

THE CREATION OF THE TURKISH RESIDENT DIPLOMACY

Prof. Dr. Yılmaz ALTUĞ

I. Reasons for lack of Turkish resident diplomacy.

Turkey did not have resident missions until Selim III. This was due mainly to the belief that she was self-sufficient which led her to a isolationist foreign policy¹. In the rise of Empire this policy could be justified, like Rome, Turkey was able to impose her will rather than to negotiate on a basis of reciprocity and equality. The French alliance concluded during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (Soliman, the Magrufreent) a favour extended to France against Emperor Charles V.

Beside the might of the Empire another reason for the lack of resident Turkish diplomacy was Islam religion. Ottoman Empire was based on Islamic principles. Turks did not think that a Moslem country could conclude alliances with Christian powers on the basis of equality². The only great power and enemy at West was Austria and Turkey was able to fight alone against this state. But in the second half of Eighteenth century not only Austria gained enormous strenght but Russia became a first rate world power and started to threaten Turkey.

Diplomatic relations of Turkey with Foreign powers were conditioned by the following factors : their attitude toward Turkey, the degree of their

¹ Enver Ziya KARAL, *Selim III'ün Hat-tı Hümayunları (Nizam-ı Cedit) 1789-1807*, (1946), Ankara, p. 164, KARAL, *Osmanlı Tarihi V. Cilt, Nizam-ı Cedit ve Tanzimat Devirleri (1789-1856)*, 10-11.

² Only Islam religion is not enough to explain the absence of Turkish resident missions. So the assertion of Maurice Herbert, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le Directoire*, Paris (1902) quoted in Karal, *Hatlar*, 164 is partly true. Another indication that only religion is not enough to explain the absence of resident missions is the absence of Turkish mission in Iran which was a Moslem country.

³ İsmail Hakkı UZUNÇARŞILI, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, 1948, p. 272.

⁴ Jacop C. HUREWITZ, *The Europanization of Ottoman Diplomacy: The Conversion from Unilatrealism to Reciprocity: 1835-1870*, article.

⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, 1948, p. 273.

friendship, whether they were neighbors or not and economic conditions³ During the unilateralist⁴ phase of Turkish diplomacy Diplomatic rules observed by Turkey were not original and *sui generis*.

II. Reasons for diplomatic reforms :

The weakness of the Empire and the strong political currents were responsible for the diplomatic reforms⁵. The French Revolution deeply influenced Turkey." In Turkey, largely because the French revolution, largely because it was secular and not explicitly Christian, became the first Western movement to affect Islam and the inspiration of the first generation of Ottoman reformers⁶.

The person mainly responsible for diplomatic reforms is Selim III. When he ascended to the throne the war between Turkey on one side and Russia and Austria on the other side was continuing. This war was declared by Turkey upon Russia with the purpose of taking back Crimea and preventing the execution of agreement between Austria and Russia for the partition of Turkish Empire. But Austria had joined Russia and many defeats followed; Kalas (December 7, 1788), Fokşan (Fokshani) July 31, 1789. These defeats persuaded some Turkish statesmen to make peace at any price, but with some other statesmen the young and energetic sovereign wanted to continue the war. But knowing that Army was weak and Treasury empty he followed first time a policy of alliances with the enemies of Austria and Russia. Turkey succeeded to conclude a treaty of alliance with Sweden in 1787. The treaty was negotiated between Reisül-küttap Raşid efendi and Swedish ambassador at İstanbul⁷.

The alliance with Prussia which followed the alliance with Sweden was defensive and European in character with reciprocal rights and duties. "Ordu Kadısı Şanizade" objected to its conclusion on religious bases claiming it was against İslam, but Şeyhülislam Hamidi Zade stating some Ayets proved that it was not against religion.

Selim III was corresponding with Louis VI. since he was Crown Prince⁸. He had also sent İshac bey, a convert to İslam to study French and French ways of life with the permission of Padişah Hamit I. French Ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier helped him and advised him to make reforms. Ishak bey Turkey with two letters in 1786, one to Louis XVI. the other to the Foreign Minister. Selim III had a reply from Louis XVI⁹.

⁶ B. Lewis, "The İmpact of French Revolution on Turkey" *Journal of World History*, V. 1., (1953) pp. 105.

⁷ Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, op. cit. p. 19.

⁸ Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, *Siyasi Tarih*, 1944, p. 61.

⁹ For this letter see. *Tarih Vesikaları*, cilt 1, pp. 198-202.

Selim III ended the war with Austria (Treaty of Zıstov) and with Russia (Treaty of Yaş). Among many things he started his reforms in diplomatic field. The first resident embassies were established in Austria and in Prussia. They were established in 1792. The first Turkish permanent Ambassador to Vienna was İbrahim Afif efendi who was then Anadolu Muhasebecisi and formerly secretary to Sadaret Kethüdası. The first permanent Ambassador to Prussia was Ali Aziz efendi of Crete¹⁰. These first Ambassadors were appointed for three years.

One outstanding men in the establishment of resident Turkish Diplomacy was Reisülküttap Ebu Bekir Talip Efendi to our opinion. When Turkish ambassador to the Court of Berlin had some trouble because he did not know European protocole it was Reisülküttap himself who tried to learn it from some European Ambassadors at İstanbul. As Turkey was neutral in the struggle between France and her enemy so in spite of close relationship of French Ambassador and Padişah, Reisülküttap did not think wise to meet with him. He met with British Ambassador and consulted him on the following points: 1) The necessity and importance of resident missions, the formality to be followed in the appointment of such ambassador, the esteem and regard by British Government toward Turkish Ambassador the convenient road to be followed by Turkish Ambassador to reach London, and the rank of the ambassador.

The British Ambassador gave the necessary answers to these questions. The first permanent Turkish Ambassador to England was Penah efendi zade Yusuf Agah efendi. He was sent in 1793 and stayed three years was replaced by İsmail Ferruh who spent three years and was replaced by Neşet efendi.

Selim III ordered the Reisülküttap Ebu Bekir Talip Efendi to go to Vienna to study Austrian institutions and to get information on the structure of other European states. Ratip efendi, learned scholar and of Voltarian spirit stayed two months in Vienna and returned to İstanbul with a 500 pages report. In the second part of his report he advised among other things to conclude with certain states political alliances on the basis of reciprocity¹¹.

Upon agreement with French ambassador Verninanc Esseyid Ali efendi of Mora, who was assigned in 1795 to Berlin Embassy but whose

¹⁰ There is a difference on first ambassador to Prussia between Uzunçarşılı and Karal. According to the first author The first Ambassador was Esseyid Ali Efendi and not Giritli Ali Efendi op. cit.

¹¹ Enver, Ziya Karal, "La Modernisation de la Turquie" *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*, 4, (1957-58), p. 431.

departure was delayed was appointed September 2, 1796 to Paris. Ottoman Empire used to send Ambassadors to French capital since 1681. But all these were extraordinary ambassadors.

Ali efendi of Mora left İstanbul by İtalian ship on March 24, 1794 with a legation composed of 18 persons. He arrived in 52 days to Marseilles¹². Before leaving İstanbul he had met with French Ambassador Aubert du Bayet who even tried to teach him some diplomatic rules¹³.

He waited 38 days of quarantin and continued his journey toward Paris. He was very well received on his way and in Paris. There was parades, dinners, and all sorts of entertainment. We think we should devote some special time on this first ambassador.

III. Esseyit Ali Efendi :

He was not prepared for diplomatic career. Any how there was no tradition at all for diplomatic career. He was raised in the Financial field. He knew some Greek and very few French. Until that time to learn foreign language was a sign of inferiority. This handicap proved to be biggest in case of Esseyit Ali efendi because his interpreter Kodrika was a Greek who was spying for Talleyrand and perusaded for example in case when Ali efendi wanted to send spy to Toulon to learn the real purpose and destination of French fleet to dismiss the idea.

It is interesting that he send a coded report giving quite a bit of information even of intelligence to İstanbul on April 10, 1797. In this report he warns that There is some perparation at Toulon arsenal but for "invasion of England". But he also add that among the soldiers there are scholars who know Turkish, arabic and pedsian that according to some rumors French will land at İskenderun and conquer Bagdad, Persia and will reach Kandehar and India. He adds his own opinion according to which French is trying to occupy either Gibraltar or Sicily. Had Turkey had a Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time of this report with experts on France or European affairs it would be very easy to detect the real purpose of French. However the Sadrazama even noting that this was just a rumor but French could not be trusted that precaution was necessary¹⁴.

¹² Karal, *Fransa - Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (1797-1807), p. 61.

¹³ Karal, *Hattı Humayunlar* op. cit. citing Maurice herbert, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le Directoire*, p. 178.

¹⁴ The report and derkenar of Sadrazam which are classified at Devlet Arşiv Dairesi S. 36. H. 74 are cited by Karal in, *Fransa - Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, p. 149-150.

Derkenar :

Ali efendi sent a second report on April 21, 1798 in which he described the news from daily papers. According to these the troops would join Ahmed paşa, governor of Sayda and with his help they would reach Egypt by land. He had not believe this but a declaration or speech made in the Assembly of Five hundreds by citizen Eschassérieux recommending colonies for France and particularly Egypt and an interpretation of this speech by Deputy Poulitier in the newspaper *Ami des Lois* on April 17, 1798 made Ali efendi extremely anxious and upon these he sent his interpreter to French Foreign Ministry and asked whether they are going to attack Ottoman territory?

Even this attitude shows simple mindness and lack of diplomatic training of Ali Efendi. Was it possible for France to admit this plan of conquest and to cause Turkish forces to be ready to fight her upon her arrival? Ali efendi had not learned yet about Talleyrand. Ali's greataest fault was his utmost honesty and virtue, for his he never questioned the answers he received from French statesmen, because for him statesman would lie.

Talleyrand had lied to Ali efendi in his answer saying that France had no war desire with Turkey, that "the scholars were to depart from Bordeaux which shows that there destination is not Egypt." Upon this second dispatch from her Ambassador, Turkey started to realize that the destination of French forces was Egypt. Reüsül küttap asked an interview with French Chargé d'affaires Ruffin which was done on June 17, 1798. Ruffin said that he did not have any instruction from his government about the preparation—which was not true—but to his personal belief which really was the view of France, "France needed the commerce of Egypt and the French merchants in Egypt suffered in the hands of beys. The Sublime Porte was not able to give justice because Turkey was not commanding any more in Egypt, so France would protect her citizens." Reisülküttap was angry to hear the words as revolution and rioting in Ottoman territory he replied that "this was not something peculiar to Egypt but in France too there were many riots and for example Revolutionary government could not subdue Marseilles but this would not justify Turkey to send army and navy to protect Turkish merchants over there." Reisülküttap threatened France saying that Egypt was a part of Ottoman Empire that any attack on Egypt meant an attack on İslam religion. Reisülküttap sent special instructions to Ali efendi by a private mission which are the following: The Turkish government approves your questionning of French foreign minister through your interpreter. But you must still search for the real purpose and destination of France. Even though Turkey did take all precautions any French attack on Egypt

would be detrimental politically and religiously to Turkish government.

A point of suspicion was raised in this instructions this was why, even if the real destination of fleet was concealed propagating news that was Sublime Porte was not secretly notified by French Chargé d'affaires of the real destination of fleet, friendship existing between two countries required this. Why then French Chargé d'affaires said that he did not know anything officially?

The instructions ended by ordering the Ambassador to ask denial of the news in the paper, and if French was refusing such a custom as not relevant, the Ambassador had to show the precedent established by the denial of news on Sicily upon complaints¹⁵.

When Malta was conquered Ali efendi was greatly relieved because he considered that was the real destination of secret expedition. He sent a letter on July 3 by private mission¹⁶, on this matter.

Before this he sent a report on June 21 telling his interview with Talleyrand and he assured him and gave guarantee that Napoleon was only instructed to conquer Malta. Ali efendi even sent to İstanbul the newspaper reporting the denial by Talleraud that the French destination is Egypt. This paper is of July 25 while Napoleon had landed his troops on first of July.

Turkey did not declare war upon France. Selim III wrote on this respect that in a such important matter as declaring war padişah's and vezir's opinions were not enough the decision belongs to padişah, to Sadrazam to Şeyhülislam and to statesmen¹⁷. The french invasion pushed Turkey towards an alliance with Russia which was concluded on 23rd of December 1798 and an alliance with England on January 5, 1799.

Françelunun İskenderun iskelesine göndermek üzere Tulon tersanesinde donanma tedariki havadisi eracı nev'inden olduğu Efendii muamaileyhin dahi mesmuat kabilinden olarak tahrir eylesmesinden eğerçi zahirdir ancak Françelunun mizaçlarına nazaran zamiri habasetgirlerinde bu makule bazı melanet ve fesat merkez olup her ne kadar şimdidek rekzi zamirleri olan habaseti meydana çıkaramamışlar ise dahi elhaletühazihi cemi müstakil devletlere ve hususa Devletialiyeye göre her halde merasimi cezm ve ihtiyata riayeti lazimedden iduğ malum alileri buyuruldukte ferman Veliyülemr Hazretlerindir.

¹⁵ The complete Turkish text of this instructions is in Karal, *Fransa - Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, p. 156 and original is in Devlet Arşiv Dairsei, S. 36.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁷ "Hele ilân-ı harb hususu gayet mülahaza götürür maddedir. İşte mu maddenin zuhurundanberi benim hatırıma gelen budur. Rey olmıyarak kaç kere sana söyledim. Zira bu hususta padişah ve vezir reyî olmaz. Bu madde hasbice benim ve senin ve şeyhülislam ve şudur-ı kiram ve rical-i devletin ve cümlenindir." Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, cilt V, p. 31.

The Turkish-Russian alliance is very important as being the first alliance between these two powers which had been often at war with each other during the eighteenth century. Turkey concluded an alliance with Two Sicilies on January 21, 1799 So the Second Coalition was formed.

Expedition to Egypt is considered by some writers as profitable to Turkey in that sense that she entered to the cycle of European alliances and could play a preponderant role if she was governed by true statesmen¹⁸.

To give an example of his reporting to the Sublime Porte, here is a Translation of a report of Moralı Seyit Ali efendi¹⁹. "Napoleon is very distinguished in Europe. He succeeded to obtain obeidance of Russia. Even there is talk of a secret alliance between them. The King of Prussia met with the Emperor of Russia at Memel. Information being sought on this point from Lukzini he answered that Prussian King went to Poland to visit a relative of his and the Emperor of Russia decided to see him at Memel, for this reason there will be no ministers accompnig them but some officers. But we learned that Koçi bey is with Russian Emperor. An officer send as courier these in his last memorandum sent from Memel explicitly explained that as King of Prussia is pro-French this meeting took place with the secret advice of Napoleon and must have a purpose. On the indemnties matter Bonaparte without notifying Austrian Emperor or his ambassador in France negotaited with Russia. Napoleon is acting in every matter as he pleases, he does not care about British Ambassador. His consulute which was temporary now is confirmed. Beside this the Republic of France is just a word, every body is more restraint than they were during kingdom. Even when I arrived first I had heard that Napoleon was trying to get the title of Emperor, nowadays there is no such talk. I had heard before that Napoleon had consented to the invasion, taking away of Wallachia and Bosnia by Austria, of Moldavia by Russia for indemnties in exchange of their recognition of his title of Emperor. This being printed in the newspapers, I requested from Napoleon during my interview with him the denial by newspapers. This has been done, but the news were spreading from ears to ears.

When I left İstanbul I did not know about the talk on Bosphorus when French asked me I told them this was not within my instructions Taleyrand answered me: "Why you are hesitating the change d'affaire Roufen wrote me that the permission is given in İstanbul". I replied: "If such was the case I would be informed." British ambassador too told me: "The permission is given for Bosphorus, this is told in Paris and in

¹⁸ Halil Ganem — *Les Sultans Ottomans*, Paris, 1902, Tome 2, p. 184.

¹⁹ Archives of Topkapı Sarayı No. 1428.

Merseilles. Why Ottoman Porte has done this? Why she gives the permission to her ennemy and not to her friend?". The ambassador repeated this many times.

I do not know the fact whether this is true or not, I could not answer him, if such was the case I would like to be informed. I know that well known Sebastiani was invited to İstanbul and some conditions were negotiated but I do not have detailed information. Sebastiani when visited me to force me by orders of Napoleon told me: "every thing was promised to me in İstanbul why are you opposing now here?" I replied him: if this was true I would be informed and instructed." Is he lying or telling truth I cannot distinguish?. After the French Chargé d'affaires Roufen had sent same documents to Taleyrand the soft attitude of French changed for the worst and they started to force me. I do not know what Chargé d'affaire wrote but as I reject the dangerous demands of Napoleon and I insist on this Napoleon who first beleived to dictate all his demands became furious with anger. He is doing all sort things during his crisis and even thinking of cutting all relations with Turkey. The situation is reported with all details to The Sublime Porte too. All my efforts are for the eternal permanence of Ottoman States.

Another fact showing bad faith of France is that for last six days I asked a passoport for a courier they anwser we will send some documents so wait for a while. I understand that they are trying to send something before my memorandum to you. I never heard such a thing".