ministry.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's long tenure as Minister of Foreign Affairs in such a turbulent period are varied. According to Findley, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, like Süleymaniyeli Mehmed Said Pasha, was one of the statespersons who remained in the era of Abdulhamid II "without [being] tainted by it." Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, had "no great diplomatic talent of profound knowledge of affairs, but possess[ed] a complete command of his features, unruffled urbanity of manner, and a composure that no crisis has yet been known to disturb."<sup>3</sup>

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha had already been recognized by the witnesses of government officials from contemporary states as the right person for this task; in a report sent to the political departments of the British Foreign Office in 1906, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was mentioned with the following words of praise: "An ideal Minister for Foreign Affairs under a régime which has reduced the role of that functionary to that of a buffer between the Palace, whence the foreign policy of the Empire is directed, and the representatives of the foreign powers."<sup>4</sup> This statement gives an idea about the reason for Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's long stay in the post of Minister. It also indicates how the foreign officers of foreign states perceived the role of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the process of foreign policy decision-making.

According to research conducted on the career paths of Ottoman civil servants, the most successful diplomats who served in various representations abroad would eventually return to the center and serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs. These diplomats could be appointed to other ministerial posts, become a member of the *Şûra-yı Devlet* (Council of State) and finally be appointed as Grand Vizier, the highest office in the Sublime Porte. The grand viziers of the *Tanzimat* era, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Âli Pasha and Fuad Pasha were among the first members of the Foreign Service to enjoy such a career path. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha followed in their footsteps as ambassador, Minister of Foreign Affairs and finally Grand Vizier.<sup>5</sup>

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's training as a Foreign Service officer and his experience in the field of diplomacy resemble the career paths of state officials in efficient and productive bureaucracies. His career started in Foreign Service at the lowest level as a clerk in the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte; he then was trained as a professional diplomat

with assignments in embassies abroad before rising to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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lieutenant). In 1866, he started to work at the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte without salary and was introduced to the profession of Foreign Service. His long years of assignments abroad started when he was appointed as the second secretary of the embassy in Rome in 1872. He took the office as the second secretary of the embassy in Vienna in the last month of the same year, became the second secretary of the embassy in Berlin

in 1873, the chief secretary of the embassy in Athens in 1875 and the first secretary of the embassy in Petersburg in 1876 immediately after the accession of Sultan Abdulhamid II to the throne. During his tenure in diplomatic posts, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha served as chargé d'affaires at the embassies of Rome, Berlin and Petersburg while the ambassadors were on leave. Upon Russia's declaration of war in 1877, he returned to Istanbul from Petersburg, where he was serving as chargé d'affaires, and was appointed as a political officer to Şumnu (Shumen), the headquarter of the Ottoman Army during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–78. After the war, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha returned to Istanbul. He was appointed as chargé d'affaires in Athens in 1879 and promoted to Minister Plenipotentiary in Athens in 1883. In addition to his duty there, he was appointed as a delegate to the Suez Canal Commission in Paris in 1885. In the same year, he was charged as Ottoman ambassador to Berlin and remained in this position for ten years until 1895 when he returned to Istanbul to serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's duty as Minister of Foreign Affairs was completed at the beginning of 1909 with the fall of Kâmil Pasha's government. During the years following the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid II, he served

as ambassador to London and later, several times as the Grand Vizier of the Second Constitutional regime. His political career ended in 1922 as the last Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's career path in Ottoman Foreign Service is an uninterrupted one that proceeds in a hierarchical and sequential way as expected from efficient, rational bureaucracies. After entering the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte, the most established unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was promoted from the post of second secretary to chief secretary in various embassies; due to the established practice, he fulfilled the duty of *chargé d'affaires* by undertaking the affairs of the embassy in the absence of the ambassadors he was accompanying. When diplomatic relations were interrupted, he worked at the war zone where his experience and knowledge could be of benefit. During the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha controlled the news sent by foreign war correspondents from the front and ensured that it was censored when necessary, thus fulfilling a task related to public relations during wartime. Afterward, he was promoted to minister plenipotentiary and finally became an ambassador. Thus, a professional, career diplomat climbed the career ladder in a rational process and finally became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. After his ten-year stay in Germany, with which the Ottoman Empire was in a conscious rapprochement, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha completed his adventure abroad during the reign of Abdulhamid II. It should also be noted that he did not hold any position in the Ottoman bureaucracy other than Foreign Service—for instance positions related to domestic affairs.

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha demonstrated his merit in the art of diplomacy, which he learned during his tenure in the embassies abroad for many years, during his office as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The education he received in international law from foreign experts, his fluent French and his diligence together formed his capability.<sup>7</sup> According to witnesses of the era, Abdulhamid II trusted him and assigned him to solve various problems in challenging times. Thus, it is understood that Ahmed Tevfik Pasha fulfilled the criterion of loyalty. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, “merit” and “loyalty” emerged as two criteria that could sometimes conflict with each other in the selection of the statespersons with whom the Sultan would work. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was chosen as the Minister

of Foreign Affairs and remained in this position for a long time; he was regarded as an “ideal” person who fulfilled both criteria.

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha’s participation as the Ottoman delegate to the Suez Canal Commission, established to negotiate and decide on the Suez Canal and the status of Egypt, was one of the experiences that prepared him for the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. He defended Ottoman interests by participating in the negotiation processes where multilateral diplomacy was carried out.

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Foreign Affairs after Süleymaniyeli Mehmed Said Pasha, who had also previously served as ambassador to Berlin, was a conscious decision taken during the time of rapprochement with Germany.<sup>8</sup> Early examples of such a preference in the appointments of Ministers of Foreign Affairs can be found in the *Tanzimat* era. Âli Pasha and Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the *Tanzimat* era when close

relations with England established, had also been appointed as London ambassadors first, and later as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

### **Ahmed Tevfik Pasha’s Role in Decision-Making Processes as Minister of Foreign Affairs**

The gradual increase in Abdulhamid II’s influence in the administration of the state and his concentration of authority created the perception that the role of statespersons serving in the high offices of the bureaucracy in decision-making processes decreased or even completely disappeared during his reign. However, it is necessary to go beyond this assumption and investigate the level of effectiveness of the Sublime Porte as the bureaucratic unit where politics were produced and implemented beside the *Mabeyn*, the top administrative institution of Abdulhamid II’s palace. The role of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha in the decision-making

processes as Minister of Foreign Affairs and his effectiveness in guiding the Sultan's decisions should be evaluated in this context.

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha prioritized seeking all alternatives other than war and communicating with his interlocutors on a peaceful basis throughout his professional life. The testimonies of his contemporaries give the impression that he had a calm and peaceful character. However, he was also a minister who was in favor of using the instrument of war in international relations when he considered it to be best for the national interest of the state. The main purpose of diplomacy is to defend the interests of the state, so for him, it was possible to consider war an option at times.<sup>9</sup>

Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was one of the statesmen influential in the decision to declare war against Greece in 1897. In 1897, Greece's decision to annex Crete to its territory developed into an international crisis and the negotiations with great powers yielded no results. Though Abdulhamid II still feared the intervention of the great powers, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha tried to convince the Sultan to go to war, stating that the great powers were unable to intervene in the crisis at the time; they had their own agendas, and it was a favorable time for war.<sup>10</sup>

After the war, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha insisted that the peace negotiations should be held with the officials of the six great powers instead of the Greek delegates. The Ottoman administration had lost confidence in the Greek authorities, and it was obvious that the great powers had intervened after all and were directing Ottoman-Greek relations throughout the process. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha ensured that the peace treaty would be concluded and the decisions would be implemented rightfully if they negotiated with the great powers. During the negotiations, the Ottoman Empire was represented by Ahmed Tevfik Pasha who insisted on receiving the determined amount of war reparations from Greece and was successful in this issue compared to others. According to his grandson, Şefik Okday, the latter did not sign the peace treaty until the Greeks had paid the full war reparations agreed upon during the negotiations.<sup>11</sup>

There is a significant example where the role of the Sublime Porte alongside the Sultan and the *Mabeyn* in decision-making processes was emphasized by Ahmed Tevfik Pasha himself. Around the turn of

the century, the European powers were imposing large-scale reforms to be carried out by the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia. By 1905, they began to press for the establishment of an international financial control mechanism in the region, claiming that the imposed reforms could not be conducted because of financial causes. The project was put forward under the leadership of Britain. The ambassadors of the major states in Istanbul asked to discuss the issue with the Sultan all together. Although the request was rejected, upon their insistence, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha reminded the ambassadors of diplomatic rules and courtesy. He also stated that since it was an internal matter, it was up to the Sublime Porte to decide and that the establishment of an international commission for financial control in Macedonia was an intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Auguste Boppe, the French Chargé d’Affaires, expressed his surprise at the rapid response from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the explicit terminology used.<sup>12</sup>

By pointing to the Sublime Porte’s call of duty in this matter, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was in fact stating that not only the Palace but also the government was active in decision-making processes and that these issues could not be discussed directly with the Sultan by ambassadors. It can be contended that a modern state administration and bureaucracy based on division of labor was in effect. On the other hand, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha’s reaction skillfully prevented the Sultan’s decisions from being questioned. In fact, to assert that the relevant issues were under the responsibility of the Sublime Porte was a strategy frequently used by Ottoman statespersons when pressure from the great powers needed to be diffused.<sup>13</sup>

As the foreign ambassadors’ insistence persisted, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha and Arab İzzet Pasha’s opinion was to stand firm and not step back. In contrast, statesmen such as Ferid Pasha, the Grand Vizier and Said Pasha, the former Grand Vizier, had expressed their opinion in favor of acquiescing to their demand.<sup>14</sup> In this case, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was little affected by the pressures of foreign ambassadors and was not guided by them. There is no indication that he had close relations with any major state or their embassies in Istanbul; in contrast to some Grand Viziers or prominent statespersons of the period, he was known only for his loyalty to Abdulhamid II. Although Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was a part of the Sublime Porte, a joint approach was achieved during



his tenure between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Palace.

One of the clear indicators of the Sultan's trust in Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was the role he assumed in the first month of his tenure as Foreign Minister in November 1895 during a diplomatic crisis regarding the presence of foreign warships in the Bosphorus. Foreign embassies in Istanbul were only

allowed to keep two small warships, called "stationary," in the Bosphorus. The news that the British embassy intended to pass a British battleship through the Bosphorus in violation of the rule had reached the Palace. Abdulhamid II assigned Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Küçük Said Pasha, former Grand Vizier, to pay a visit to the British, Russian and German embassies to prevent the passage of the ship. After the diplomatic crisis was overcome, Abdulhamid II asked Ahmed Tevfik Pasha whether during the meetings in the embassies Küçük Said Pasha had spoken in a manner faithful to the Sultan's order. Abdulhamid II not only entrusted this critical task to Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, who had just started to work as Minister of Foreign Affairs, but also sought his testimony about Küçük Said Pasha, whom he was planning to appoint as Grand Vizier at the time.<sup>15</sup>

During the first years of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's ministry of foreign affairs, the Armenian issue was the most important problem of Ottoman foreign policy. Between 1894 and 1896, the Armenian uprisings had become an international issue due to the intervention of foreign states. The great powers desired to exert pressure on the Ottoman Empire and demanded that the reforms promised in the Berlin Treaty of 1878 be carried out. Meanwhile, the Armenians were circulating propaganda in Europe and seeking help by cultivating public opinion that they had no security of life or property in the Ottoman lands. From the first stage in which he took office, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha instructed the Ottoman embassies abroad to convey news about the attacks and rebellions of Armenian bandits against the local population in various settlements of Anatolia to the statespersons of the country in which

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they were serving, and to the press and the European public in general. Thus, counterpropaganda was being carried out through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>16</sup>

While the Armenian incidents continued across the country, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha attempted to solve the issue through diplomatic communication by informing the embassies of France, Germany, Russia and Britain in Istanbul. In turn, these powers transmitted their diplomatic notes to the Ottoman government regarding the Armenian reforms to Ahmed Tevfik Pasha via their ambassadors. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's task was to reply to them and try to convince them by informing them that necessary measures were being taken regarding the Armenian issue.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding a note of the European states dated 1895, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha shared his opinion with the Sultan that if the Armenian reform proposed by Britain was accepted, the Bulgarians would demand an autonomous administration, as would the Armenians. Instead of accepting the reforms conveyed in the note, he stated that it would be advantageous to implement the reforms promised in the Treaty of Berlin in all Ottoman provinces.<sup>18</sup>

Another diplomatic crisis during Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term emerged with the request of the United States (U.S.) to upgrade the status of its legation in Istanbul to that of an embassy. In the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. desired to be accepted as an active actor in European diplomacy and to be recognized as a great power in diplomatic protocol. It had engaged in reciprocally upgrading the rank of its diplomatic representatives with most states since 1893.<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Department of State expressed the same request through the Ottoman ambassador in Washington in 1897. In Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's opinion, the aim of this request was to include the U.S. representative in Istanbul within the group of ambassadors of the European powers. In this way, the U.S. would have the opportunity to intervene effectively in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's proposal, which Abdulhamid II approved, was to pass over the request by using diplomatic language.<sup>20</sup> The issue, which was thus postponed through the efforts of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, was brought up again by the U.S. government several times until the end of his term. Despite

the ensuing crises, during which the U.S. navy even entered the Aegean Sea in an attempt at intimidation, the Ottoman government managed to resist the demand until the end of Abdulhamid II's reign. The U.S. legation was turned into an embassy unilaterally in 1906, while the Ottoman representation in Washington remained a legation until the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy.<sup>21</sup>

The competition between the European states to undertake the construction of railway lines in the Ottoman Empire was one of the era's most important foreign affairs issues. The ambassadors of the great powers negotiated with Ahmed Tevfik Pasha on the granting of railway line privileges. This was a point where economic interests and politics overlapped. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha endeavored to ensure the most favorable decision to Ottoman interests. In 1899, the privilege for the construction of railway lines to Baghdad and Basra was granted to the Germans. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha informed the German ambassador Marschall von Bieberstein that the extension of these lines to Kuwait would be technically and politically beneficial for both countries. This idea was discussed and approved by the military commission upon Sultan Abdulhamid's request. Marschall transmitted Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's ideas to German foreign affairs officials and stated that by extending the line to Kuwait, Germany could compete economically with the British in the region.<sup>22</sup> As expected, the British ambassador opposed the idea.<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's meetings with the ambassadors maintained their importance in achieving balance between the competing parties.

### Ahmed Tevfik Pasha and Pan-Islamism

Pan-Islamism was one of the policies on which the Ottoman Empire relied, in the hope of having an impact on the Muslim population living in the colonies of the great powers. Although it had begun to be used at an earlier date, the policy of Pan-Islamism is identified with the foreign policy of Abdul Hamid II, and gained more weight with the support of Germany throughout the period. During Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's tenure, there are interesting examples of how the Ottoman Empire attempted to carry out the policy of Pan-Islamism using various means.

İsmail Hakkı Bey was one of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's two sons and a member of the Ottoman army serving as an aide-de-camp to Abdulhamid II. In

December 1907, the French embassy in the Hague drew the attention of the French embassy to the fact that Bey was trying to gather information about the Muslim population in the East Indies (today Indonesia), a Dutch colony at the time. A letter sent from the embassy to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that Bey had contacted Muslims in Java and Sumatra and asked for detailed information about Islamist activities in the region and the names of those who would perform the pilgrimage. The French government found out that in 1906, İsmail Hakkı Bey had requested statistical information from the Tunisian authorities and the administrators of the French colonies of Dahomey, Upper Senegal, Niger, Mauritania and French Congo in Africa about the Muslim population in their regions.<sup>24</sup>

The French colonial administrations left İsmail Hakkı Bey's questions unanswered. The French government was extremely uneasy about the issue and warned Dutch officials of Bey's inquiries. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, as Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, confirmed his son's activities, but tried to reassure the anxious foreign officials by emphasizing that Bey was acting on the orders of the Sultan as a close aide-de-camp and that this had nothing to do with the policy of Pan-Islamism.<sup>25</sup> These examples of their joint efforts as father and son to develop and implement Abdulhamid II's Islamist policies regarding world Muslims should be noted.

Pan-Islamism did not have the power to generate as great an impact as the colonial states feared. However, an incident in the memoirs of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's grandson, Şefik Okday, reveals the perception among the rulers of the great powers about the Ottoman Empire's sphere of influence over Muslim lands. When Ahmed Tevfik Pasha (then Bey) presented his credentials to Emperor Wilhelm I in 1885 to take office as ambassador in Berlin, the Emperor stated that the ambassador of a state neighboring the Ottoman Empire had also presented his credentials the previous day, but he could not remember which state it was, and asked Ahmed Tevfik Bey to remind him of the names of the states neighboring the Ottoman Empire. When it was obvious that none of the neighboring states he named was the state in question, the Emperor called the royal chamberlain who recalled that the ambassador who had presented his credentials the day before was not from a neighboring state at all, but from Kingdom of Siam.<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm I's perception that

the borders of the Ottoman Empire, or rather its sphere of influence, extended to Far Asia via the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, indicates the level of the concern regarding Pan-Islamism.

### Institutional Changes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to develop institutionally during Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term. The most important institutional innovation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the establishment of a Directorate of Commercial Affairs (*Umûr-ı Ticariye Müdüriyeti*) within the Ministry. On April 20, 1896, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha notified all embassies of the Ottoman Empire with a circular about the new unit. The aim was to protect the commercial interests of the state and to establish commercial relations with new states on new grounds such as trade agreements. Ottoman consuls serving abroad were preparing reports on their observations and advice on the commercial activities of their areas; these reports were sent to the Directorate of Consular Affairs (*Umûr-ı Şehbenderî Müdüriyeti*) of the Ministry. With the establishment of the new department for commercial affairs, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha instructed the consuls to send their reports to the Directorate of Commercial Affairs as well.<sup>27</sup> For the improvement of Ottoman foreign commercial activity, the reports on current economic activities and potential commercial opportunities collected from all over the world would form a pool of information and guide the authorities in the development of new policies regarding commercial relations.

Another initiative regarding the organization of correspondence and documents produced in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the re-establishment of the Directorate of Confidential Office (*Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti*) in 1898. This was one of the central units of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied by the Foreign Correspondence Office (*Tahrirat-ı Hariciye Kalemî*), which had been established in 1879 and then closed. The purpose of its re-establishment was to prevent the circulation of important and confidential documents in French language among the departments and to keep state secrets safe. The chief clerk of the Foreign Correspondence Office, Yusuf Franko Pasha, a well-known figure of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, was appointed director of the Confidential Office, which was later closed again in 1907.<sup>28</sup>

The Commission for the Selection of Foreign Ministry Officials (*İntihâb-ı Memurin Komisyonu*), one of the permanent commissions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was established in 1899 upon Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's proposal. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha stated that the officials to be appointed for foreign affairs should have "competence, qualification, loyalty and integrity." Officials of foreign missions such as undersecretaries, secretaries, attachés, consuls and clerks would be selected by this commission, which convened under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>29</sup>

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The development process of the Ministry's organization abroad continued during Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term. New diplomatic missions and consulates were opened to respond to the various needs of both foreign and domestic policy. For example, the legation in Bern was founded in 1899 because of tensions in Ottoman internal affairs rather

than the development of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Switzerland. Beginning in 1890, opposition to the Sultan had increased throughout the Empire, and a considerable number of political exiles travelled to Europe for various reasons. Some of the Ottoman students abroad joined opposition groups, and the activities of the Young Turks were concentrated in major European cities. The Sultan gave instructions to his diplomatic representatives to monitor opponents living abroad and gather intelligence about their activities. The primary duty of the ambassadors in Paris, London, Brussels, Stockholm, Rome and Bucharest was to follow them up.<sup>30</sup>

The legation in Bern stands out as a mission opened primarily due to this need. The consulate in Geneva was established in 1898 both to take care of the affairs of Ottoman nationals living there and to keep tabs on the political opponents and Young Turks who were gathering in various cities across Switzerland. On November 13, 1899, the Bern legation was opened and the envoy in Brussels, Karateodori Efendi, was assigned to the Bern legation in addition to his duties.<sup>31</sup>

While the diplomats of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term were engaged in monitoring the political opponents in line with their instructions, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was not personally interested in the pursuit of the Young Turks and adopted a more neutral attitude in matters related to the internal affairs of the state.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was a trusted servant of the state first and foremost, and was appointed to offices by both Abdulhamid II and later the Young Turks in the Second Constitutional Era. The longevity of his career can be attributed to his aforementioned neutral attitude. Immediately after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy and the deposition of the Sultan, some of the statesmen who had served in Abdulhamid's regime were dismissed from their positions, while Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier and ambassador to London.

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire's network of consulates in various parts of the world, especially in cities where commercial activities were concentrated, also continued. Between 1895 and 1909, twenty-six new consulates were opened.<sup>33</sup> These consulates were primarily opened to take care of the affairs of the Ottoman citizens living in the region and to protect the rights of Ottoman merchants. However, special reasons can also be identified for the establishment of some consulates. As mentioned above, the Geneva consulate was opened to follow up on the empire's political opponents in Switzerland. Some consulates were opened within the framework of the Pan-Islamism policy. In Iran, the Linja (Bandar Lengeh) consulate was established to create ties with the Sunni population of the region and to provide intelligence.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Natal in South Africa and Rangoon in Burma (today Myanmar) in India were established with Pan-Islamist motives. It should be recalled that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many people emigrated from the Ottoman Empire to the Americas and Australia, whose governments were accepting migrants for labor from all countries. To take care of the immigrants of Ottoman origin, consulates were opened in Sydney, Australia and Sao Paulo, Brazil during Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

Abdulhamid II played a leading role in the decision-making processes in the formation of the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed

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Tevfik Pasha was an executive who stood out due to his loyalty and honesty and tried to fulfil the instructions he received from the Sultan. Although the scope of his action in the formulation of foreign policy was limited, his experience in foreign affairs, his calm and restrained attitude and,

most importantly, his personality that reassured Abdulhamid II as an anxious Sultan who wanted to be informed about everything, ensured that Ottoman foreign policy was managed reasonably. Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's foreign policy decisions were based on knowledge, experience and diplomatic restraint. For all these reasons, he became the longest-serving Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

Although the effectiveness of the Sublime Porte decreased during the reign of Abdulhamid II, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's steady role as a Minister trusted by the Sultan helped to keep relations between the Sublime Porte and the Palace in balance. The opinion that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in a state of stagnation during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II is not confirmed by the facts. The process of professionalization and complexification in the central units, embassies and consulates continued during this term. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to develop institutionally within the framework of various contemporary foreign policy needs during Ahmed Tevfik Pasha's term.



## Endnotes

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3. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 255, 257.
4. Ibid, pp. 257, 392.
5. Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 274.
6. BOA (Presidential State Archives–Ottoman Archives), HR. SAİD., 25/9/11-12, 13 Cemaziyelevvel 1340 (January 12, 1922); BOA, DH. SAİD., 2/1008; İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1982, Vol. 3, pp. 1705–1707.
7. Nurten Çetin, *Son Sadrazam Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2015, pp. 2, 4–5.
8. Ibid, pp. 51–52; Necati Çavdar, *Son Osmanlı Sadrazamı Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi, 2016, p. 90.
9. Çavdar, *Son Osmanlı Sadrazamı Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, p. 39.
10. Ibid, p. 198; Şefik Okday, *Büyükbabam Son Sadrazam Ahmed Tevfik Paşa*, İstanbul: Marsan Matbaacılık, 1986, p. 25.
11. Okday, *Büyükbabam Son Sadrazam Ahmed Tevfik Paşa*, p. 10C, 26; Çetin, *Son Sadrazam Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, pp. 107, 111.
12. Metin Ünver, “Zorlayıcı Diplomasi’nin İzleri: Osmanlı Devleti’nin Makedonya’da Uluslararası Bir Mali Kontrol Mekanizması Kabul Etmeye Zorlanması,” *Tarih Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No. 71 (2020), pp. 372–373.
13. Another example of this strategy was conducted during the diplomatic crisis following the U.S.’s request to upgrade its legation to the status of an embassy. See Bostan, *Osmanlı Hariciyesinin Modern Temelleri*, pp. 160–167.
14. Ünver, “Zorlayıcı Diplomasi’nin İzleri,” pp. 377–378.
15. Said Pasha was later informed of the situation and stated in his memoirs that he was offended by the Sultan’s suspicion of him. See Mustafa Gündüz (ed.), *Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Sadrazamı: [Küçük] Mehmed Sa’id Paşa’nın Hâtıratı*, İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2019, pp. 281–285. For more information on the crisis of “Embassy Stationaries”, see Emre Gör, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Mabeyn II. Katibi Arap İzzet Paşa: Şam’dan Yıldız Sarayı’na Uzanan Bir Yaşamın Öyküsü (1852–1924)*, İstanbul: Dün Bugün Yarı Yayınları, 2020, pp. 59–60.
16. Çetin, *Son Sadrazam Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, pp. 83–86.
17. Çavdar, *Son Osmanlı Sadrazamı Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, p. 162.
18. Ibid, p. 166.
19. Bostan, *Osmanlı Hariciyesinin Modern Temelleri*, p. 160.
20. BOA, Y.A. HUS. 367/148.
21. Bostan, *Osmanlı Hariciyesinin Modern Temelleri*, pp. 161–167.
22. Murat Özyüksel, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Nüfuz Mücadelesi: Anadolu ve Bağdat Demiryolları*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013, p. 157.
23. Çavdar, *Son Osmanlı Sadrazamı Ahmet Tevfik Paşa*, pp. 211–212.
24. Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-İslâm Politikaları: İdeoloji ve Örgütlenme*, translated by Nigar Bulut, İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2001, pp. 395–396.
25. Ibid, p. 396.
26. Okday, *Büyükbabam Son Sadrazam Ahmed Tevfik Paşa*, p. 19.
27. BOA, HR. İD. 1266/2, lef 1, 2, 20 April 1896.
28. Aydın Çakmak, *Türk Dışişleri Teşkilatı’nın Gelişimi: Hariciye Nezareti*, İstanbul: Ötügen Neşriyat, 2020, pp. 149–150.
29. Ibid, p. 183.
30. Bostan, *Osmanlı Hariciyesinin Modern Temelleri*, pp. 191–193.
31. Ibid, pp. 153–157; BOA. İ.HR. 365/16.

32. Orhan Kolođlu, *Son Sadrazam: Milli M¼cadele Tarađları Ahmed Tevfik Pařa*, Istanbul: Dođan Kitap, 2007, pp. 43–45.
33. These included Belgrade (1896), Salmas (1896), Breslau (1896), La Ciotat (1897), Limerick (1897), Tehran (1897), Akmesid (Simferopol) (1897), Sydney (1897), La Rochelle (1897), Geneva (1898), Las Palmas (1898), Linja (Bandar Lengeh) (1898), West Hartlepool (1899), Malm¼ (1901), Turnu Magurele (1902), Kiel (1904), Zurich (1904), Lille (1904), Natal (1904), Rangoon (1905), Vladivostok (1905), D¼sseldorf (1906), Isle of Man (1907), Bradford (1907), Sao Paulo (1908) and Bergen (1909). See: Bostan, *Osmanlı Hariciyesinin Modern Temelleri*, pp. 279–280.
34. Prior to the opening of the consulate in Linja (Bandar Lengeh), the Sunni population in the region was communicated with through the consulate of Bombay. Ibid, p. 234.
35. Ibid, pp. 216, 218 and 230.