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II Mahmud and His Statesmen's Diplomatic Manoeuvres to Solve Mehmet Ali Pasha Crisis*

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Abstract

Although his period of reign, 1808-1839 (31 years), was very long, Mahmud II was one of the most ignored Sultans of the nineteenth century. His diplomatic abilities in particular are never taken into account when scholars examine the fevered diplomatic developments between 1831 and 1840; called 'The Eastern Question' by western historians. One of the main reasons for this ignorance is prejudice and preconceived ideas in the western scholar's mind. According to the general attitude of these historians, Mahmud and his statesmen were passive actors in the process, and did almost nothing apart from watch the diplomatic developments in their territories unfold. Such a view, infused as it is with 'Orientalist', represents the attitudes of the European statesmen of the time and in the absence of the view from the Turkish side of the hill, has tended to hold the field. Furthermore, it could be revealed that the cause of this biased point of view is repudiation of the Eastern World with views based only on their own western sources. These issues continue to be discussed under the umbrella of Orientalism, a concept originated by Edward Said. However, this has been conducted as a cultural history centred debate and therefore it seems that it might be useful to provide diplomatic examples in order to make some contribution to the Orientalism debate. In this context, although this article is not a theoretical study, it will attempt to convey the essence of the diplomatic struggle story of Mahmud and his diplomats in the years of 1834 and 1835.

Keywords: Mehmet Ali Pasha Crisis, Anglo-Ottoman Relations, Ottoman Diplomacy.

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II. Mahmud ve Devlet Adamlarının Mehmet Ali Paşa Krizini Çözmek İçin Diplomatik Manevraları

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Öz

Saltanat süreci 31 yıl gibi, (1808-1839), uzun bir dönemi kapsamına rağmen, II. Mahmud 19. Yüzyılın en fazla ihmal edilen Sulatanlarından bir tanesidir. Batılı tarihçiler tarafından ‘Şark Meselesi’ olarak adlandırılan 1831-1840 arasındaki tansiyonu yüksek diplomatik gelişmeler, alimler tarafından incelenirken, özellikle II. Mahmud’un diplomatik yetenekleri yeterince dikkate alınmamıştır. Bu bihaberliğin en önemli sebeplerinden bir tanesi batılı alimlerin zihinlerindeki peşin hükümler ve önyargılardır. Bu tarihçilerin genel yaklaşımına göre, Mahmud ve devlet adamları bu süreçte pasif aktörlerdi ve kendi hüküm sürdükleri topraklarda meydana gelen diplomatik gelişmeleri seyretmekten başka bir şey yapmamışlardı. Dönemin Avrupalı devlet adamlarının yaklaşımlarını sergileyen bu nevi bir Oryantalist görüş Türk tarafının hikayesinin yokluğundan kaynaklanmakta ve alana hakim olmaya devam etmektedir. Ayrıca bu peşin hükümlerin sebebi, batının sadece kendi kaynaklarına dayanması nedeniyle doğu dünyasını tanımaması olarak ortaya konabilir. Bu tarz sorunlar Edward Said tarafından ortaya konan Oryantalizm şemsiyesi altında tartışılmaya devam etmektedir. Bununla birlikte bu tartışmalar kültürel tarih merkezli yürütülmektedir ve bu yüzden Oryantalizm tartışmalarına katkıda bulunmak için bu anlamda diplomatik örneklemeler sunmak da faydalı olacaktır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma her ne kadar teorik bir çalışma olmasa da, II. Mahmud ve diplomatlarının 1834 ve 1835 yıllarındaki diplomatic mücadele hikayesinin hakikatini ortaya koymaya çalışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mehmet Ali Paşa Krizi, İngiltere-Osmanlı İlişkileri, Osmanlı Diplomasisi.

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Дипломатические маневры заключенных и государственных деятелей для разрешения кризиса Мехмет Али Паши

Резюме

Несмотря на длительный период правления ,который составил 31 год (1808-1839 Султан Махмуд Второй был одним из самых «заброшенных» султанов 19 века. Напряженные дипломатические события 1831-1840 годов, которые западные историки называют «восточным вопросом», были исследованы учеными, но не были приняты во внимание дипломатические способности Махмуда Второго. Одна из важнейших причин этого невежества – стереотипы и предубеждения в умах западных ученых. Согласно общему подходу этих историков, Махмуд Второй и государственные деятели были пассивными участниками этого процесса и ничего не делали, кроме как наблюдали за дипломатическими событиями, происходящими на земле, которой они правили. Такой востоковедный взгляд, отражающий подходы европейских государственных деятелей того времени, проистекает из отсутствия истории о Турецкой стороне и продолжает доминировать в этой области. Более того, причина этих предубеждений может быть выдвинута, поскольку запад не признает восточный мир, потому что он полагается только на свои собственные ресурсы. Такие проблемы продолжают обсуждаться под эгидой ориентализма, выдвинутого Эдвардом Саидом. Однако эти дебаты сосредоточены на истории культуры, поэтому было бы полезно привести дипломатические примеры в этом смысле, чтобы внести свой вклад в дебаты о ориентализме. В этом контексте, хоть и это исследование не является теоретическим, оно попытается раскрыть правду о дипломатической истории борьбы махмуда и его дипломатов в 1834 и 1835 годах.

Ключевые слова: Кризис Мехмета Али Паши, Англо-османские отношения, Османская империя

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Introduction

Before the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi some of the British politicians, notably, Palmerston, George Canning, William Lamb, Charles Grant and Viscount Dudley, thought that the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse and they did not want to offer any assistance because of their desire to cultivate a good relationship with Russia.¹ They thought Russia was a more civilized country than the Ottoman Empire because it was a Christian state and would offer better opportunities for an economic relationship. One of these politicians, Richard Cobden, was a Radical M.P in the British Parliament. According to him, “*the Ottoman Empire was a despotic Muslim State in decline and Russia was a peaceful, commercial, Christian Empire.*”² It could be said that this perspective reflects the influence of the Orientalist perspective of the time that the East was characterized as being backward and needing to be modernized by the West. Some Western politicians believed the East could never progress without their help. It may be concluded that these misconceptions affected the relationships between the Ottoman Empire and the European Powers. This can be seen clearly in their diplomatic relationships during the Mehmet Ali Crisis. This time however, in contrast with their support for the Greeks in the 1820s, British policy makers would eventually recognize the importance of the Ottomans and support them against Russia and Mehmet Ali after the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, on 8 July 1833³.

After the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, British policy toward the Ottoman Empire, now managed by Palmerston⁴, completely changed, because he had become more concerned about the danger Russia posed to the strategic position of the Ottoman straits. Furthermore, according to Webster, Palmerston had already realized what danger Russia posed to the Ottoman Empire even before the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. However, he was unable to support the Ottomans at that time. Webster stated that:

“Palmerston was more prescient than his colleagues, but his own conviction was not sufficiently strong, his influence in the Cabinet not yet sufficiently powerful to

¹ Laurence Mark Guymar, *Sir Henry Bulwer and the Ottoman Empire 1858-1865* [unpublished UEA Phd. thesis, 2009], p. 13.

² L.M., *Ibid*, p.15.

³ Too see more information on the period before the Treaty of the Unkiar Skelessi look at Fatih Gencer, “Hünkâr İskeleyi Antlaşmasını Hazırlayan Koşullar”, *Tarih Okulu*, No.22, 2015.

⁴ For more information about the importance of Palmerston in the British Foreign Policy at that time look at David Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography*, Yale 2010.

obtain necessary action. From the weakness of these months came a whole series of difficult problems.”⁵

Russia had desired to secure ports first on the Black Sea and then on the Mediterranean Sea for her own interests since the establishment of the Russian Empire.⁶ With the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, the Russian bureaucrats found an opportunity to implement their dreams as Russia and the Ottoman Empire agreed to protect each other. The Ottomans agreed that, in case of war, the Dardanelles would be closed to all other Powers.⁷ As Bailey mentioned,

“Britain did not fully awaken to the importance of the Ottoman Empire’s geographical, political, and economic position in Europe until 1833 when Russia threatened England’s position in the Near East by signing with Turkey the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.”⁸

All of these reasons were enough to scare Palmerston about British interests in India because, if Russia could dominate in the Ottoman lands, this might damage British interest from India later on. Thus, as mentioned above, Palmerston and the British policymakers thought that they had to assist in the politics and economics of the Ottomans as much as possible, to defend British interests against the Russians. At the same time, other European Powers with interests in the Ottoman Empire, namely France and Austria, also interfered in the Mehmet Ali Problem.

In this context, the intervention of the European Powers over this domestic issue was a blow for the Ottomans. Although many scholars have said that the defeat of Mahmud II by his own governor was a great blow, this can be looked at differently. There is no doubt that this defeat can be seen as a shame for the Ottoman Empire. However, this military failure was converted into a diplomatic success by Mahmud II and his governments. It should be considered that at that time, Mehmet Ali Pasha had enough power to capture Istanbul, and even had a chance to declare his independence, but due to the successful diplomatic policy of Mahmud II, Mehmet Ali could not properly utilise this opportunity. The reason for this is that Mahmud II was using the

⁵ Sir Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston: 1830-1841*, Vol.I, London 1951, p. 273.

⁶ S. Goryanof, *Rus Arşiv Belgelerine göre Boğazlar ve Şark Meselesi*, Ötüken Yayınları , İstanbul 2006.

⁷ V.J. Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East 1834-1853*, Stanford University Press, United States of America 1969, p. 9.

⁸ F.E. Bailey, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement*, New York Howard Fertig 1970, p. 38.

conflicting interests of the European Powers politically, to the Ottoman advantage, so the powerful Mehmet Ali Pasha could be stopped. Therefore, this period should not be considered simply as a military failure, there was a diplomatic advantage achieved by the Ottomans. In this article, in order to properly understand Mahmud II's objectives, a different method will be followed from that of foreign scholars. They have used Foreign Office documents, and any state archives other than Ottoman, to examine this period. Predictably, although there are many serious British and American academic studies in this area, because they have failed to evaluate the Ottoman documents they have not fairly assessed the Sultan's effort to solve the problem.

As a matter of fact, the diplomatic struggle of Mahmud and his statesmen is a neglected topic among the Turkish historians as well. For instance, although Muhammed H. Kutluoğlu examined the period, 1831-1841, in the context of Egyptian Question⁹, he did not mention anything about the reports of the Ottoman diplomats, Namik Pasha, Nuri Effendi, Mustapha Reshid Pasha, and also he did not use Mahmud's significant orders to these diplomats. The question is that how we could know what the Ottomans diplomatically had done to resolve the problem without knowing these indispensable materials. Kutluoğlu did not also mention almost anything about the vital events, which were directly related to the Mehmet Ali Problem, such as the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, the Euphrates Project, and the treaty of Balta Limani. There are also some other Turkish historians, who studied the period, however they did not scrutinize the Ottoman diplomatic struggle as well, such as Şinasi Altundağ, have confined their studies to the chronology of the historical events marking the struggle between the Sultan and his vassal governor, and reflected upon its impact in the international arena.¹⁰ Some of them, such as Sevim Ünal, have examined Palmerston's and his ambassadors' diplomatic efforts based on the Foreign Office documents, as has been done in the English literature, and yet others, such as Mübahat Kütükoğlu¹¹, have investigated the problem based on its economic effects on Anglo-Ottoman economic relations. However, it could rightly be said that none of them have considered Mahmud and his statesmen's intensive diplomatic endeavours between 1833 and 1839. As a

⁹ M.H. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, Eren Press, İstanbul 1998.

¹⁰ Ş. Altundag, *Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa İsyanı Mısır Meselesi 1831-1841*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1988.

¹¹ M.S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri 1580-1838*, Vol.I., Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, İstanbul 1974 and *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri 1838-1850*, Vol.II., İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, İstanbul 1976.

result of this approach to the era, the Turkish scholars have looked at Mahmud's relations with Russia, Britain, and the other European powers from an almost orientalist perspective, just as the European scholars have done. Therefore, the purpose of this article will be to investigate some parts (1834 and 1835) of Mahmud II's struggle for the prolongation of the Ottoman Empire's life by using diplomacy, and this argument will be clearly examined in detail and with proofs, in the light of the Ottoman documents.

Mahmud and his diplomats' diplomatic struggle in 1834-1835

With the beginning of 1834 the new relative position of the parties in the Anglo-Ottoman relationship had started to become more apparent. When looking at this new position from the point of view of the Ottomans, the most significant factors to examine are Mahmud's diplomatic manoeuvres, such as those of the summoning of the Russian Navy Power to the Bosphorus and the much-disputed Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. Another bold diplomatic move was to be added to these shrewd diplomatic tactics was with the British attempt in 1835, when she wanted to request permission for the use of the Euphrates Route, which entailed passing through the entire length of the Ottoman lands, to reach India, her biggest possession, much more quickly, via the shortest possible route.¹² As could be guessed, this British desire was another chance for Mahmud to implement his real aim, which was to secure a military alliance with Britain to assist him in combatting his rebel governor, Mehmet Ali. After all these manoeuvres from Mahmud, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire seemed to undergo a radical change; this was particularly visible in the revised attitude of the famous British Foreign Minister, Palmerston. As a matter of fact, many international scholars of history have conducted detailed studies of this British policy change, but they have universally neglected to study the degree of Mahmud's and his statesmen's role in this change, owing to a failure to avail themselves of the Ottoman record of events. Naturally, this omission has brought about a one-sided narration of the period. This article will examine in detail both these issues: what were the effects of Mahmud's diplomatic mentioned manoeuvres on the Anglo-Ottoman relationship in the period 1834 and 1835, and also what other policies did Mahmud and his statesmen follow in those years in

¹² To see the detail information on the Euphrates Project look at: Serkan Demirbaş, *İngiltere'nin Hindistan Rotaları Ve Bu Rotalardan Biri Olan Fırat Nehri Projesi'nin Mehmet Ali Paşa Sorunu Konteksinde Gösterdiği Gelişim*, Osmanlı Devleti'nde Nehirler ve Göller Sempozyumu, Kayseri 2013, pp. 805-819.

order to facilitate the forging of an Anglo-Ottoman military alliance so they would be better able to resist all their enemies in the region.

The most significant development in 1834-35 was the Euphrates project. Although the Ottoman statesmen had tried to not to show their true colours to the Russians at the beginning of the process because of the clauses in Unkiar Skelessi¹³, Mahmud eventually gave his permission for this project despite all the opposition from Russia, which was trying to use all its privileges of presence in the Ottoman lands which had arisen from the Unkiar Skelessi treaty, to prevent the British from achieving their aim in this matter. As can be imagined, the Sultan's permission in favour of the British negatively affected the Ottoman-Russian relationship. This permission given by the Sultan became a somewhat negative blueprint for future diplomatic relations between Mahmud and Nicholas.¹⁴ Another remarkable aspect of this process was that Mehmet Ali also tried to exploit this project for his own plans just as Mahmud had. In this respect, he played a double game. He indicated to Palmerston that he really wanted to cooperate with the British in this project but was tied hand and foot since he was only a simple governor, and it was the Sultan who was preventing him from helping the British with the project.¹⁵ At the same time, we also know from his statement to the Russian translator in Alexandria that he thought that the Euphrates project was totally unacceptable.¹⁶ The Ottoman diplomats reported this state of affairs to Mahmud and informed him that Mehmet Ali was expecting to profit in either event: whether Britain was going to triumph over Russia's wishes in this competition over access to the Euphrates; or Russia had its way.¹⁷

In 1835, the Ottoman documents indicated that relations between the Sultan and his rebel governor were getting more and more volatile with every passing day, and on both sides their open hostility was becoming daily more apparent. Mehmet Ali had planned for his ambitions in this direction – a complete independence from the Sultan – to come to fruition in this year. To make matters worse, Mahmud's fears over the treaty of Kütahya had begun to come true. As a result of Mehmet Ali's political attack, Mahmud

¹³ *BOA, HAT., 1186/46758 B.*

¹⁴ Of course, despite Mahmud's strong desire to implement an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, and some of his diplomats' efforts in this process, on the other hand Mahmud and his men had been sometimes handling the Russians tactfully - many Ottoman documents reveal these Ottoman tactics - while at the same time striving to induce the British to enter into an alliance.

¹⁵ *BOA, HAT., 1171/46349 01.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

thought that it would be wise to accelerate his diplomatic solution-seeking with the European powers, particularly Britain. In this context, he ordered his statesmen that they should obtain the opinions and attitudes of the British and French ambassadors about their opinion on Mehmet Ali's latest attack by requesting an official letter from them.¹⁸ Upon receiving this instruction, the Foreign Minister replied that he intended to request this letter from Ponsonby. However, before he could do this, Ponsonby actually sent a letter by himself through his translator which spontaneously brought up the subject. He stated in his letter that Mehmet Ali's demand for independence was a sheer fantasy and his government would neither accept it nor conform to it.¹⁹ In fact, the indications were that this attempt of Mehmet Ali's had started to show his true colours since the last period of 1834. Rodkey indicated on this topic that:

“In October, 1834, after Campbell had warned the foreign office of serious intentions on the part of Mehmet Ali to declare himself independent, Palmerston warned the Pasha in no uncertain terms not to disturb the status quo.”²⁰

Right after that the French translator brought a letter from the French ambassador about the same issue, which stated that the French government did not accept the legitimacy of this demand. However, the Ottoman Foreign Minister was not as completely satisfied with the French communication as he was with the British one. He gave as a reason for this, that the French Ambassador also advised in his letter that the Ottoman Empire should not make any military advance towards Mehmet Ali. After this, the French Ambassador was told that the Ottoman Empire did not have any malevolent intentions and he was officially warned about his last letter. In response he stated that the sentiments he had expressed in the letter were merely a reflection of the instructions which he had been given by his government, however he strongly believed that the Ottoman Empire did not harbour ill-will against Egypt and therefore he apologised for any offence the letter may have caused.²¹ The hard-line warning obligated the French Ambassador to concede his position and demur. To add to the opinions conveyed by these ambassadors, the Austrian Ambassador also presented a letter of the Austrian government's views about the same issue, and just like the British

¹⁸ BOA, HAT., 360/20064.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ F.S. Rodkey, “Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1830-41”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Dec., 1929, p. 576.

²¹ BOA, HAT., 360/20064.

and French Ambassadors he did it of his own accord.²² Mahmud was pleased with these explanations of the ambassadors since it meant he no longer felt so diplomatically isolated against his insubordinate governor, and with the help of this support, he could compensate for his army's weakness and inexperience with his abilities in diplomacy and politics, as he had done in the past to combat the seemingly insurmountable domestic issues of the Empire.²³ As a result of his endeavours, it seemed that the diplomatic developments of 1835 had started to take a turn for the better. One other example for this came from Prince Metternich's instruction to the Austrian ambassador to London, Prince Esterhazy.

Namık Pasha was in London at that time, to negotiate the latest developments in Anglo-Ottoman relations after the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.²⁴ Esterhazy showed the instruction to Namık Pasha whereupon the Pasha reported to the Sultan and informed him about it immediately, on 3 May 1835.²⁵ Metternich explained in the instruction that Austria had always stood up for the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and from this point of view Mehmet Ali's real aim of independence from that empire, which had now come to light, should never be accepted²⁶. The most important information in the instruction was that Metternich had intercepted a secret document informing him that Mehmet Ali had organized a revolt in Albania, via the governor of Crete: Mustafa Pasha. Esterhazy told Namık Pasha that Metternich had already informed the British Foreign Minister of the situation and requested that the British and Austrian ambassadors to Alexandria, Albania, Crete, and Greece, should be kept abreast of all the latest developments and should not be allowed, under any circumstances, to contact

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Mahmud disbanded his old army the Janissaries (also called the Yeniçeri Ordusu) in 1826. The Janissaries had been a major feature in many military victories during the height of the Empire, but they would not adapt to changing warfare techniques and became outdated, and unwilling to adapt to any innovations. He established a modern army called the Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye, however this army was inexperienced and this was one of the main reasons for its easy and rapid defeat against Mehmet Ali's army in 1832. Therefore, knowing his armies' weakness, Mahmud was seeking an alternative solution to going to war alone once more against the Egyptian Army, like making a military alliance with Britain. Thus the best way to achieve this aim was through the use of diplomacy.

²⁴ To see different approach to the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi: Serkan Demirbaş, "A New Perspective on the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi Mahmud II's Use of International Diplomacy to Resolve the Mehmet Ali Problem", *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Sayı 17(2), Eskişehir Aralık 2016, pp. 1-16.

²⁵ *BOA, HAT., 1174/46430 C.*

²⁶ To see more information on Metternich's policies during the Mehmet Ali Crisis look at, Hayrettin Pınar, "Mehmed Ali Paşa İsyanı ve Metternich'in Osmanlı Siyaseti", *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Eskişehir 2011, pp. 157-178.

Mehmet Ali about this dangerous attempt.²⁷ When Namık Pasha learned of Metternich's talking with the Minister with respect to defending the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan's authority over it, he saw this situation as an opportunity to elucidate the Ottoman points of view once more. So he went to talk to the Foreign Minister about the subject. He explained that if Britain put pressure on Mehmet Ali and tried to ignite within him once again the desire to obey his sovereign and abandon his destructive rebellion against central government, he strongly believed that Mehmet Ali would not attempt to oppose Britain in the matter.²⁸ This last diplomatic strategy was very likely to lead to another important development towards success, which was a thought that pleased Mahmud, since it seemed that diplomatic support from the European powers was in his favour now.

Despite all these positive developments, there was another major difficulty with which Mahmud had to contend. The problem was with the city of Damascus. Damascus was a critically important Ottoman city but it was now under Mehmet Ali's control.²⁹ Under Mahmud's direction the Ottoman statesmen had undertaken some discreet activities to rescue Damascus, but the British government did not have a favourable attitude towards any forcible intervention in this city since they thought that any possible crisis in the Ottoman lands might give the Russians an opportunity to exploit the incident to their advantage using the new rights that had arisen from the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. Consequently, because of the British sensitivity over Russian policy, Mahmud did not want the British to know about the Ottoman activities in the region, at least in the beginning. However, Britain came to hear of the Ottomans' latest activities in Damascus, and Palmerston sent a despatch about it to both Ponsonby and Colonel Campbell.³⁰ As a matter of fact, this was prepared after Mehmet Ali's complaints to the British. This is interesting because Mehmet Ali appears to have made a decision to induce the British via diplomatic ways to agree with the rightfulness of his struggle, just as his sovereign Mahmud had done. This despatch contained some complaints about these latest Ottoman activities in the region, firstly conveying that the British government was aware of the Ottomans' secret activities in Damascus to try to

²⁷ BOA, HAT., 1174/46430 C.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ To see the desire of Mehmet Ali for Syria look at, Fatih Gencer, "İbrahim Paşa'nın Anadolu'yu İstilası", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, V. 9, N. 42.

³⁰ BOA, HAT., 361/20100 A.

circumvent a revolution from Mehmet Ali, but the Ottoman power in this city was not currently sufficient to successfully achieve any such thing. Secondly, they were also well aware that the Sultan had ordered for preparations to start with a view to establishing an army (from the districts, which were under the control of the central government, and at Reshid Pasha's command) for the purpose of attacking Mehmet Ali.³¹ The Ottoman statesmen responded immediately to the British claims. They said that firstly, the central government had not been provoking any kind of revolution in Damascus as had been asserted. The last revolution had occurred as a result of the cruelty and atrocities of Mehmet Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha, towards the public in Damascus³². However, if there were any Ottoman soldiers in Damascus, it was to force the Egyptian soldiers to withdraw, back to their boundaries, because although Urfa and Rakka were Ottoman cities and not under the control of Mehmet Ali, they were under the occupation of his army at that moment. The Ottoman statesmen wanted the British statesmen to evaluate the Ottoman activities in Damascus in this way.³³ As previously examined, they were trying to conceal their real purposes for being there and at least gain some time. They also stated clearly that they had legitimate reasons behind the recent increase in Ottoman activities against Mehmet Ali. One of them was that Mehmet Ali had stopped paying his taxes to the central government.³⁴ Mahmud probably took this as a signal that Mehmet Ali had made a decision to accelerate the process of acquiring his independence. This Ottoman statement seems to have changed the British mind on the matter, since Colonel Campbell subsequently met with Mehmet Ali and impressed upon him, in the name of the British Government, those exact points which Mahmud had hoped and wished would be suggested by the British. As a matter of fact, prior to this last situation, Palmerston felt that he himself, as a result of Mahmud's risky manoeuvres, should have prevented the Sultan from being dominated in his own lands, since a Balkanised Ottoman Empire could have been dominated by Russia much more easily, an eventuality he wished to avoid. On October 1834, he communicated his opinion about this to Campbell, and explained to him about the kinds of cities which Mehmet Ali had been trying to enlarge his province by occupying. Rodkey explains this situation in more detail thus:

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² To see more information on opposition against Mehmet Ali in the Ottoman lands look at Fatih Gencer, "Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa Yönetimine Karşı Filistin Muhalefeti", *Belleten*, LXXIX/286, Ankara Aralık 2015.

³³ *BOA, HAT., 361/20100 A.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

“To sever from the Ottoman Empire the vast and fertile provinces held by Mehemet Ali, the British foreign secretary maintained, "would not only trench deeply upon the integrity of the Turkish Empire, but would fatally impair its independence. "Instead of encouraging the Viceroy in his ambitions, Palmerston strongly recommended that he should evacuate Orfa and Diarbekir, and pay the tribute that he owed to the Sultan.”³⁵

When Campbell spoke to Mehmet Ali on the matter he told him that his wisest course of action would be to become a submissive and capitulatory governor to his sovereign, Mahmud II. Campbell added that if he were to co-operate in this way, he would be safe from any possible attack or seizure. Most importantly, Campbell indicated that the King of Great Britain was a close friend and ally of the Sultan, and the King had been calling most emphatically for the continued territorial integrity and stability of the Ottoman Empire in every respect and had long considered this to be the key factor in European peace and security, hence, the King would never consent to the division or weakening of the Ottoman Empire. Campbell also mentioned that the King also would not allow the Ottomans to be hurt, nor would he allow Mehmet Ali to proclaim his independence since this ambition was irrational, inadvisable and detrimental to European stability. Campbell concluded his meeting with Mehmet Ali with three points: firstly, that he should have to calm down and try to be an obedient governor; secondly, he should pay the necessary taxes as agreed according to the treaty of Kutahya; and thirdly, he should immediately withdraw his army from Urfa and Rakka, where he had no right to be since these cities were not under his control.³⁶ This advice from Britain would have been a stunning blow to Mehmet Ali because he had been striving to induce the European powers to accept his struggle's legitimacy, just as Mahmud had been doing, to promote his own cause. Since this last negotiation with the British about Damascus had started badly following his rebel governor's complaints to Britain about him, it is easy to see that Mahmud must have been extremely pleased with the way events were turning out. However, events had turned once again into an even more positive outlook for the Sultan. In their doing so, the Sultan, so to speak, 'killed two birds with one stone'. The first benefit achieved was that Mehmet Ali in his approach had debased himself in the sight of the British. In one sense, it could be said

³⁵ F. S. Rodkey, *Ibid.*, p. 576.

³⁶ *BOA, HAT.*, 361/20100 A.

that ‘the hunter had become the hunted’. The second benefit, it transpired, was that in contrasting with his governor, Mahmud actually reinforced his requests in the eyes of the British about collaboration with the English to solve the problem.

France, which had now started to act in tandem with Britain in the Eastern Question, wanted to get involved in the Damascus issue as well. Although France seemed to have acted as an ally of Britain in solving the Mehmet Ali problem after the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, it could not be expected from her to change her policies with respect to Mehmet Ali that easily, since she had been a source of strength and support for the governor ever since the beginning of his campaign. In France’s previous dealings in the matter, whenever she became involved with the problem, she ‘played a double game’, at one time in opposition to Mehmet Ali and at another time in his favour, and this approach had been most vexatious to the Ottomans.³⁷

The same thing happened in connection with the Damascus issue. France sent a motion to her ambassador to Alexandria, Bigos, and this motion was shown to Mavroyani, the charge d'affaires of the Ottoman Empire to Vienna, by the French ambassador to Vienna.³⁸ There were two aspects to it. The first one was saying to Mehmet Ali that the Egyptian soldiers should be immediately withdrawn from Urfa and Rakka and in addition to this; he pays the taxes of Egypt, Crete, and Damascus to the central government.

The second aspect of the message was of concern for the Ottoman Empire. It was saying that the central government should have lessened its preoccupation with Damascus and concentrated its efforts on achieving what was necessary with the treaty of Kütahya. As previously indicated, this approach annoyed the Ottomans once more. Mavroyani declared that the allegations the French were making were nonsensical and had no basis in fact. Mavroyani also said something uncomplimentary about Mehmet Ali in the light of the latest developments. He asserted that in his opinion the governor had destroyed his dignity in the eyes of the European powers because of his overambitious aspirations and blatant deceit.³⁹

Mavroyani also went on to make further scathing comments on the subject of Mehmet Ali; that he was destitute of foresight and very inexperienced in terms of the

³⁷ BOA, HAT., 1190/46885.

³⁸ BOA, HAT., 361/20100 A.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

European Powers' policies. Mavroyani also met with Metternich about this issue and mentioned his complaints to the British, and thereafter went on to discuss the comments of Britain and France about Damascus. Metternich stated on these issues that Mehmet Ali's complaints were extremely inconvenient. He also said that he ordered his ambassador to go to Alexandria in order to protest and his ambassador warned the governor even more sternly than had the British and the French. He lastly said to Mavroyani that Mehmet Ali had attempted to make some complaints about his sovereign as well but according to Metternich that was a grave error because the Austrians had to honour the sovereignty rights of the Sultan in compliance with their administrative principles. Mavroyani said that he sent a motion, indicating his rejection of Mehmet Ali's complaints, to his ambassador to Istanbul.⁴⁰

Following on from all of these developments, Mahmud found one more opportunity to develop increased intimacy with the British, which was prudent because he badly wanted to conclude this potentially disastrous matter within the shortest possible time. The opportunity was provided by the need to improve economic relations, and this was to culminate in the forging of the treaty of Balta Limani on 16 August 1838. Before these economic negotiations were made, an important economic incident had taken place between the Ottomans, the British and Mehmet Ali. The details of the matter were that, after the termination of the Levant Company in 1826, there was no obstacle arising within British legislation that limited their trading with the immense and fertile Ottoman lands. However, there was a negative side, which was called "7 Vahid". The Ottoman economy had always been closed ever since the establishment of the Empire, which meant that the State had to grant permission regarding the import of all goods. At first, the exportation of goods was not so highly regulated, as the State did not have to give permission for every export. The majority of these items were salt, all kind of pulses, and gunpowder, flour, spices and sugar.⁴¹ However, in 1826 Mahmud banned seven goods from exportation. These forbidden items were called the "7 Vahid". The British merchants were dismayed by this prohibition, and so they complained about this troublesome situation to their Ambassador.⁴² Mahmud realised that this demand from the British merchants could be used in solving the Mehmet Ali problem, and

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Huri İslamoğlu-Inan, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1987, p.128.

⁴² M. Kütükoğlu, *Ibid.*, pp. 66-70.

negotiations over this matter commenced in the 1830s.⁴³ However, it seemed that Mehmet Ali would not relinquish his control over these monopolies in his region that easily. In 1835, Mehmet Ali took the step of prohibiting the British merchants from trading in silk in Damascus. Following this development, Ponsonby appealed to the Sultan for termination of Mehmet Ali's monopoly on these items.⁴⁴ The translator of the British Embassy, Pizani, visited the Reis Effendi, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, to negotiate this issue. In the meeting, the Reis Effendi asked about the reason for which the courier, who came to the British Embassy a few days ago, had been sent. Pizani responded that the Foreign Minister had sent an official letter, to communicate the fact that Mehmet Ali was denying any commerce involving Damascus silk to the British merchants based on 7 Vahid, and the Minister was demanding a rescript from the Sultan on this issue.⁴⁵ Thereupon the Reis Effendi requested an official declaratory letter from Ponsonby. Subsequently, in response, Ponsonby presented two official letters, explaining the situation. Ponsonby stated in these letters that if these prohibitions were coming from the central government, Istanbul, although this decision's meaning was contrary to the rapport between both countries, they could not deny that this was a right of the Ottoman Government. However, if Mehmet Ali had made this decision without asking the central government, he did not have a right to act in contravention with the international treaties and principles; in fact, nor did he even have the power to make such a decision. Ponsonby added that if the situation was indeed as he suspected, he demanded that the Pasha be dismissed from his position for raising difficulties for the British merchants, and also that all the tariffs which had caused the merchants such difficulty and expense be revoked.⁴⁶ In response, the Reis Effendi advocated to the Sultan that it would be a necessary course of action to submit a rescript, one which proclaimed that Mehmet Ali's decisions and actions had been without the proper knowledge and permission of the central government, and they knew and accepted that these kinds of decisions were adverse to the friendship between the countries.⁴⁷

This incident was appears to have been a good opportunity for Mahmud and his statesmen to seize in order to sharpen the unpleasant emotions and feelings of hostility

⁴³ This process has been examined in detail in Serkan Demirbaş, "The Treaty of Balta Limanı's Role In Anglo-Ottoman Relations during the Mehmet Ali Problem", *Journal of History School*, Sayı XXIV, İzmir Aralık 2015, SS. 233-251.

⁴⁴ *BOA, HAT.*, 1172/46369.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

between the British and Mehmet Ali. In this context, the Reis Effendi asked Pizani a critical question: what would happen if Mehmet Ali did not obey the Sultan's orders? Would the British statesmen complain that the rescript was useless and think the Sultan's orders impotent, or would they attempt to rescue British commerce in the region from Mehmet Ali's arbitrary rulings, by enforcing the rescript and obligating the Pasha to fulfil what it instructed?⁴⁸ This question was a roundabout way for the Sultan to pose his real enquiry; which was whether Britain would intervene with military force against Mehmet Ali when more and more conditions indicating the prudence of this intervention had been cropping up with every passing day.

The Reis Effendi's question was found to be a significant question and Pizani said that he should let Ponsonby know about it. The following day, Pizani reported back that Ponsonby had said that the question was quite clear and to the point but he had also indicated that he needed more time to ponder upon it.⁴⁹ He sent the response only four days later saying that if the governor toes the line they would indeed be indebted to the Sultan. Otherwise, if he were to oppose the order, there would be only one reason from Ponsonby's point of view. In this respect, he touched upon a quite interesting and unimagined aspect of the situation. According to Ponsonby the reason was Russia. He explained that diplomatic relations between the Pasha and the Russians were in very good shape. He also said on this topic that because of this he and his government were very well aware that the Pasha had been making concession eleven percent extra to the Russian merchants, and therefore, if he insisted on contravening the rescript, they would perceive it as disobedience to his Sovereign for the sake of the Russians. Ponsonby went on to say that in such a case we would have to think very carefully about what we could do to help against Mehmet Ali without adversely affecting the Ottoman interests.⁵⁰ After Ponsonby's response, it was decided that if the rescript were to be given to the British, then they would be the ones to contend with Mehmet Ali since it was obvious that his prohibitions made them very angry. In addition to this, when the British merchants obtained extra trading privileges in the region and so rose head and shoulders above the merchants of the other European powers, the British nation and state would feel the warmest appreciation of the Ottomans. At the end of his report Reis Effendi

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

stated that this rescript was vital because by way of it, they would be able to provide the stimulus the British needed in order to exercise their power over the Pasha, and also it might even provide cause for Britain to wipe out his army and even his existence.⁵¹ Mahmud's men seemed to be as enthusiastic to gain British cooperation against the renegade governor as was Mahmud.

In this regard, one of the most encouraging pieces of news with respect to this cooperation came from Nuri Effendi, the Ottoman ambassador at London. He had met with Palmerston on 14 July 1835, and reported that prior to this meeting with the Foreign Minister he was well aware that the debated article of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi had deeply hurt the British and as a result of this situation, the Anglo-Ottoman alliance might be only possible with the Russian repulsion of the British.⁵² He therefore said that he had seen fit to have a word with Palmerston about the Russians in order to lead up to discussing the Egypt problem. In this context, he stated that he had heard something about the Russians but he could not verify whether the information was true or false due to the fact that he had not received any news from Istanbul for two weeks. He had heard that there were a few articles in the newspapers to the effect that some Russian war ships in the Black Sea had started to make certain preparations. He asked Palmerston about whether he had any information concerning this news or not.⁵³ Palmerston responded that he did not know about this situation; however he knew that twenty thousand Russian soldiers were on the road to the Castle of Silistra through Moldova and since the castle was under the control of the Russians this would potentially cause much harm. Palmerston then started to talk, in fact complain, about the Russians' position in Istanbul and as one might expect, these complaints were a welcome sound to Mahmud's ears, since Palmerston's complaining like this was evidence that his manoeuvres had really started to properly bear fruit. Palmerston opened the dialogue by saying that the Russian ambassador had been playing a very active role in Istanbul and interfering with Ottoman administrative and diplomatic affairs. He also stated that in these circumstances, how could it be asserted that the Ottoman Empire was an independent country with this Russian penetration in the Ottoman lands? He also proffered that while the Russians were continuing with their influence in Istanbul, how were the British at the same time supposed to be aiding the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *BOA, HAT., 1190/46879 001.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Ottoman Empire? After this frank exchange of views Palmerston stated, just as Mahmud had expected, that if the Ottomans had been feigning to be an allied country with the Russians because of any feeling that they had no other source of help, Britain would be the guarantor for the Ottomans that neither the Russians nor Mehmet Ali would be able to damage the Ottoman Empire so long as the British Maritime power was in the Mediterranean Sea.⁵⁴

This offer of Palmerston's shows an explicit change in the British policy in 1835 concerning the Eastern Question when compared to the period before 1833.⁵⁵ Baker clearly expresses the main aims of the British policy after the Unkiar Skelessi when he writes:

*“The two chief aims of British policy in this quarter from 1833 to 1839 were, first, to prevent a renewal of Russian intervention in Turkish affairs, and eventually to destroy the Russian sole protector ship of Turkey acquired in the treaty of 8 July; and secondly, to maintain the peace between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali by dissuading both from attempting any measure which might led to a renewal of hostilities.”*⁵⁶

After Palmerston had spoken, Nuri's response was that there was no indulgence of the Ottoman Empire or any other reason related to it concerning the Russian control of the Castle of Silistra. According to Nuri Effendi's explanation of affairs, sometimes calamities happen and as a result of these the Russians captured the castle. However, he could also reassure him that the Ottoman statesmen had been making great efforts day and night under the guidance of the Sultan to reform and regenerate the Empire and it was manifestly clear that after these reforms had been enacted they would soon be able to recapture the Castle.⁵⁷

In fact, Palmerston had been taking the reform of the Ottoman Empire very seriously as it was the only way to rescue the Empire from her enemies, particularly the Russians,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ To see the Mehmed II and his diplomats' extraordinary efforts to change the British opinion on making an alliance with the Ottomans: Serkan Demirbaş, “A Fresh Look at Mahmud II's Purpose in Calling Russian Troops to İstanbul in 1833”, *Journal of History School*, Sayı XXVIII, İzmir Aralık 2016, pp. 347-378.

⁵⁶ R.L. Baker and Viscount Palmerston, “Palmerston on the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi”, *The English Historical Review*, Oxford University Press Jan. 1928, Vol. 43, No 169, p. 84.

⁵⁷ *BOA, HAT., 1190/46879 001.*

and he fully appreciated the efforts the Ottomans were putting in to enhance the Empire. Rodkey's comments on this topic are:

“Henceforth until the renewal of war between the Sultan and the Pasha of Egypt in 1839 Palmerston consistently counselled the Turkish government to keep the peace in the Levant in order that it might succeed with its plans for military and administrative reorganisation, and on more than one occasion he took practical steps to further Ottoman Reform. Late in 1835 he instructed Ponsonby to exhort the Turkish ministers to pursue “with increasing energy and perseverance that wise system of organization – military, naval, financial, and administrative”- which had already been so successfully begun.”⁵⁸

Nuri also said something useful about Palmerston's words with regard to the Russian hegemony in Istanbul. He said that they had to make the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi as a result of Mehmet Ali's rebellion because of the immediate necessity of an alliance with another power to fortify the Empire against the problem. At this stage of the meeting Nuri Effendi indicated – in accordance with the Sultan's plan – that they had really desired to make an alliance with Britain. He added that if the British sponsored the Ottomans in every aspect, Mehmet Ali would have to revert back his old position and accept the supremacy of the Sultan and thus the suspicions and uncertainties arising from the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi would be laid to rest.⁵⁹

It seems Palmerston in the meeting was much clearer this time with an Ottoman official on the Russian issue, so much so that he replied to Nuri's words by saying;

“We do not have anything further to say about Unkiar Skelessi for now; when we war with the Russians we will ask Istanbul and get the answer, there is no problem with that. The problem is what does Russian hegemony in Istanbul really mean? Even I have a proof in this matter. Although the Ottoman Empire had an intention to acquire 30 Russian officers to use them in the training of the Ottoman army, the Russian ambassador learned of this situation and restrained the Ottomans from doing that. Instead of doing that, if some British officers went to Istanbul, they would be able to reform the Ottoman Army very quickly and by this means the Ottoman Empire could gain an edge over both Russia and Mehmet Ali. I am making this suggestion since Britain really only desires for the Ottoman

⁵⁸ F. S. Rodkey, *Ibid.*, pp. 576-577.

⁵⁹ BOA, HAT., 1190/46879 001.

*Empire to have power, strength, glory, and stateliness. In this respect, the King only feels partiality and deep love to the Sultan.*⁶⁰

Interestingly, after Palmerston had spoken thus he added that because of King William's sympathy with Mahmud, he would like to send five horses to the Sultan as a gift, via a ship which was to take Lord Lambton to Petersburg, and Palmerston even intimated that he had chosen the horses with his own hands. Most interestingly, he mentioned that these horses were not so valuable themselves in financial terms but they would be a strong evidence to show Mehmet Ali and the Russians that Britain would stand by the Ottomans' side in all circumstances.⁶¹ Mahmud was satisfied with the King's gift and he sent a letter to William to thank him for it. Mahmud also thanked William for his country's hospitality and the compliments to Nuri Effendi he had received.⁶² Mahmud was very pleased by this situation and he saw it as another occasion which had further improved the Anglo-Ottoman relationship.

When Nuri Effendi was convinced that everything was going well in London, he reported that they should use praising and encouraging language much more with the British and at the same time more critical and adverse language with the Russians from then on. The reason for that was, he continued, that Britain had always behaved with extreme favour to the Ottomans. For example, the last serious attempt Mehmet Ali made to declare and announce his independence to all the European powers, as examined above in detail, had been prohibited by Britain's actions and this support could not be forgotten. On the other hand, the Russians had always been an enemy and generally brought trouble on the Ottomans from Nuri Effendi's point of view. Owing to these circumstances, he mentioned, how could they prefer the Russians to the British? He also recounted Palmerston's words about the Russian ambassador's penetration into Istanbul and said that it was as clear as day that all grace and respect shown to him so far had been simulation, as if the Ottomans were a friend nation to the Russians, according to the appearance of the existing conditions.⁶³

Nuri mentioned another current and significant topic to Palmerston in their meeting: that when Mehmet Ali gave up all hope of British support, he had fallen back

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *BOA, HAT., 1236/48114.*

⁶³ *BOA, HAT., 1190/46879 001.*

upon the Russians and therefore, he continued, if Britain took sides with the Ottoman Empire, Mehmet Ali would abandon Damascus and go back to his previous boundaries and as a result of this situation the Sultan would enhance the power of his rulership.⁶⁴ Nuri was another Ottoman diplomat, who raised the Damascus Question. He added that if Mehmet Ali could be given a hard time in Damascus, the Damascus public would pay more attention to the prosperity and safety in the other Ottoman regions under the favour of the Sultan's domination and this state of affairs would be conducive to establishing a volunteer army against Mehmet Ali from out of the Damascus public. In response, Palmerston said that they knew well that the Damascus public was complaining about the central government in the beginning, however, when they saw Mehmet Ali's oppression, they would recognize and understand the value of the Sultan and decide to get rid of Mehmet Ali. After he had said this, when Nuri stated that it would be difficult to recapture Damascus from the Pasha at that moment, Palmerston responded that it would be very easy from the British point of view; however, first of all, the Ottoman statesmen should retire to ponder on the issue and later on they could reconvene to negotiate the topic further.⁶⁵ It was another positive development for Mahmud because Palmerston had previously, at the outset, rejected the prospect of any Ottoman intervention in Damascus. However, just a moment ago, he had been talking about the ease of an operation in Damascus, despite the fact that he had been saying it was not the right time at present. This was another change in the direction of British foreign policy and it could be taken as yet another success by Mahmud with his diplomatic policies.

After his many negotiations in London, Nuri Effendi was replaced by Mustafa Resid Pasha, who was already in Paris in the capacity of the Ottoman ambassador. He was regularly sending detailed reports about the diplomatic atmosphere in Europe and the main character of these reports was that they were pro-British. Palmerston wrote a laudatory letter to the Sultan about both of the Ottoman diplomats.⁶⁶ Palmerston was very happy with Reshid's assignment to London because he knew very well how hard the Ottoman ambassador was trying to win acceptance for the Anglo-Ottoman

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *BOA, HAT., 1172/46412 A.*

cooperation in the region against their common enemies, Russia and Mehmet Ali.⁶⁷
Palmerston stated about these assignments that:

“I would like to declare my pleasure with the letter of the Sultan with respect to the assignment of Mr. Reshid and also express my thanks about it to you, the Sultan. I would also like to express how very pleased I am with Mr. Reshid’s being sent to London vested as he is with extraordinary powers. All negotiations and correspondences with the Ottoman Empire, which are to be done through Mr Reshid, would be affected very positively, and are likely to develop the relationship between both friend countries daily. As a matter of fact, I want the Sultan to know that both the King and the British government are very sincere in their desire to improve and enhance this long standing friendship. For my part, I will do my best in order to maintain this historic relationship between the two countries. I also want to add a point about Nuri Effendi’s great efforts in London. He has done his utmost to increase the value of both his Sultan and his country in the eyes of the British Public. I would like to declare that I am sure he will strive as well to defend and protect his Sultan’s and his country’s rights in the presence of the French”⁶⁸.

It is interesting to compare these flowery words with Webster’s record:

“Nourri Pasha, had no French and Palmerston found him an “oaf” on whom he could make no impression.”⁶⁹

In best orientalist fashion, Palmerston wrote that:

“Nourri is a greasy stupid old Turk, without an idea in his head” “A perfect nullity with whom it is impossible to get on at all. He is like a Turk in a melodrama on the stage: one of Bluebeard’s attendants.”⁷⁰

We have here a perfect vignette of British orientalism in practice. On the one hand Palmerston uses the most effusive language possible when writing to the

⁶⁷ As a matter of fact, Mehmet Ali was not an enemy of the British at the beginning of his rebellion. He even published some articles in the British newspapers, which showed him some support. However, when the British had started to see him as the reason for the trouble with the Russians in terms of upsetting the British over their interest in the region, as a result of Mahmud and his statesmen’s diplomatic efforts, they withdrew their support and began to oppose him as strongly as they opposed Russia.

⁶⁸ BOA, HAT., 1172/46412 A.

⁶⁹ S. C. Webster, *Ibid.*, p. 538.

⁷⁰ S. C. Webster, *Ibid.* p. 538

Ottomans, as he thought it what they liked, but in private he revealed the contemptuous attitude which marked his own attitude, and those of so many other Westerners to the 'Turk'. Such attitudes all fed into an underestimation of the diplomacy and policy of the Sultan, which is why the story from the Ottoman archives needs to be told. It at least counters the view that 'greasy Turks' were too 'stupid' to have a policy. The British may just have been too arrogant to have seen what it was

Webster also explained, with great expertise, about the vital importance of the Sultan in the diplomatic process in that the following;

“The representatives of all these states at Constantinople endeavoured by bribery and by the use of the favourites and indirect methods of approach to get past the official machinery to the source of power and decision, the Sultan himself.”⁷¹

⁷¹ S. C. Webster, *Ibid.* p. 527

Conclusion

As can be seen, at the beginning the British side had got some prejudiced opinions about the Ottomans; however, the Mahmud's and his diplomats' risky diplomatic and political tactics had changed their approach and at the end they gave the support, which Mahmud wanted, to the Ottoman side to solve the Mehmet Ali problem.

Examination of this intensive diplomatic period, 1833-1839, from the point of view of the Ottoman side is vital. As it has been revealed in every aspect all through this article for 1834-35, the Ottoman influence, under the leadership of Mahmud, was in large part a strong factor determining the alteration of the attitude of the British, particularly Palmerston about this "Eastern Empire". This mission was not easy since this very same person, Palmerston, and the very same British politicians, had been thinking the exact opposite at the beginning of the 1830s about the Ottoman Empire to the way they now thought about the Empire in the second half of the 1830s.

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