

**BRITAIN  
AND THE STRUGGLE  
OF THE  
OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

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*Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy  
to Istanbul  
1776-1794*

**A. I. Bağış**

**2021**

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**THE ISIS PRESS**







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A.I. Başgöç

Associate Professor,  
Hacettepe University Ankara

With a Preface  
by  
Prof. M. S. Anderson

1978



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

*Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayrimüslimler  
Kapitülasyonlar - Beratlı Tüccarlar  
Avrupa ve Hayriye Tüccarları.  
1750 — 1839*



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First edition 1984

*Published by*

ISIS YAYINCILIK LTD.

Kuyumcu Irfan Sok. 22/2, Nişantaşı, Istanbul, Turkey

*Printed in Turkey by*

İSTANBUL MATBAASI

İ.M.Ç. 2. Blok 2274 Unkapanı/İSTANBUL

Tel. : 526 41 83 - 522 85 87



21 SA 1391

The Publishers gratefully acknowledge  
the support of the Egemetal Group of  
Companies in bringing out this book



## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XII
PREFACE	XIII
	to
1 THE EARLY YEARS IN ISTANBUL AND THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF THE C	Vernon J. Parry
2 THE OUTBREAK OF THE RUSSO - TURKISH WAR	<i>in memoriam</i>
3 THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND THE TURCO - PRUSSIAN TREATY	53
4 THE REICHENBACH CONVENTION	83
5 THE BRITISH INTEREST -- THE INTEGRITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS OF 1791	93
6 THE OTTOMAN STRUGGLE WITH AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA; THE FINAL PHASE AND THE PEACE TREATIES	111
CONCLUSION	131
APPENDICES:	
I The Speech of his Excellency Sir Robert Ainslie to his Highness the Grand Vezir	137
II A Statement from Sir Robert Ainslie to the Kapudan Pasa	139
III Translation of the Imperial Command Directed to the Istanbul Efendi, to the Molla of Galata and to the Chief Customers of Constantinople	143
GLOSSARY	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY	147
ABBREVIATIONS	151
INDEX	153

## ILLUSTRATIONS

HASAN PASA	<i>facing page 30</i>
COMTE DE CHOISEUL -- GOUTIER	
SELIM III	
YUSUF AGA EFENDI	



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of

Vernon J. Perry

in memoriam

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Koyuncu Irfan Sok. 22/2, Nispetiye, Istanbul, Turkey

Printed in Turkey by

ISTANBUL MATBAASI  
LMC. 2. Sok. 37/1, Nispetiye/ISTANBUL

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QASA 0334

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## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XII
PREFACE	XIII

1	THE EARLY YEARS IN ISTANBUL AND THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEA	1
2	THE OUTBREAK OF THE RUSSO - TURKISH WAR	23
3	THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND THE TURCO - PRUSSIAN TREATY	53
4	THE REICHENBACH CONVENTION	83
5	THE BRITISH INTEREST — THE INTEGRITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS OF 1791	93
6	THE OTTOMAN STRUGGLE WITH AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA; THE FINAL PHASE AND THE PEACE TREATIES	111
	CONCLUSION	131

### APPENDIXES :

I	The Speech of his Excellency Sir Robert Ainslie to his Highness the Grand Vezir	137
II	A Statement from Sir Robert Ainslie to the Kapudan Paşa	139
III	Translation of the Imperial Command Directed to the Stambul Efendi, to the Molla of Galata and to the Chief Customer of Constantinople	143
	GLOSSARY	145
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	147
	ABBREVIATIONS	161
	INDEX	163

### ILLUSTRATIONS

HASAN PAŞA	<i>facing page 80</i>
COMTE DE CHOISEUL — GOUFFIER	
SELİM III	
YUSUF AGAH EFENDI	



# CONTENTS

XII	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
XIII	PREFACE
	I THE EARLY YEARS IN ISTANBUL AND THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEA
1	2 THE OUTBREAK OF THE RUSSO - TURKISH WAR
13	3 THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND THE TURCO - PRUSSIAN TREATY
33	4 THE BERLIN CONVENTION
38	5 THE BRITISH INTEREST - THE INTEGRITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS OF 1901
93	6 THE OTTOMAN STRUGGLE WITH AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA: THE FINAL PHASE AND THE TREATY
111	THEATRE
131	CONCLUSION
	APPENDICES:
	I The speech of the Excellency Sir Robert Ainslie to his Highness the Grand Vezir
137	II A Statement from Sir Robert Ainslie to the Kapudan Pasa
139	III Translation of the Imperial Command issued to the Grand Vezir, to the Mulla of Galata and to the Chief Custodian of Constantinople
143	GLOSSARY
145	BIBLIOGRAPHY
147	ABBREVIATIONS
151	INDEX
153	

## ILLUSTRATIONS

80	HABAN PASA
	COMTE DE CHOISEUL - COUTURE
	SERIM II
	YUSUF AGAH EFFENDI



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work originally was presented to London University as a Ph.d. Thesis in 1974. In this present edition certain chapters have been reviewed and altered and the need of a new chapter was evident (Chapter X) in order to give a more complete understanding of the subject.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my supervisor, the late Mr. Vernon J. Parry, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London. His enthusiasm and criticism not only sustained my approach to the subject but also refined and reshaped my understanding of it.

I am greatly indebted to Professor M. S. Anderson, of the London School of Economics and Political Science, the University of London, for taking over the supervision of this work at a very difficult time; his many comments and suggestions have been very valuable and much appreciated.

I would like now again to thank Prof. Anderson for writing the preface to this edition.

My grateful thanks are due to Dr. Leslie Collins of the School of Slavonic Studies, for helping me to translate a number of passages in Russian primary and secondary sources; to Hector Munro M. P., for allowing me to consult in Edinburgh University Library, the papers of Joseph Ewart.

I should like also to express my thanks to the Central Research Fund of the University of London, whose financial assistance made it possible for me to work in Paris in 1968 and 1969.



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## PREFACE

Between the appearance in Istanbul of the first English diplomatic representative, William Harborne, in 1583 and the arrival there as ambassador of Sir Robert Ainslie in September 1776 there elapsed more than two centuries. During much of that period trade with the Ottoman Empire played a role of considerable importance in the general pattern of English commerce. As a source of raw silk in particular, and to a lesser extent of other things such as cotton and dried fruits, the Levant trade was for long periods a significant element in the expanding overseas trade which, perhaps more than anything else, stimulated English economic growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It cannot be pretended, however, that the relations of England (or after 1707 Great Britain) with the Ottoman Empire were really close during these two centuries. From the 1720s onwards, if not even earlier, French competition was making serious inroads into the British Levant trade; while already the enormous growth of the Caribbean and North American markets had begun to make almost all branches of trade with the Mediterranean seem, in the eyes of many British statesmen, of very secondary importance. Moreover the political relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, two states at different ends of the European continent, had been always of distinctly minor direct significance to both and sometimes distinctly tenuous. There were times, indeed, when the actions of the Ottoman government seemed to ministers in London of real interest and importance and very well worth influencing if this were possible. But this British interest was still always an indirect one. The Ottoman Empire and its policies seemed important, from the standpoint of London, because they affected profoundly the actions and potentialities of other states which were geographically closer and of much more direct political or military interest. The efforts of England, together with the Dutch Republic, to act as a mediator at the Carlowitz peacemaking in 1699, to take only the most obvious example, were inspired by a strong desire to end the long Ottoman-



Habsburg struggle and thus free the hands of Austria and enable her to act effectively as the ally of England in the great conflict with France which was clearly on the point of breaking out in Western Europe.

By the early nineteenth century this situation had changed drastically. By then British interest in the Ottoman Empire was more active, more continuous and much more direct than ever before. This interest had been stung into life most of all by the French invasion of Egypt, which very arguably marked the real beginning of modern history in the Near East. But even before 1798 there had been unmistakable signs of a slow change of attitude in London. In 1770 Great Britain had been lavish in the help she gave to the Russian warships which in that year circumnavigated Europe to destroy the Ottoman fleet at the battle of Chesmé. The Russian vessels used British ports to refit and take on supplies and in several cases carried British officers. By contrast, when the next great Russo-Turkish struggle broke out in 1787 the British government refused to give any help at all in the sending of a Russian squadron to the Mediterranean and disappointed any hopes Catherine II may have had of repeating the spectacular achievements of 1770. Only a year or two later, in 1791, the Ochakov crisis brought the first overt, though in this case unsuccessful, British resistance to the apparently relentless southward movement of Russian territory and power at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. The decade of the 1790s can thus be seen as something of a watershed in Anglo-Turkish relations. As yet there was no sustained or consistent policy of British support for the Ottoman Empire against pressure from the north: we are still a long way from the age of Palmerston or Disraeli, not merely in years but in attitudes and ideas. Nevertheless the remoteness and indifference which had so strongly marked political attitudes to the Near East in London during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was now becoming a thing of the past. Willy-nilly, the Ottoman Empire was now playing a more important, and a more continuous, role in the scheme of British foreign relations than ever before and the significance of this role was to increase markedly in the decades which followed.

The embassy of Sir Robert Ainslie therefore stands at a



turning-point in Anglo-Turkish relations. When he reached Constantinople the embassy there was still almost a diplomatic backwater so far as Great Britain was concerned. When he left it, in the autumn of 1793, it was showing the first signs of its transformation into what it became during much the greater part of the nineteenth century, one of the handful of supremely important British diplomatic missions overseas.

It is a great pleasure and satisfaction that Dr. Bağış has now been able to enlarge and adapt his London Ph.D. thesis on Ainslie's Istanbul years and publish it as a book. The interest of the subject and the scholarship with which Dr. Bağış has treated it combine to make this a very significant addition to the still scanty literature on the earlier history of Anglo-Turkish relations. It is a particular pleasure that the publication has taken place in Turkey, a fact which may, I hope, be taken as showing the existence there of scholarly interest in an area of study still somewhat neglected in Great Britain. I congratulate Dr. Bağış on his work and wish his book all the success it deserves.

London School of Economics  
and Political Science

M.S. ANDERSON







## CHAPTER I

### The Early Years in Istanbul and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea 1776 - 1783

Sir Robert Ainslie was descended from one of the ancient families of Scotland. He was born either in 1729 or more probably, in 1730.<sup>1</sup> There is no abundant store of evidence about the period of his life preceding his appointment, in 1776, as ambassador to Istanbul.

His father, George Ainslie, is known to have spent long years at Bordeaux as a merchant. George Ainslie seems to have returned to Scotland in 1727. He then purchased the estate of Pilton in Midlothian.<sup>2</sup> Robert Ainslie himself also worked in due course as a merchant at Bordeaux. At a date so far unknown he became, to all appearance, an agent serving the British government. In 1773 he procured from the office of the Duc d'Aiguillon, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, copies of despatches sent from Paris to Madrid during the Falkland Islands dispute. Robert Ainslie sent these copies to Lord Rochford, then Secretary of State for the British Foreign Office (October 1770 - October 1775). Lord Rochford, in June 1773, wrote to George III, enclosing in his letter some of the evidence that Ainslie had gathered together and assuring the King that he would do his best to obtain further information.<sup>3</sup> One author, writing a little later in time, noted that Ainslie was employed in "several important services", no indication being given, however, as to their nature.<sup>4</sup> It was perhaps in return for these labours on behalf of the British government that Ainslie was raised to ambassadorial status.<sup>5</sup>

On 27 June 1775 John Murray, the British ambassador at



Istanbul (1765 - 1775) was given leave to return home to England for a few months in order to settle his private affairs. He died, however, at Venice on 9 August 1775 during the course of his journey to London.<sup>6</sup> The conduct of affairs in Istanbul had been entrusted to Anthony Hayes, the British consul (1762 - 1794) at Izmir.<sup>7</sup> On 15 September 1775 Lord Rochford wrote to Hayes, informing him that Robert Ainslie had been nominated as ambassador in succession to Murray.<sup>8</sup> A few days later an official announcement appeared in the London Gazette,<sup>9</sup> stating that<sup>10</sup>:

The King has been pleased to appoint Robert Ainslie, Esq., to be His Majesty's ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, in the Room of John Murray, Esq., deceased; and His Majesty was pleased this Day to confer upon him the Honour of Knighthood; upon which occasion he had the Honour to kiss His Majesty's Hand.

A letter from the Levant Company in London informed Hayes, in October 1775, that Ainslie would set out for Istanbul in February 1776.<sup>11</sup> It was not, however, until April 1776 that Ainslie received from the British government his instructions as ambassador, and not in fact until June of this year that he sailed from Falmouth in the packet vessel "Eagle" travelling to Marseilles and then to Istanbul.<sup>12</sup> Sir Robert Ainslie reached Istanbul on 2 October 1776.<sup>13</sup>

Sir Robert Ainslie had received from the British government orders to<sup>14</sup>:

instruct yourself in the manner of making your address with our credentials to the Grand Signor and Grand Vizir, ... and at your audience from the Grand Vizir, you are to insist to be treated with the same ceremonies and respect that have been usually shewn to the ambassadors of other Princes.

Soon after his arrival in Istanbul, he notified the Ottoman government officially of his presence. A few days later, on 6 October, a message came to Ainslie from the Grand Vizir, through one of the dragomans of the Porte, stating that his first audience would have to be postponed until the end of *Bayram*.

The audience took place on 30 November 1776. Ainslie entered the Porte accompanied by six janissaries, by the "porter" at the head of six grooms, also by sixteen servants, four *valets de chambre* and two *maîtres d'hôtel* (all in gold liveries) and by his



dragomans and the embassy secretaries. He was led through the hall of the *divan* into the second room, where he was introduced to the Grand Vizir. The ambassador and the Grand Vizir saluted each other with great civility, Sir Robert Ainslie handed over the letter of King George III and made a speech.<sup>16</sup> The Grand Vizir replied, through his dragoman, that he cherished "most perfect esteem for the English Nation which he looked upon... as the constant friend of this Empire." Ainslie was then invested with a pelisse of furs. His chief secretary received a robe of honour (*hil'at*), a distinction which Ainslie believed never before to have been shown to an English ambassador. The following day Ainslie had a formal audience also with the Sultan.<sup>17</sup>

Sir Robert Ainslie had received his official instructions in London, on 17 April 1776, before he left for Istanbul. They consisted of eleven articles.

As the British interest in the Ottoman Empire was directed above all towards trade, the instructions dwell at some length on commercial matters. In the second article of the instructions reference is made to the "observance of the peace and correspondence towards our subjects in their trade, which is so beneficial to those parts above any nation."<sup>18</sup> Ainslie was urged therefore to act in the best and most effectual manner and to be firm and active in maintaining all the privileges given to British trade. Furthermore, he was to encourage the capitulations in favour of English commerce which already existed.<sup>19</sup>

Particular stress was laid on the relations between Ainslie and the merchants of the Levant Company. He was reminded that it was for their "Good and Benefit you are most especially to reside there."<sup>20</sup> He was not only to perform all good offices for the merchants, but also to do all in his power to ensure satisfaction to the Levant Company's merchants,<sup>21</sup> allowing them free access to his person.<sup>22</sup> Moreover on all occasions he was to make available to them both his own assistance and also that of the dragomans and of the other staff at the embassy.<sup>23</sup>

The instructions relating to trade dealt with the special problem of the English pirates in the Mediterranean. These pirates had caused numerous incidents disadvantageous to the Turks in the Levant. Owing to Turkish weakness at sea, Muslim mer-



chants, at times, entrusted their goods to British ships. Sir Robert Ainslie was instructed that, in respect of incidents caused by British pirates, the government at London declined to accept any responsibility whatsoever. None the less, the Crown declared its positive resolution and desire to preserve the ancient amity existing between the two courts.<sup>24</sup>

As to political affairs - not much was said about them in the instructions. Only two points were made. Firstly, the ambassador should strive to preserve peace; and, secondly, he was to endeavour to maintain good co-operation with those foreign ministers at Istanbul who were thought to be in some degree of friendship and understanding with Great Britain.<sup>25</sup>

Ainslie's instructions were, by and large, rather negative in character, bringing no new and specific changes in the general policy of the embassy. British policy in the Ottoman Empire at this time was based on the maintenance of the *status quo*, and in 1776 the affairs of the Ottoman Empire had no especial prominence in the eyes of the statesmen and politicians at London.

The good relations hitherto existing between the Porte and the British Government had been much weakened during the years of the Russo-Turkish war (1768-74). England had given assistance to the Russian fleet which in 1770 had sailed from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and which had, on 10 July 1770, burnt and destroyed the Ottoman fleet in the harbour of Çeşme, on the western coast of Asia Minor. The Turkish government believed that the aid which Britain had granted to the Russians was responsible in no small degree for the disaster which befell the Ottomans at Çeşme.<sup>26</sup> The attitude of the Porte therefore became rather cold and hostile towards Great Britain and towards her ambassador at Istanbul. Threats were indeed made against the factories of the Levant Company at Istanbul and Izmir and against British trade in general.<sup>27</sup> On several occasions the Porte indeed refused the offers of Great Britain to mediate between the Turks and Russians in the war then in progress.

Later, however, with the war running unfavourably to them, the Turks did turn to Britain for support. On coming to the throne, Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid I (1774-89) was eager to obtain



the mediation of Britain. No positive results emerged however, from this new climate at the Porte. The *Re'is Efendi*,<sup>28</sup> 'Abd-ul-rezzak Bahir, a person hostile to the British ambassador, was said to have informed the Sultan<sup>29</sup> in 1773 that the "English Ambassador will do nothing for the Porte."<sup>30</sup> The war between the Ottomans and the Russians was to end ultimately, in 1774, in the peace negotiated, without any foreign mediation, at Küçük Kaynarca.<sup>31</sup> The *Re'is Efendi*, 'Abd-ul-rezzak Bahir was deposed from his office almost a year after the departure from Istanbul on 25 May 1775 of the British ambassador, John Murray, in order to settle his personal affairs in England. Thus, at the moment when Ainslie assumed the office of ambassador at the Porte in 1776, there was an evident need for measures to restore good relations between the two empires and to end the coldness of the preceding years.

At the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-74, Catherine II had forced the Turks to sign the humiliating treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (21 July 1774). The Turks yielded to the Russians, for the first time, a permanent foothold on the shores of the Black Sea, though for the time being it was of limited extent. Again, for the first time, the Russians received the right to send their merchant ships freely into the Black Sea, which the Turks had closed, since the end of the sixteenth century, to all non-Muslims.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, she acquired the regions of the Kuban and the Terek, part of Azov and, in addition, the fortresses of Kerç and Yenikale in the Crimea.<sup>33</sup> Last but not least Russia was able, also for the first time, to impose on the Porte the idea of independence of the Crimea, the Sultan being allowed to retain over the Crimea only a supremacy in matters spiritual. This development was going to be an issue of the first importance in the years ahead. The treaty was ratified in 1775, but meanwhile tension was growing rapidly between the two courts. Dissensions increased rapidly also within the Crimea itself through the years 1775-79. Russia supported there a puppet Khan, Şahin Giray, while the Ottoman Porte favoured another claimant to the Khanate, Devlet Giray. Thanks to St. Priest, the French ambassador at Istanbul, who acted as a mediator between the two powers, Russia and the Porte entered into an agreement intended to bring the troubles in the Crimea to a close. This agreement was the Convention of Aynalıkavak concluded on 21 March 1779.



The main issue in dispute between Russian and the Porte was the status of the Crimea. All the foreign ministers at Istanbul concerned themselves with this problem, each minister responding to it in accordance with the particular interests of his own state in the Ottoman Empire: Austria and France, for example, desired to gain, like Russia, the right to send their ships into the Black Sea.

For Sir Robert Ainslie the situation was delicate and critical, as Britain had not, of late, shown much immediate interest in the political affairs of the Ottoman Empire. In the first general instructions given to Ainslie before he left London no mention at all was made of the critical situation developing between the Porte and Russia. Soon after his arrival at Istanbul, therefore, Ainslie sought from London new instructions for his guidance: "I should be very glad to receive Your Lordship's instructions how I ought to act... in the present reduced state of the Ottoman Empire."<sup>34</sup>

On 15 November 1776 the new *Re'is Efendi*, 'Atifzade Ömer tried through Pisani, the first dragoman of the British Embassy, to gain information as to Ainslie's views about the state of affairs in the Crimea. Ainslie did not hesitate to give his opinion and, next day, sent a verbal message to the *Re'is Efendi*, as from the minister of a power enjoying the closest amity with the Porte:

I sincerely regretted that any seeds of discontent should still exist... I did not see that the Porte had any reasonable prospect of bettering their situation by refusing to comply with their engagements, but on the contrary would expose themselves to great misfortunes, and perhaps to farther demands from Russia.

Ainslie therefore advised the *Re'is Efendi* "by all means to avoid Disputes and to execute the late Treaty in all its articles." The *Re'is Efendi* thanked Ainslie for his "very sincere and honest"<sup>35</sup> advice. The Porte approached Ainslie once more on 20 December 1776, when Great Britain was asked to lend to the Ottomans twelve ships of war, to be employed in protecting Muslim vessels in the Black Sea.<sup>36</sup> Ainslie resolved to refuse this request and, in order to explain his refusal and at the same time to underline to the Turks "the ridiculousness of the demand", lost no time in seeking an audience with the *Kapudan Paşa*,<sup>37</sup> Gazi Hasan, with whom he was on the best of terms.<sup>38</sup> In the course of the meeting



Ainslie, well inclined towards the Porte, insisted on the need to avoid a rupture with Russia and advised the Porte to execute the recent treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in all its articles. The *Kapudan Paşa* thanked Ainslie for his advice and asked him if he would set forth his opinion in writing. Ainslie agreed to do so. A copy of the statement that he wrote for the benefit of the *Kapudan Paşa* is extant, as an enclosure in a letter, dated 3 January 1777,<sup>39</sup> which Ainslie sent to the Secretary of State, Lord Weymouth,<sup>40</sup> at London. Ainslie underlined that the two essential articles of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca were the third, stipulating the independence of the Crimean Tatars, and the eleventh, granting Russia freedom of navigation in the Black Sea. Although admitting that the Tatars, by reason of their Muslim faith and their dynastic loyalties, showed great reluctance to accept the terms of the treaty, Ainslie none the less urged the Porte to avoid trouble with Russia. He compared the Ottoman Empire to a man strong indeed, but impaired by a long and dangerous illness. As long as Russian troops under the command of General Field-Marshal Rumyantsev,<sup>41</sup> occupied such fortresses as Kilburun, Yenikale and Kerç, it would be perilous for the Ottomans to provoke a new conflict over the Crimea, all the more since the Ottomans had to deal at the same time with friction along their frontier with Persia.<sup>42</sup>

The tension in the Crimea continued unabated in the spring of 1777. Ainslie was bound by advice which he had received earlier from London. Lord Weymouth then declared that<sup>43</sup>:

whatever Propositions may be made to Your Exc.<sup>y</sup> with Respect to a Mediation, you will receive and transmit to me; being careful not to express any opinion of the reception it may meet with here, nor giving any indication that you had anticipated the event and written on the subject.

In fact Ainslie at this time was to receive from the Ottomans no request for his mediation in the matter of the Crimea. And it is relevant to note that Weymouth, in his letter of 28 January 1777, reiterated the desire of the British government to retain "the strict"<sup>44</sup> relations with Russia. Ainslie no doubt was eager to make a good impression at the beginning of his career as ambassador;<sup>45</sup> but Weymouth did not want him to commit himself too far in writing. Replying to Ainslie in a letter dated 14 February 1777, Weymouth stated<sup>46</sup>:



Nothing can be more proper than Your endeavoring... to represent to the Ministers of the Ottoman Porte the propriety and expediency of their conforming with the utmost punctuality to the several articles of the Treaty concluded by that Power with the Court of Russia, but such opinions must be verbal, and I must recommend you not [to] deliver in writing any political opinion however well founded.

Thereafter Ainslie maintained a constant reserve in the expression of his political opinions to the ministers of the Porte; and his attitude was to remain unaltered until 1783 when Charles James Fox, desired him to advise the Turks to consent to the Russian annexation of the Crimea.<sup>47</sup> Now in 1777, Weymouth declined to send warships to the assistance of the Porte, realizing that, if he did so, he might injure the relations existing between England and Russia. In a letter dated 14 February 1777, Ainslie was told that "The friendship subsisting between this Court and that of Russia cannot admit His Majesty's lending twelve ships of war to the Ottoman Porte."<sup>48</sup>

Great Britain was at this time more concerned to maintain good relations with Russia than with the Porte. Her main interest in Russia was the lucrative trade in raw materials; much of the timber needed for the British navy came in fact from Russia. Furthermore, British merchants enjoyed a prosperous trade in Russia.<sup>49</sup> Britain's relations with the Ottoman Empire had also been based on commerce, but in the eighteenth century this commerce was not so flourishing as it had once been. Much of the Levant trade had passed into the hands of the French;<sup>50</sup> furthermore, the trade with India was now far more lucrative for Britain than the trade with the Ottoman Empire. It is understandable that Lord Suffolk, the Secretary of State for the north, should be seeking at this time to renew the commercial treaty negotiated between Britain and Russia in 1766. The British ambassador James Harris (1777-83), recently appointed to St. Petersburg, was seeking to achieve this purpose, and considerable funds had been made available to him as a means to influence important personages at the Russian Court.<sup>51</sup> Ainslie, too, had striven to obtain funds which he might use to mould opinion at the Porte, but his moves in this direction had met with no response from London. None the less he continued so far as he



was able, to improve and strengthen his personal influence with the more influential of the Ottoman dignitaries.

Meanwhile the tension between the Ottomans and the Russians over the future of the Crimea rapidly became more and more serious. In the winter of 1777-78 Russian troops entered the Crimea and raised their own nominee, Şahin Giray to be master of Bahçesaray.<sup>52</sup> Ainslie was careful to inform London in detail about the progress of events in the Crimea. On 3 March 1778 he wrote "I most earnestly entreat Your Lordship... to give me Directions how to act."<sup>53</sup> He received, however, no guidance beyond an exhortation not to commit himself in the quarrels then existing between the two courts of St. Petersburg and Istanbul.

It was France, not England, which at this juncture of affairs exerted an effective influence on the course of the Crimean dispute. The French Foreign Minister, Vergennes (1774-87), reluctant to see the Turks involved in another war with Russia which he was well aware might be disastrous for them, instructed the French ambassador at Istanbul, St. Priest, to persuade the Turks that their best course would be to recognize the independence of the Crimea; and in April 1779, as a result of the French mediation, the convention of Aynalıkavak was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.<sup>54</sup> Ainslie observed in a letter to London (17 March 1779) that<sup>55</sup>:

it must however be confessed that the Force of a French Mediation was well imagined to save the Dignity of the Porte in her present distressed situation... The [French] ambassador, My Lord, is a man of acknowledged abilities, and merit, who profits to the utmost of the favour he at the present enjoys at this Court.

The first phase in the dispute over the Crimea was now at an end; but a second phase would soon begin - and terminate only with the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 1783.

The convention of Aynalıkavak eased for a time the situation in the Crimea. The Tatar Khan Şahin Giray now sought to impose reforms within the khanate. The Porte, however, was still seeking to further its own interest in the Crimea, a purpose which it hoped to achieve by making Bahadur Giray, the brother



of Şahin, its own candidate for the office of Khan. Tension began to grow once more in the Crimea and reached crisis point by the year 1782. Catherine II, determined to counter the intrigues of the Porte, ordered her minister Potemkin to maintain Şahin Giray as Khan. It became, however, increasingly evident that Şahin Giray was no longer able to preserve order within the Crimea.<sup>56</sup> In order to secure Russia from outside interference while she prosecuted her ambitions at the expense of the Turks, Catherine negotiated a new *entente* with the Emperor Joseph II of Austria (May-June 1781).<sup>57</sup> This entente of 1781 included a scheme for the organization of the entire Balkan peninsula. According to this "Greek Project", Russia would acquire the Black Sea coastal area between the rivers Bug and Dniestr, including the fortress of Ochakov, which commanded the mouths of the two rivers. The next phase envisaged would be the freeing of Bessarabia, Moldavia and Wallachia from the Turks and their amalgamation as a new state, to be named "Dacia" - a state which should be independent of Russia but under the rule of a prince of the Orthodox faith. And finally, when the Turks were driven out of Europe, it was planned to revive the Byzantine Empire, with the Russian Grand Duke Constantine as emperor. Austria was to receive a part of Serbia including Belgrade, while Egypt and some other appropriate portion of the Ottoman Empire would be offered to France. In that plan there was mention neither of Britain nor of Spain.<sup>58</sup>

Great Britain was hoping at this time that it would be possible to renew once more her commercial agreement with Russia, which was due to expire in 1786. The British government was also seeking to hire Russian troops for use against the rebellious American colonists - a request which Catherine rejected. In January 1781 Britain suggested to Catherine that Russia might acquire Minorca in return for her mediation between England, France and Spain. The Tsarina was determined however to avoid all involvement in western Europe and refused to act as mediator. A visible coolness developed between Great Britain and Russia when, in December 1780, Catherine arranged the so-called "Armed Neutrality" directed against the rights of search which Great Britain claimed in relation to neutral shipping in time of war.<sup>59</sup>

In the summer of 1782 Russian troops entered the Crimea,



and on 15 November 1782 the Russian and Austrian dragomans at the Porte, in the name of their ambassadors, submitted joint memoranda to the Porte, in which three demands were presented to the Turks: that the navigation of the Black Sea be tolerated, that the Ottomans should refrain from intervening in the affairs of the Tatars, either secretly or openly and that the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia be treated in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca.<sup>60</sup>

The Porte had little hope of receiving foreign support in its desire to refuse these demands. Even France, from which the Turks hoped to obtain some positive help, did not feel able to assist the Porte: the finances of France had suffered badly from the war with Britain (1778-83), so that it was not until April 1782, when peace negotiations began in Paris to end the war between France and England, that the French thought the moment opportune to intervene once more in the Crimean imbroglio - i.e., to attempt to secure some concessions from Russia in favour of the Ottomans and then to persuade the Ottomans to accept the Russian demands.<sup>61</sup> The Turks, on the other hand, did not feel themselves strong enough to risk a new war with the Russians and sought to temporize, delaying an answer to the Russian demands.

On 28 November the *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan, in the name of the Sultan, invited Ainslie to a meeting and asked his opinion of the Crimean affair. Ainslie, having no new instructions from London, advised the Porte not to begin a new war with Russia.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Grantham, in a despatch dated 18 October 1782, had instructed Ainslie to act in a "perfect friendship with the Russian ambassador at Istanbul".<sup>63</sup> Ainslie was informed of the far-reaching nature of the Tsarina Catherine's ambitions and of her determination to realize them, even if it meant a new war with the Turks. Grantham also noted for Ainslie's benefit that the Emperor Joseph II was willing to assist Russia in these schemes of aggrandisement, expecting to win Bosnia as a reward.

In February 1783, Charles James Fox replaced Lord Grantham as Foreign Secretary. In spite of his radicalism in domestic affairs, Fox was "in foreign affairs a complete conservative".<sup>64</sup>



He was hostile to the Bourbon powers, and would have liked to create a great coalition of North-European states - Britain, Russia, Denmark and Prussia - against them. In his judgment, Russia, despite her territorial ambitions and her armed neutrality, was the most valuable and most natural of allies for Britain - and this view was shared by George III.<sup>65</sup> However, Fox sent no instructions to Ainslie on the Crimean question until September of 1783. Meanwhile, in April, Catherine II had announced to the whole world that she was annexing the Crimea to her empire.<sup>66</sup> Prince Potemkin, in the name of the Tsarina, assumed control forthwith of the Crimea and also of the Kuban and of the isle of Tamam, thus confronting the Porte with a *fait accompli*. Russia, with the annexation now complete, hoped that the Porte would soon accept the change. But the Porte was slow and hesitant in its answer. On 30 July 1783, the *divan* refused to recognize the Russian annexation of the Crimea, for the Ottomans feared that her absolute possession of the Crimea would give to Russia a dominant position - a position so dangerous that it might even threaten Istanbul itself and the continued existence of Ottoman rule - in the European lands. The Porte now resolved therefore to make preparations for a possible recurrence of war.<sup>67</sup> However, the Grand Vizir Halil Hamid Paşa did not want a new conflict with the Russians and sought to secure foreign intervention in the crisis. On 10 October 1783 he asked Stefano Pisani, Ainslie's dragoman, to tell his ambassador that the Porte wished Great Britain to use her good offices and to engage Russia "to adopt sentiments of moderation, the only means of preventing a destructive war".<sup>68</sup> The Grand Vizir added that he trusted Ainslie would communicate to London as quickly as possible this desire of the Porte for the good offices of Great Britain.<sup>69</sup> Ainslie, having at this time no idea as to what the precise attitude of his government might be, was unable to make any positive response. In the meantime, on 21 September 1783, Fox had in fact written to Ainslie urging him to use the whole weight of British influence at Istanbul to dissuade the Porte from offering resistance to Russia.<sup>70</sup> Fox emphasized his belief that, should the Ottomans consent to accept the recent course of events in the Kuban, the Crimea and the isle of Taman, Russia would then adhere scrupulously to all the other provisions of the Küçük Kaynarca settlement of 1774. Pointing out the military weakness of the



Porte in relation to Russia, Fox ordered Ainslie to make strong representations about the danger, for the Turks, of a new outbreak of hostilities. Ainslie was to co-operate with those Christian ambassadors at Istanbul who favoured the cause of peace. It was at the express wish of the Russian court, Fox now informed Ainslie, that Great Britain sought to dissuade the Turks from embarking upon a new war. Fox noted, moreover, that he had made contact with the French ambassador in London, in the hope that the French court might be induced to support the preservation of peace. Above all, Ainslie was to keep two things in mind: first, he was to offer his own observations to the Turks "in the style of friendly advice, and not so as to commit his Majesty or the Nation to take any part either on one side or the other in case of a rupture"; and second, "that everything we do is with the knowledge and privity of the Empress of Russia and agreeable to her desire".<sup>71</sup> These instructions from Fox reached Istanbul on 18 October 1783. Ainslie, having consulted the Russian ambassador, Bulgakow lost no time in seeking an audience at the Porte. On 23 October 1783 a meeting took place at Scutari with the *Re'is Efendi* Mustafa (in office 1783-84), the *Defterdar*,<sup>72</sup> Feyzi Efendi (1782-84), and a dragoman of the Porte.<sup>73</sup> Ainslie told the Ottoman dignitaries that his earlier lack of precise instructions had arisen from the previous unawareness at London of the views of the other European powers over the Crimean question. Now, however, he was authorized to offer to the Porte his good offices, urging that if the Porte consented to the cession of the Crimea, the Kuban and the island of Taman, Russia would maintain scrupulously the stipulations of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. Ainslie urged the Porte to accept the *fait accompli*, as these territories were already effectively in the possession of Russia.<sup>74</sup> Nothing was determined at this meeting, although the ministers of the Porte seemed inclined to accept Ainslie's advice. Ainslie was told that he would receive a formal answer after the Grand Vizir had been consulted about the matter. On 25 October the Grand Vizir summoned Ainslie's dragoman, Stefano Pisani. The Grand Vizir thanked Ainslie for his friendly intervention, informing Pisani that he was in agreement with Ainslie's view that the Tatar provinces had indeed been irrevocably lost as a consequence of the Küçük Kaynarca settlement in 1774. Halil Hamid now expressed,



however, a desire to see France invited to take part with Great Britain in a joint mediation between the Porte and Russia.<sup>75</sup>

On 29 October 1783, the Grand Vizir, through Ainslie's dragoman Pisani, invited the ambassador to yet another conference.<sup>76</sup> He intimated to Ainslie that he was ready to make concessions to the Russians, and once more conveyed to Ainslie his gratitude for Great Britain's friendly concern.<sup>77</sup> On the following day, 30 October, Ainslie and Pisani met the Turkish ministers at the palace of Aynalıkavak, the Porte being represented at this meeting by the *Kapudan Paşa*, Gazi Hasan, the *Re'is Efendi*, Mustafa, and the *Beglikçi*.<sup>78</sup> Ainslie opened the meeting, once more offering to the Ottoman dignitaries the good offices which he had proposed in the meeting of 23 October. He again urged the Porte to consent to the Russian annexation of the Crimea, the Kuban and the island of Taman. At this point the *Kapudan Paşa* intervened, declaring to Ainslie that the Porte desired to end the Crimean problem and to secure a durable peace, and arguing that France and Britain should join together and offer their mediation. Ainslie told the Paşa that he was not authorized to discuss a possible mediation of France and Great Britain. He repeated, however, his earlier view of the matter and emphasized how imprudent it would be for the Porte to risk a further war with Russia, as the military situation of the Ottoman Empire was not strong enough for any such enterprise.<sup>79</sup> The *Kapudan Paşa* now reiterated his desire for a joint mediation of France and Great Britain - a desire which also found favour with the *Beglikçi*. With this, the meeting came to an end. On the following day, 31 October, Pisani was informed that the Porte was indeed desirous to avoid war; that it had the fullest confidence in the friendly disposition of Great Britain; and that it was disposed to accept whatever arrangement might be proposed by the king of England relative to the Crimea.<sup>80</sup>

Meanwhile Vergennes, the French Foreign Minister (1774-87), working through his ambassador at London, d'Adhemar, had persuaded Fox to instruct Ainslie that he should act in close co-operation with St. Priest, the French ambassador at Istanbul, in order to induce the Turks to accept the annexation of the Crimea.<sup>81</sup> Fox was agreeable and on 22 October 1783, wrote to Ainslie, ordering him to take this course:<sup>82</sup> "His Majesty's Plea-



sure is that you should communicate to the French ambassador at Constantinople the tenour of your instructions." Ainslie was admonished, however, to bear in mind that <sup>83</sup>:

you are to act in perfect confidence with M. Bulgakow, and you are not to encourage any ideas which the French Ambassador may start of a modification of the Empress's possession of the Kuban the Crimea or the Isle of Taman.

Ainslie received these instructions from Fox on 8 November 1783, and at once made contact with St. Priest and Bulgakow.<sup>84</sup> The French ambassador had also received from Paris instruction to the same purpose: "l'Angleterre ayant rompu la glace à cet égard; Je ne suis nullement embarrassé de partager son intervention dans cette besogne".<sup>85</sup> On 13 November Ainslie and St. Priest met at the British Embassy, and St. Priest promised to support Ainslie at the Porte. He proposed also that the Porte should be persuaded to ask Russia to allow the selection, as Khan, of "un homme de paille qui n'auroit de cette dignité que le titre"<sup>86</sup>, this personage to be chosen from amongst the Muslim subjects of the Tsarina. Ainslie opposed this proposal, since he had been instructed not to enter into far-reaching negotiations relating to the Crimea. He told St. Priest that delay might increase the danger of a rupture inconsistent with the intentions of their respective courts and with the interests of the Ottoman Empire. He also underlined that there was no use in encouraging the Turks to seek for better terms.<sup>87</sup> On the following day, 14 November 1783, St. Priest declared his readiness to agree with Ainslie's views and assured him that he would use his influence in the strongest manner at the Porte, in order to persuade the Turks to accept the loss of the Crimean territories. St. Priest even told Ainslie that in order to strengthen his arguments with the Turkish ministers he would submit to the Porte a document, "Le Tableau de l'Empire Ottoman" which had been sent to him from Paris.<sup>88</sup>

On 21 November 1783 the Russian ambassador at Istanbul, Bulgakow, in a meeting with the Turkish ministers, asked the Porte to consent to the Russian annexation of the Crimea. Bulgakow declared that the French and British ambassadors were not acting as mediators, but were offering their friendly good offices to Russia and the Porte in order to end the dispute bet-



ween them. The Porte, after this meeting, sought support once more from St. Priest and Ainslie for a modification of Bulgakow's demands. Both ambassadors urged the Porte to give a positive reply to Bulgakow as soon as possible.<sup>89</sup> On 6 December Ainslie had another meeting with the Kapudan Paşa, Hasan at which the Kapudan suggested that Great Britain and France should guarantee "the reciprocal Engagements"<sup>90</sup> between Russia and the Porte. Ainslie objected strongly that "the idea of Mediation was novel, and that His Majesty's intervention had never extended further than to give this [i.e., the Ottoman] court his friendly advice, in order to prevent their running headlong to ruin."<sup>91</sup> Ainslie recommended that the Porte "as the best, and most dignified Policy [should] do with a good grace what could not possibly be avoided."<sup>92</sup> As to the position of the Tatars, Ainslie emphasized that they existed "no more as a Nation."<sup>93</sup> The Porte, despite the opposition of the 'ulema,<sup>94</sup> would now accept the loss of the Crimea and that the dispute between Russia and the Porte would soon come to an end - all the more since the Grand Vizir Halil Hamid and the *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan continued to be of the opinion that war had to be avoided with Russia. On 14 December Bulgakow was invited to meet the Ottoman dignitaries on the following day. The Porte was represented by the *Kapudan Paşa* Hasan, the *Re'is Efendi*, Hacı Mustafa and Ahmed 'Azmi Efendi, an important member of the 'ulema. The *Kapudan Paşa* opened the meeting by declaring that the Porte was ready to adopt a pacific policy, provided the Russian demands were found to be consistent with the dignity and safety of the Ottoman Empire. The *Paşa* once more insisted on British and French mediation and attributed the Ottoman delay in answering the Russian demands to the desire of the Porte to obtain a decision on this mediation from the governments at London and Versailles.<sup>95</sup> Bulgakow, though appreciating the good and friendly offices of these courts, refused emphatically to envisage a formal mediation by Britain and France, telling the Ottoman ministers that his court was determined not to accept a foreign mediation.<sup>96</sup> Ainslie and St. Priest now sent verbal messages to the Grand Vizir, informing him that they had no expectation of receiving instructions from London and Versailles to offer an official mediation and guarantees to the Porte.<sup>97</sup> On the contrary, both ambassadors once more urged the Porte to terminate the dispute



with Russia as soon as possible. Meanwhile the Austrian inter-nuncio, too, recommended the Ottoman government to follow this course.

A *müşavere*<sup>98</sup> held at the Porte on 18 December 1783 discussed in great detail the Russian demands as well as the French and British ambassadors' friendly advice that the Porte should consent to the annexation of the Crimea by Russia. The Grand Vizir, Halil Hamid Paşa, opened the meeting and assured the Ottoman dignitaries that no one would be blamed for his opinion, whatever he said.<sup>99</sup> Yet the dignitaries fell into a curious silence and none of them uttered a word. The Vizir and the *Şeyh-ul-islâm*,<sup>100</sup> Mehmed Ata'u'llâh Efendi asked the dignitaries to speak out and reveal their opinions.<sup>101</sup> At last, the dignitaries present at the meeting began to give their views. Almost all of them suggested that Britain and France be invited again to mediate.<sup>102</sup> The *Kapudan* replied that the Russian ambassador showed no great enthusiasm to accept the good offices of France and Great Britain, let alone a formal mediation.<sup>103</sup> The 'ulema, on grounds of religion and of the interests of the Tatars, at first opposed strenuously all concessions threatening the safety of the Ottoman Empire. The *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan told them frankly that the military and financial situation of the empire did not permit of effective resistance to Russia - an opinion which, contrary to the general expectation, was supported by the *Cebecibaşı*.<sup>104</sup> The *Kapudan Paşa* told the dignitaries about his meeting with Ainslie on 2 December. None the less, after a long debate, the meeting came to an end, with no positive answer formulated for transmission to the Russian ambassador.

On the next day, 19 December, a message was sent to Ainslie, inviting him, in the name of Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid, to discuss the situation yet again with the *Kapudan*, Hasan.<sup>105</sup> Ainslie, desirous as ever to see the dispute ended, met the *Kapudan* at *Ok Meydanı*, the Sultan's summer palace, on 20 December 1783. The *Kapudan Paşa* had been instructed to consult Ainslie as to whether the Sultan might trust the Russians to respect sincerely the terms of an agreement about the Crimea. The *Paşa* added that the Sultan, the Grand Vizir and most of the Ottoman dignitaries, including the chiefs of the military corps and even the principal members of the 'ulema, were in favour of peace.<sup>106</sup>



Ainslie told the *Paşa* that, "upon my word of honour, as His Majesty's Ambassador, and as his Friend", he saw no danger in the acceptance of the Russian demands, asserting that compliance with the demands of Russia was "suitable to the real interests of the Porte".<sup>107</sup> Ainslie underlined, however, that <sup>108</sup>

I did not pretend to be a Prophet, nor to make myself any ways responsible for future events, which might in process of time be produced by numberless causes... but answered [the] question... as a Man of honour, sincerely desirous to co-operate in the salutary work of conciliation, and Peace, most cordially recommended by my Royal Master, as absolutely necessary for the good

of the Ottoman Empire. On the following day, 21 December, Ainslie learnt from the *Beglikçi* that the *divan* was most persistently and earnestly bent on securing the necessary approbation of the 'ulema to the measures which they wished to enforce and that nothing could now defeat the peaceful intentions of the *divan*.<sup>109</sup>

By the beginning of the new year the Turks, "weak, isolated, and bewildered",<sup>110</sup> yielded to necessity and recognized the annexation of the Crimea in a formal agreement concluded with Russia on 8 January 1784.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, see, Sir Robert Ainslie.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Debrett, *Baronetage of England*, ii (London, 1808) pp. 986-7.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Rochford to George III, 8 June 1773 in *The Correspondence of George III (1768-1773)*, ed. Sir J. Fortescue, II (London, 1927), letter no. 1266, pp. 496-7.

<sup>4</sup> J. P. Wood, *The Ancient and Modern State of Parish of Cramond* (London, 1794), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., for example, D. B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service 1689-1789* (Oxford, 1961), p. 275, where the author notes that a number of diplomats and consuls owed ambassadorial appointments to their success as agents of the government at London.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *D. N. B.*, see, Ainslie.

<sup>7</sup> Murray to Rochford, P. R. O., S. P. 97/51, no. 8, 18 April 1775; cf. Rochford to Hayes, no. 1, 11 July 1775.

<sup>8</sup> Rochford to Hayes, P. R. O., S. P. 97/51, 15 September 1775.

<sup>9</sup> *London Gazette*, 20 September 1775.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Levant Company to Hayes, P. R. O., S. P. 105/120, London, 31 October 1775.

<sup>12</sup> Levant Company to Hayes, P. R. O., S. P. 105/120, 25 June 1776.

<sup>13</sup> Hayes to Lord Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, 3 October 1776.



- 14 Weymouth to Ainslie, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, 17 April 1776 (instructions to Ainslie, article 1).
- 15 It was the Ottoman usage to postpone all diplomatic ceremonies during the observance of the chief religious festivals of Islam.
- 16 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, no. 5, 3 December 1776. See appendix I.
- 17 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, no. 5, 3 December 1776.
- 18 Weymouth to Ainslie, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, 17 April 1776, (instructions to Ainslie, article 2).
- 19 *ibid.*, article 5.
- 20 *ibid.*, article 5.
- 21 *ibid.*, article 10.
- 22 *ibid.*, article 11.
- 23 *ibid.*, articles 7 and 11.
- 24 *ibid.*, article 9. Ainslie also discusses this matter in his despatches later on. See, for example, Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/55, 18 October 1779; Ainslie to Hillsborough, F. O. 78/1, 17 February 1780, 1 July 1780, 17 July 1780, 17 August 1780, and see also A. C. Wood, *A History of Levant Company* (London, 1964), p. 148.
- 25 Instructions to Ainslie, articles 3 and 4.
- 26 See, M. S. Anderson, "Great Britain and the Russian Fleet 1769-70." in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, XXXI (1952), pp. 148-63: idem, "Great Britain and the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774." in *The English Historical Review*, LXIX (1954), pp. 38-58; Şehabettin Tekindağ, in *IA*, see "Çeşme"; I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/I (Ankara, 1956), p. 401.
- 27 Hayes to Rochford, P. R. O., S. P. 97/51, 30 October 1775.
- 28 See glossary.
- 29 Mustafa III (1757-1774).
- 30 Murray to Rochford, P. R. O., S. P. 97/49, no. 4, 17 February 1773.
- 31 The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was concluded on 21 July 1774; see, G. E. Noradounghian, *Recueil d'Actes Internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, I (Paris 1897), pp. 319-34 and M. S. Anderson, *The Great Powers and the Near East, 1774-1923: Documents of Modern History* (London, 1970), pp. 9-14.
- 32 Cf. C. M. Kortepeter "The Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the XVIIIth century" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXXVI (April - June 1966), pp. 86-113.
- 33 Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, IV/I, pp. 422-5; M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, 1966), pp. XI-XII; A. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772-1783* (London, 1970), pp. 51-7.
- 34 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, no. 3, 17 October 1776.
- 35 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/52, no. 4, 18 November 1776.
- 36 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/53, no. 1, 3 January 1777.
- 37 See glossary.
- 38 Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/53, no. 1, 3 January 1777.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 See appendix II.
- 41 Rumyantsev, Petr Aleksandrovich, Count (1725-1796) the leading Russian



general in the 1768-74 war with the Turks.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, IV/I, pp. 458-514.

<sup>43</sup> Weymouth to Ainslie, P. R. O., S. P. 97/53, 28 January 1777.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Cf., for example, a remark of Ainslie in a later despatch dated 3 April 1777, requested Lord Weymouth that "Your Lordship will not refuse me some degree of indulgence at my outset, in a residence, where the modes of transacting Bussiness so widely differ from those of any other Court."

<sup>46</sup> Weymouth to Ainslie, P. R. O., S. P. 97/53, no. 2, 14 February 1777.

<sup>47</sup> See below, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Weymouth to Ainslie, P. R. O., S.P. 97/53, no. 2, 14 February 1777.

<sup>49</sup> Isabel de Madariaga, *Britain, Russia and the Armed Neutrality of 1780* (London, 1962), p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 32; Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Madariaga, "The Use of British Secret Funds at St. Petersburg, 1777 - 1782", in *The Slavonic Review*, XXXII (1953-54), pp. 464-74.

<sup>52</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, I (Istanbul, 1308/1890), p. 150; A. Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-9.

<sup>53</sup> Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/54, no. 5, 3 March 1778.

<sup>54</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ainslie to Weymouth, P. R. O., S. P. 97/55, no. 6, 17 March 1779.

<sup>56</sup> Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-27.

<sup>57</sup> I. de Madariaga, "The Secret Austrian-Russian Treaty of 1781" in *S. E. R.*, XXXII (London, 1954), pp. 464-74; M. S. Anderson, "European Diplomatic Relations, 1763-1790" in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VIII (London, 1968), pp. 270-72; I. Young, "Russia" in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VIII (London, 1968), pp. 326-7.

<sup>58</sup> Young, *loc. cit.*, p. 327.

<sup>59</sup> Madariaga, *The Armed Neutrality*, pp. 9-10; see also *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VIII (London, 1968), pp. 266; 326.

<sup>60</sup> R. Salomon, *La Politique Orientale de Vergennes, 1780-1784* (Paris, 1935), pp. 128-33; see also Ainslie to Grantham, P. R. O., F. O. 78/3, no. 32, 24 December 1782.

<sup>61</sup> M. S. Anderson, "The Great Powers and the Annexation of the Crimea, 1783-84", in *S. E. R.*, XXXVII (1958-1959), pp. 17-41.

<sup>62</sup> Ainslie to Grantham, P. R. O., F. O. 78/3, no. 31, 10 December 1782.

<sup>63</sup> Grantham to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/3, no. 4, 18 October 1782.

<sup>64</sup> Anderson, "The Great Powers and the Annexation of the Crimea, 1783-84", in *S. E. R.*, XXXVII (1958-1959), p. 25.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>66</sup> Salomon, *op. cit.*, 165-70.

<sup>67</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P.R.O., F. O. 78/4, no. 16, 9 August 1783.

<sup>68</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 20, 10 October 1783.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Fox to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 9, 21 September 1783.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> See glossary.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Précis de la déclaration rendue par l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre aux minis-



- tres de la Sublime Porte Ottomane, dans la conférence qui a eu lieu le 23 d'Octobre 1783, can be found in P. R. O., F. O. 78/4.
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid.*; Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 21, 24 October 1783.
- <sup>75</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 22, 25 October 1783.
- <sup>76</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 23, 2 November 1783.
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>79</sup> Précis de la conférence à Ainali Cavac, que S. E. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre a eu le 30 Octobre 1783, can be found in P. R. O., F. O. 78/4; see also, Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 23, 2 November 1783.
- <sup>80</sup> Cf. "Litteral translation of a report given in by Stephano Pisani dated 31 October 1783" to be found in P. R. O., F. O. 78/4.
- <sup>81</sup> Anderson, *The Great Powers and the Annexation of the Crimea, 1783-84*, in *S. E. R.*, XXXVII (1958-1959), pp. 26-8.
- <sup>82</sup> Fox to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 12, 12 October 1783.
- <sup>83</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 24, 10 November 1783.
- <sup>85</sup> St. Priest to Vergennes, C. P. T., 169 (1783), no. 27, 31 October 1783.
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*; see also no. 29, 19 November 1783.
- <sup>87</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 25, 22 November 1783.
- <sup>88</sup> *ibid.*; of. St. Priest to Vergennes, C. P. T., 169 (1783), no. 27, 31 October 1783.
- <sup>89</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 27, 10 December 1783.
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*; cf. Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, III, pp. 38-9.
- <sup>91</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O., 78/4, no. 27, 10 December 1783.
- <sup>92</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>94</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>95</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 28, 24 December 1783; cf. Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, III, pp. 26-7.
- <sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 26-7
- <sup>97</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 28, 24 December 1783; see also, St. Priest to Vergennes, C. P. T., 169 (1783), no. 33, 24 December 1783.
- <sup>98</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>99</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, III, p. 34; cf. I. H. Uzunçarşılı, "Sadrazam Halil Hamid Paşa", in *"Türkiyat Mecmu'ası"*, V (1935), p. 229.
- <sup>100</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>101</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, III, pp. 37-8, 40.
- <sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 39-47.
- <sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 38-9.
- <sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42; for the term, see glossary.
- <sup>105</sup> Ainslie to Fox, P. R. O., F. O. 78/4, no. 28, 24 December 1783.
- <sup>106</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>107</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>108</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>109</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>110</sup> Anderson, *The Great Powers and the Annexation of the Crimea, 1783-84*, in *S. E. R.*, XXXVII (1958-1959), p. 18.







## CHAPTER II

### The Outbreak of the Russo - Turkish War 1787

After the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, which brought to an end the war between France and Great Britain, the balance of power in Europe was greatly altered. France, Spain and Austria appeared to stand "in alliance" with one another. Holland tended now to move in the same orbit. Great Britain and Prussia found themselves now in isolation.<sup>1</sup>

In 1784, the rivalry between Fox and Pitt ended in the latter's victory. Henceforth, Britain was to have an administration more stable than she had known since the days of Walpole.<sup>2</sup>

During the early years of the new government, peace abroad was an ever present concern of Pitt and his colleagues. The fact was that the Prime Minister aimed above all at success in domestic affairs. The Irish problem, the national debt and naval affairs occupied Pitt's mind more than the problem of foreign relations. Not that he eschewed all interest in foreign policy. On the contrary, he maintained a close contact with Lord Carmarthen, the Foreign Secretary.<sup>3</sup> During his first years in power Pitt was rather cautious and reserved towards continental involvement. As his biographer Holland Rose has pointed out, Pitt's attitude towards foreign affairs was to "wait until the horizon cleared".<sup>4</sup> Pitt declared on one occasion: "Till I see this contry in a situation more respectable as to the Army, Navy and Finance, I cannot think anything that may draw us into troubled waters either safe or rational".<sup>5</sup> Pitt was no advocate of isolation. Indeed he wished to emerge from it as soon as he could and searched



for the means to do so, though very cautiously.<sup>6</sup> He hoped that, if he could range Great Britain with Austria, he might also gain the approval of Russia, for the simple reason that Russia had been in alliance with Austria since 1781. The Emperor Joseph II, however, was little inclined to accept a close connection with Great Britain. He believed that since the American War of Independence Britain had lost her influence everywhere and had fallen into the status of a second-rate power. Moreover, Austria's dislike of the activities of George III as Elector of Hanover made it difficult for Great Britain to win the confidence of Austria.<sup>7</sup> Russia, too did not approve of George III's attitude towards German affairs. And, over and above these considerations, the main interest of both Russia and Austria was directed not to the West, but to the Ottoman Empire. The ambitions of Joseph II and Catherine II to win new territories at the expense of the Turks dominated their outlook. The two empires preferred therefore to view the approaches of Great Britain with considerable reserve.<sup>8</sup> Catherine II would have liked to receive from Britain an evident readiness to acquiesce in her ambitions against the Ottoman Empire - a readiness more discernible perhaps in the attitude of Fox at the time of the annexation of the Crimea in 1783 than in the attitude of Pitt during his first years of office after 1784. Neither Pitt nor the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carmarthen, seemed prepared to do more than talk in terms of the continuance of the amicable relations which had existed between Russia and Great Britain during the recent years. Vague protestations of goodwill meant little to the Tsarina. She declined to renew the Anglo-Russian commercial agreement concluded in 1766 and due for renewal in 1786 - and now made a commercial treaty with France, giving to the French the status of most-favoured nation.<sup>9</sup>

Prussia, like Great Britain, was also in a state of isolation in Europe. The death of Frederick II, however, in 1786, and the situation developing in Holland created an opportunity for both powers to end their isolation. Pitt, in particular, viewed with suspicion the growth of French influence in the United Provinces. He feared that co-operation between the Dutch and the French East India Companies might prove dangerous to the interests of Great Britain in India.<sup>10</sup> Holland itself was beset



during these years with the tensions arising from the conflict between the so-called "Patriots" and the supporters of the Stadtholders. France supported the former, Great Britain and Prussia tended to favour the latter. In September 1787, when the "Patriot" faction arrested the queen of Holland, Great Britain and Prussia used their joint influence in her support - and warned France not to intervene on behalf of the "Patriots".<sup>11</sup> The outbreak of a new war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in August 1787 made the French reluctant to embroil themselves too deeply in Dutch affairs. In these circumstances it is not surprising that British and Prussian influence was now much strengthened in the United Provinces - to such a degree indeed that in August 1788 Great Britain, Prussia and Holland entered into a 'Triple Alliance'. This alliance brought to an end the isolation of England and Prussia in European affairs - and also initiated an era of good relations between the two powers.<sup>12</sup>

In 1783, through the good offices of the French and British ambassadors at Istanbul, the long conflict between Russia and the Turks ended with the Russian annexation of the Crimea. The Tsarina and Prince Potemkin, now in charge of the provinces of southern Russia, felt the need to develop new military and naval bases in the territories of the former Khanate. Kherson, situated on the Dniepr, became in 1783-84 the site of a Russian naval base. In 1784 Potemkin built a great fortress at Sebastopol. Two years later, in 1786, he ordered the construction of a new town, Ekaterinoslav, on the right bank of the Dniepr. At the same time he encouraged foreign merchants to settle in the Crimea and engage in trade.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, a far different 'climate of opinion' was discernible in government circles at Istanbul. The Ottomans found it difficult to accept the loss of the Crimea to the Russians. The Grand Vizir, Halil Hamid Paşa, with the help of St. Priest, the French ambassador, initiated a programme of reforms. His main aim was to modernize the Ottoman armed forces and, in order to achieve this end, he now established schools both for the army and for the navy. French army officers, teachers and engineers came now in considerable numbers to Istanbul. With their assistance the Ottomans began to repair and renovate their fortresses along the border with Russia.<sup>14</sup> Halil Hamid Paşa found, however,



little effective encouragement in his reforming activities at the Porte. The Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid I (1774-89) showed no great inclination to co-operate with the Grand Vizir, indeed he began to suspect that Halil Hamid might be preparing to dethrone him in favour of his nephew, the future Selim III. At the Porte, the dignitaries hostile to Halil Hamid - notable amongst them being the well-known *Kapudan Paşa*, Cezayirli Hasan - strove to incite 'Abd-ul-hamid against Halil Hamid. And with success, for in March 1785 Halil Hamid was deposed from the Grand Vizirate and soon after strangled at Bozcaada, near İstanbul.<sup>15</sup> These intrigues around the throne hindered the fulfilment of the reform programme envisaged by Halil Hamid and boded ill for the Turks, should a new crisis arise between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

The next Grand Vizir Hazinedar Şahin 'Ali Paşa held office for only a short time (March 1785 - January 1786). Now, the Grand Vizirate went to a man who was in fact the creature of Cezayirli Hasan - i.e., to Koca Yusuf Paşa, Grand Vizir during the years 1786-89. It was during his administration that the new tensions already discernible between the Russians and the Turks began to assume serious proportions. Almost all the foreign ambassadors then at the Porte - and also the Turkish historians of this time - agree that Yusuf Paşa lacked the abilities required to govern the empire at a moment of developing crisis. The Grand Vizir was ill-informed about the political realities now confronting the Ottoman Empire and ill-equipped to meet these realities. Yusuf Paşa was fated soon to lead the Turks most ill-advisedly into a new war with the formidable power of Russia.

The government at St. Petersburg, in pursuit of its expansionist aims, had begun to intervene in the affairs of Georgia, a land where both the Russians and the Turks sought to establish spheres of influence advantageous to their respective interests. At this time (1785) Russia extended her "protection" over the King Erekle, then ruling a group of Georgians located in the region of K'art'lo-Kakhet'i. The Ottomans, for their part, gave their "protection" to another Georgian ruler in control of Akhaltsikhe, a certain Süleyman Paşa.<sup>16</sup> This opposition between Russia and the Ottoman Empire assumed in the course of 1785-86 a more ominous character, Russian troops entered Georgia, threatening



the Lezghis of Daghestan and the Khans of Tiflis.<sup>17</sup> Tatar elements which had fled from the Crimea and the Kuban after 1783 also harassed the Russians in Georgia and the adjacent territories, often with the encouragement of the Porte, which was ever mindful that under article 23 of the peace of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) all Georgians had been defined as being under the protection of the Turks, and resentful therefore of the new Russian intervention in that area. The Tsarina Catherine was reluctant to accept that this article should continue in force.

In October 1784 the Russian Foreign Minister, Bezberodko, wrote to Bulgakow, the Russian ambassador at Istanbul, urging him to endeavour to render the clause ineffective - to correct it "not indeed on paper, but de fait".<sup>18</sup> Bulgakow, though he realized full well that the clause, as formulated in 1774, was quite clear, protested to the Porte on several occasions against the intrusions of Süleyman Paşa of Akhaltsikhe into the Georgian territories of K'art 'lo-Kakhet'i, at that time under the protection of Russia.<sup>19</sup> At this time Bulgakow was seeking to take advantage of that clause in the Küçük Kaynarca settlement which gave Russia the right to establish consulates in the Ottoman Empire. Russia was eager now to appoint a consul at Varna.<sup>20</sup> The Russian ambassador failed to obtain a definite response to his complaints about the situation in Georgia and to his representations about Varna. In May 1786 we find him submitting a memorial<sup>21</sup> to the Porte, demanding, *inter alia*, that the Ottoman government should restrain Süleyman Paşa, whose activities continued to disturb the frontiers of the protectorate of K'art 'lo-Kakhet'i in Georgia. The Porte, in a reply dated 14 July 1786,<sup>22</sup> denied the Russian accusations, charging the Russians with violation of Ottoman territory. Bulgakow, wearied of Ottoman procrastination, advised the Tsarina to make a more forceful approach to the Porte, in an effort to overcome the stubbornness of the Turks. He also requested that the Tsarina assign to him full powers, which would allow him to adopt a more resolute attitude towards the Ottoman dignitaries at the Porte.<sup>23</sup> Catherine at once complied with Bulgakow's request, informing him, however, that "our sincere desire is not to let matters reach breaking point, unless there is need".<sup>24</sup> The Ottoman dignitaries, confronted now with more insistent demands from Bulgakow, again took refuge in



procrastination, being reluctant to bear the burden of a concrete decision in this matter.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, as the tension became more and more evident, the Ottoman ministers began to consider, with a sense of urgency unfelt heretofore whether or not one or other of the European states, perhaps Great Britain,<sup>26</sup> might be induced to resume a role of mediation in the disagreement between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.

The general attitude of the government in London has shown, as yet, little change from that of the preceding years. Ainslie - given thus far no definite instructions from London as to the course he should follow in relation to the growing tension between the Ottoman Empire and Russia - was inclined to believe that it would be "prudent to remain perfectly quiet"<sup>27</sup> and that "no favourable circumstance [could] intervene to save"<sup>28</sup> the Ottomans.

His own position at the Porte had been much improved with the passing of the years, not least because of his role, limited though it was, in the matter of the Crimea. As the relations of the Ottoman Empire with Russia became more and more strained, the Turkish dignitaries began to turn to Ainslie in the hope of securing through him an effective measure of support from Great Britain. The ministers at the Porte, from the beginning of 1786, made several attempts to win Ainslie to their side. One motive behind their approaches to Ainslie was, no doubt, their apprehension that another Russian naval squadron might - with the good offices of England - penetrate into the Mediterranean, as had occurred before during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-74 - an apprehension which remained alive on the eve of the new war about to begin in 1787.

On 31 January 1786 the *Kapudan*, Hasan Paşa, invited Ainslie to visit him at the *Tersane* (Arsenal) in Istanbul. Assuring Ainslie that the Sultan had been most content with the good advice that he had offered at the time of the annexation of the Crimea, Hasan Paşa requested that the ambassador offer his opinion on the general situation of the Ottoman Empire at this time - for example, on affairs in Georgia, on the condition of Egypt, and on the border difficulties with Venice in the region of Albania. Ainslie declined, however, to commit himself, in the



sense of giving definite counsel on questions which, as of this moment, he regarded as matters "internal to the Ottoman government".<sup>29</sup> Ainslie was later summoned to audience with the new Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa. The Vizir greeted him cordially, assuring him of his best office in relation to the concerns of the British merchants trading in Ottoman territories and of his own reliance on the amicable disposition of the British government.<sup>30</sup>

Ainslie once more avoided any particular involvement with the Ottomans. Writing to London, he did, however, express his view that "unless the Porte was prepared to make concessions to Russia",<sup>31</sup> it would find it difficult to overcome the present irritations which divided the courts of Istanbul and St. Petersburg. Ainslie also recommended to the Foreign Office in London that the best course would be "to remain quiet",<sup>32</sup> at least for the time being. The Ottoman dignitaries continued, however, to press for a closer understanding with Great Britain. On 13 April 1786 Ainslie was invited to meet Yusuf Paşa at the latter's "country house".<sup>33</sup> The Paşa urged the ambassador to "recollect his constant Friendship for me, and the open preference he had always given to the Interests of His Majesty's Subjects over all others" and "particularly in the affair of Masteria Duty."<sup>34</sup> He also requested that Great Britain send two artificers to cast cannon for the use of the Porte.<sup>35</sup> Ainslie felt that this request was a "caprice" of the Porte, observing that the Porte had already at its disposal a considerable number of technical experts from France, Germany and Italy.<sup>36</sup> None the less, in order to make some gesture which might serve to maintain British influence amongst the Ottoman officials, he suggested to Lord Carmarthen in London that it would perhaps be a sound course to fulfil this request of the Grand Vizir, even though compliance would in fact be "contrary to our laws".<sup>37</sup> Soon afterwards, early in May 1786, a further approach was made to Ainslie - this time by the *Kapudan*, Hasan Paşa, who intimated that the ambassador, through compliance with the Turkish request, would be able "to secure his own credit in the eyes of the Sultan"<sup>38</sup> and at the same time offset in the mind of the Sultan the impression which the French had tried to lodge there that, but for the good offices of Great Britain, a Russian squadron would never have been able to enter the Mediterranean during the war of 1768-74.



so setting in motion the train of events which led at last to the disaster to the Ottoman fleet at Çeşme in 1770. Ainslie, writing to Carmarthen on 10 May 1786 urged that two experts be despatched to the Porte, stating: "I cannot consistently avoid repeating to Your Lordship an affair upon which must in great measure depend the future influence of His Majesty's Mission at this Residence". Ainslie explained to Carmarthen<sup>39</sup>:

I certainly would have gone to every proper length to elude this commission, but I could not hazard the consequences of disobliging a Grand Vizir and Capitan Pashaw from whom I have received such great Favours and who have so many means in their power of taking their Revenge at the expence of His Majesty's commercial Subjects.

Carmarthen nevertheless refused the Sultan's request, on the ground that British artisans were not allowed to be sent out from England to undertake employment in other countries.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile the Russian ambassador Bulgakow was still seeking from the Porte an answer to his memorial of 18 May 1786.<sup>41</sup> On 5 June Ainslie once more met the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa.<sup>42</sup> He recommended to the Porte a policy of prudence and moderation. Yusuf Paşa, finding no positive encouragement in the attitude of Ainslie at that moment, now revealed the purpose which had led him to invite Ainslie to an audience. He desired Ainslie to consult the government at London with regard to a request for "His Majesty's interference, and kind influence, in order to conciliate the present differences with Russia; in case, that Court shall be found equally well disposed to refer all disputes to the mediation of mutual friends". Yusuf Paşa concluded by offering to Ainslie "the most solemn assurances of his sincere wish to cultivate the friendship of Great Britain".<sup>43</sup> The Porte now proceeded to formulate an answer to Bulgakow's memorial of 18 May 1786. Before authorizing the transmission of this answer to Bulgakow, the Grand Vizir sent a draft of the Ottoman answer to Ainslie through the British dragoman Peter Crutta, and asked Ainslie to give his opinion on this provisional text - a text which, amongst other things, accused the Russians of attempting to provoke a new war.<sup>44</sup> This Ottoman reply was in fact to be handed to Bulgakow on 14 July. Ainslie, writing to Carmarthen on 24 July, noted that he had recommended to the Grand Vizir<sup>45</sup>:



the greatest Temper and Moderation in treating of an Event [i.e., the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire] which might possibly never happen as the present Difference between the two Courts was yet susceptible of being healed.

In the same despatch Ainslie observed that "both the Porte and Seraglio wish to introduce Great Britain into mediation of every arrangement to be concluded with the bordering Powers". Ainslie assured his superiors in London that he would continue to act with reserve unless and until "I receive ulterior instructions".

On 17 August 1786 Yusuf Paşa asked Ainslie whether he had received instructions from London in connection with the request of the Porte, made on 5 June, for the mediation of England.<sup>46</sup> Ainslie as yet without definite advice from his government, informed the Grand Vizir that it was not possible for the English Court to give a firm answer, since the mediation would depend on the existence of a favourable disposition towards it at the Russian court. At this point of the audience Yusuf Paşa made a specific request that Ainslie should set down his opinion in writing, so that it might be presented for the personal inspection of the Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid I. A written statement, so the Grand Vizir affirmed, would help to impress the Sultan with the amicable attitude of Great Britain towards the Ottoman Empire and even serve to counteract the effect on 'Abd-ul-hamid of the interferences emanating from the ambassadors of France and Holland at Istanbul. Ainslie, anxious not to weaken his own influence amongst the Ottoman dignitaries, agreed to this request on the condition, however, that "it should be drawn up in the form, or in the style of a written message without signing or sealing".<sup>47</sup>

The document dated 18 August 1786, contained little of a positive nature.<sup>48</sup> His intention now, as on previous occasions, was to avoid a definite involvement of the British government in the discord existing between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. The document assured the Sultan and the Ottoman ministers of the continuing goodwill of Great Britain towards the Ottoman Empire and of the British government's readiness to view with approval attitudes and policies tending to alleviate the difficulties which might occur between the Porte and the Christian states bordering on the Ottoman Empire. Ainslie, in a letter dated 25 August 1786, informed Carmarthen that he had handed over to the Grand Vizir the written statement mentioned above.<sup>49</sup>



Meanwhile, the French ambassadors at Istanbul and St. Petersburg had been endeavouring throughout 1786 to persuade Russia and the Ottoman Empire to settle their differences through the good offices of France. The Tsarina was willing to accept the assistance of Choiseul-Gouffier at the Porte, but at the same time instructed her own ambassador there, Bulgakow, to insist firmly on the fulfilment of the Russian demands and not to let control of the whole matter fall into the hands of Choiseul-Gouffier.<sup>50</sup> To Ségur, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, Potemkin argued that "the existence of the Turks is a real scourge to the human race".<sup>51</sup> The position of Choiseul-Gouffier, and above all of Ségur, was a delicate one, since at this moment France was negotiating a new commercial agreement with Russia.<sup>52</sup> As to the good offices of France at Istanbul, Bulgakow's close adherence to his instruction from St. Petersburg that Russia desired the fullest compliance of the Turks with their demands limited seriously the room for manoeuvre available to Choiseul-Gouffier - left him indeed with little real prospect of achieving a settlement by compromise, a solution which the Turks might perhaps have been induced to accept. Of the French intention in the Russo-Ottoman dispute at this time Ainslie was to write (10 November 1786) <sup>53</sup>:

For my Part I foresee great Difficulties in settling this affair amicably, unless the Porte, overawed into Concessions or that Russia should consent to retract Her claims, at all Events the Porte still continues to shew much Diffidence of France and a Dislike to have her Interference.

On 20 January 1787 the Russian ambassador at Istanbul, Bulgakow met the *Re'is Efendi*, Mehmed 'Ata'ul-lâh and gave him official notice of Catherine's projected visit to the Crimea. At the same time Bulgakow renewed his request that the Ottomans allow the appointment of a Russian consul at Varna and insisted also that the Porte take effective measures to prevent the Lezghis of Daghestan and also the Tatars in the Kuban from committing further depredations against Russian territories.<sup>54</sup> The news that the Tsarina intended to travel to the Crimea aroused considerable apprehensions amongst the Turks. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the Ottoman dignitaries even after the meeting of 22 January 1787 once more refused the demand of Bulgakow.<sup>55</sup>



As yet there was no strong current of opinion among the Ottoman ministers in favour of a definite breach with Russia. A document sent at this time from the Sultan to the Grand Vizir offers indeed some details of interest on the situation of this moment.<sup>56</sup> The document inquires<sup>57</sup>:

Ne seroit-il pas convenable d'arranger selon les engagements des traités les affaires en question par le moyen de l'ambassadeur de France, d'Angleterre ou par l'entremise de quelque autre ministre d'une autre puissance ?

On the other hand it does recommend that the fortresses on the borders with Russia, and in particular Ochakov, be set in good condition and prepared for future eventualities.<sup>58</sup>

It was at this juncture of affairs that the attitude of the British government towards the Ottoman Empire and its difficulties entered upon a course somewhat different from that which had been followed heretofore. William Pitt and his ministers had of course long been aware of the negotiations in progress for a commercial agreement between France and Russia. This agreement was in fact to be signed in January 1787. The French success in these negotiations was most unwelcome to the British government - all the more since its own efforts to renew the Anglo-Russian commercial agreement of 1766 had met with failure. Even before the signing of the Franco-Russian agreement Pitt and his Foreign Minister Carmarthen had indicated to Ainslie a new line of conduct in a despatch dated 19 December 1786.<sup>59</sup> This reached Ainslie on 3 February 1787.

The new instructions informed Ainslie that "the more immediate object of attention, which naturally engages this Government is the real situation in which the Ottoman Empire finds itself respecting that of Russia."<sup>60</sup> Carmarthen observed that France had offered "mediation" to the Turks and Russians and then urged on Ainslie:

the necessity as well as propriety upon every occasion, of endeavouring to combat the views of France as far as possible with caution and discretion in order to serve and promote the interests of England.

The Russian inclination to make use of the good offices of France was, in Carmarthen's view, a manoeuvre designed to hold of a



formal break until her armed forces should be in "a situation to keep pace with the bold and determined language she Catherine has thought proper to hold, and which she thought would of course intimidate her Ottoman rival." Carmarthen declared that "this difference for the interest of England ought certainly to be blown into a flame if possible".<sup>61</sup> Ainslie was given to understand:

of your own sagacity and knowledge of persons upon the spot will easily point out to you how far the resolution of the present Divan can be encouraged so far as at least to hamper France if not actually break with Russia, without at the same time, committing England till things are ripe for our taking what we ought to do, on every possible occasion, a decided and effective part.

Ainslie should take care to remain on good terms with the Russian ambassador Bulgakow and with the French ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier. At the same time he was to note that "the members of the Divan must be as much flattered and caressed as possible." Carmarthen concluded by stating that it was "by no means the wish of England to create or even encourage a breach of Public tranquillity, except where some restless and ambitious power renders it necessary for our own defence," and by emphasizing that, in his judgment, "a diversion of the attention of France on the side of Turkey would now be of the most important service to England."<sup>62</sup>

The new line of conduct indicated for Ainslie by this despatch requires some suppleness and indeed in implementing it, the British ambassador was to pursue an ambiguous cause, laying himself open to criticism by the foreign powers that he was instrumental in provoking a new outbreak of Russo-Turkish hostilities. Whatever his private reservations may have been concerning this new policy, Sir Robert Ainslie lost no time in seeking an audience with the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa. The meeting took place on 5 February 1787.<sup>63</sup> Ainslie inquired of Yusuf Paşa whether or not<sup>64</sup>:

he was sure the Seraglio<sup>65</sup> would not leave him in Lurch, and resume their Pacific system - the unavoidable consequence of which must be a Change of Administration - that this Evil might still be avoided by timely concessions and



operated without risk if he would secure the leading members of the Ulema and the Cabinet especially when authorized by the Sultan and supported with the Credit of Hassan Bashaw. (66) His Highness thanked me for my friendly solicitude but told me that Peace or War depended absolutely upon the Determinations of Russia. He said that the Sultan, the Ulema and the Cabinet were unanimous in their Resolution to abide by the Treaty (67) and to refuse all further Concessions: - that they were prepared to oppose their Enemies and submitted their Cause to the Will of God.

Ainslie noted in a despatch of 10 March that the *Re'is Efendi* (Süleyman Feyzi), in discussion with the Russian ambassador Bulgakow, had offered "to submit the contested Points to the arbitration of two friendly courts, chosen by both Parties", and that Bulgakow refused this offer, declaring that "the Empress would not submit Her Rights to the Decision of any Power upon Earth."<sup>68</sup> Writing to London on 24 March 1787, Ainslie underlined the bitterness which the Grand Vizir felt towards "the haughtiness and Injustice of Russia, now become unsupportable."<sup>69</sup> Yusuf Paşa indeed expressed his doubt as to whether or not it would be possible to maintain the peace and indicated his determination to prepare for war, "however sensible of his Danger and Disadvantages."<sup>70</sup> Ainslie observed in the same despatch that Bulgakow had insinuated to the Grand Vizir that the difficulties existing between Istanbul and St. Petersburg might be resolved:

if the Porte would appoint Plenipotentiaries to treat with the Russian ministers at Kerson; which was refused as equally unwarrantable and inexpedient.

Yusuf Paşa was still hopeful that Russia might be brought to accept the mediation of Great Britain and France or some other power. It was "the sincere Desire of the Porte that Great Britain should have the principal management of that important Business."<sup>71</sup> The Grand Vizir informed Ainslie that should Russia be compliant he was willing to make an official application to London for a British mediation - which Ainslie received in an evasive manner, promising to communicate this desire of the Porte to the British government.<sup>72</sup> Ainslie in April of this year felt able, on the basis of the information "from the Vizir, and from equal good authority in the Seraglio", to assure the ministers at London<sup>73</sup>:



that the Sultan is determined to reject every overture of mediation, in which Great Britain is not included. This, My Lord, I can venture to say may be depended on, and that the Credit of France will not prevail under this Administration.

A little later Ainslie informed Carmarthen that the Grand Vizir to all appearance, was resolute in insisting on a formal retraction of the Russian claims in the Caucasus.<sup>74</sup> This retraction once granted, he would be prepared to renew the former treaties with Russia<sup>75</sup>:

under the mediation of England with France or Prussia, but at all events Great Britain to be joined, in which case every arrangement is to take Place. This, My Lord, is strenuously urged by the Vizir, the Grand Admiral and all that Party, nay it is the prevailing opinion of the Seraglio, the Ulema and the Cabinet.

As noted earlier,<sup>76</sup> Carmarthen had urged on Ainslie the "necessity as well as propriety upon every occasion, of endeavouring to combat the views of France as far as possible with caution and discretion." The despatches sent by Ainslie to London during the first half of 1787 contained a number of comments on the situation of the French ambassador at the Porte, but little to indicate what precise measures Ainslie took in order to thwart the policies of France. Ainslie, writing to Carmarthen on 10 February 1787, noted that he had sought, without success, "to discover the Vizir's Sentiments with respect to France".<sup>77</sup> He observed also that Choiseul-Gouffier, with the support of the Dutch ambassador, was still attempting to persuade the Turks that their best course would be to accept the mediation of France in their difficulties with Russia.<sup>78</sup> On 24 March Ainslie informed Carmarthen that "His Highness [i.e., the Grand Vizir] has very little confidence in the versatile Politicks of France". He states also that Choiseul-Gouffier had received from Versailles instructions ordering him "to use his utmost Endeavours to restore the ancient Credit of France at this Court", ample funds being made available to him to further this intention.<sup>79</sup> Ainslie was to remark later, on 7 April 1787, that "the credit of France will not prevail under this administration."<sup>80</sup> A subsequent despatch of Ainslie (25 April 1787) describes Choiseul-Gouffier as "much out of Humour with me, because he supposes I obstruct his Operati-



ons".<sup>81</sup> Ainslie in May 1787 alluded to the attitude of Choiseul-Gouffier, intimating that the French ambassador believed it to be imperative that Great Britain and also Prussia should be excluded from all future mediations, "because their views tend to widen the breach"<sup>82</sup> between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Ainslie was a little more explicit in his despatch of 25 June 1787. Here he remarked<sup>83</sup>:

The Porte appears determined not to submit the Differences with Russia to the Management of France, jointly with Germany [i.e., Austria], and this Refusal is the more likely to continue, because the Ministers of both these Courts are personally disagreeable to the Porte. The French Ambassador continues to be prodigal in Money and Presents. He could not fail in reestablishing the almost exclusive Influence of his Court, was it not for the rooted opinion that he is devoted to the Interest of Austria.

Still later during a confidential discussion with the Grand Vizir, Ainslie was told by Yusuf Paşa that<sup>84</sup>:

the instances of French Politick [are] always liable to vary, according to the Time and Place and as little to be depended on as the surface of an air Balloon.

Ainslie continued in the same despatch with the observation that:

in consequence of this conversation I thought it absolutely necessary, on several accounts to secure the services of the Reis Efendi, his Secretary, the Dragoman, and the Vizir's private Treasurer who enjoys his Masters Confidence. Accordingly Messrs Pisani and Cruta [sic] (85) were employed on this Service, in which they succeeded to my Wishes. The Season of the Ramazan furnished the Pretext for sending an English Gold Watch and Chain of excellent Workmanship to the Minister, and a Gold Watch to each of the other three Gentlemen, costing in all two thousand one hundred Dollars which were received as Proofs of my Friendship.

Not long before the outbreak of war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire Ainslie indeed was to declare - referring to the ambassadors of Austria and France - that "these two Ministers have lost all personal influence here, and that during the present administration they can be of little service to Russia".<sup>86</sup>

How far the diminished reputation of Choiseul-Gouffier at



the Porte was due to the manoeuvres of Ainslie is not clear from the above fragment of evidence. A little extra illumination can be obtained from the despatches of the French ambassador sent to Versailles. Writing to France on 10 February 1787 Choiseul-Gouffier described Ainslie as seeking to persuade the Turks that the Franco-Russian commercial *entente* concluded in January of that year was in fact a Franco-Russian alliance directed against the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>87</sup>M. le Ch. Ainslies dans une conférence secrète avec le Grand Vizir lui a répété ces imputations absurdes, en lui ajoutant que vous veniez de conclure un Traité avec la Russie et ce ministre auquel il serait impossible de faire entendre que des liaisons de commerce ne sont pas un Traité d'alliance vous suppose peut-être entrés dans une confédération générale contre les Musulmans. Ma situation est cruelle.

The French ambassador in another despatch to Versailles (10 May 1787) makes more extended comment on Ainslie and his activities.

<sup>88</sup>Che. Ainslies... a véritablement excité les Turcs en même tems qu'il offrait basement ses services à M. de Bulgakow, mais ce ne sont pas des motifs politiques qui le font agir. Il a désiré qu'il y eût quelques légères hostilités promptement suivies d'une médiation dans l'espoir d'en être chargé et de recevoir les sommes considérables que l'Imp. donne en en pareil cas à ceux qui facilitent ses affaires. Je ne doute pas que si le personnel de cet Ambassadeur était connu de M. Pitt il ne se hâtât de lui substituer un plus digne représentant de la nation Britanique.

The period preceding and following the outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in August 1787 saw accusations of serious nature raised against the conduct of Ainslie at the Porte, and also against that of the Prussian ambassador Diez. These accusations depicted Ainslie as reponsible in no small measure for the Ottoman decision to enter into a new conflict - an accusation which has been reiterated in a number in a number of more recent historical studies relating to these years. Thus the German historian Gerhard writing in 1933 stated that "vor allem Sir Robert Ainslie, der britische Gesandte am Goldenen Horn, habe die Turken zum Kriege getrieben."<sup>89</sup>

Some time before the Ottoman declaration of war against



Russia in August 1787, the conduct of Ainslie at Istanbul had become the subject of complaints sent from St. Petersburg to London. The British ambassador to Russia, Fitzherbert, writing in February 1787, informed Carmarthen the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that Bezberodko, the Russian Foreign Minister, and also Potemkin had criticized the actions of Ainslie at the Porte.<sup>90</sup> Later, in July 1787, Count Osterman made an official complaint about Ainslie to Fitzherbert. There can be no doubt that these criticisms of Ainslie derived from the despatches which the Russian ambassador at Istanbul forwarded to St. Petersburg. The letters of Bulgakow available for consultation do not enlighten us as to what Bulgakow wrote about Ainslie.<sup>91</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that in a despatch dated 1/12 February 1787 he declared that Ainslie had passed beyond reasonable restraint and was intriguing with the ambassadors of Holland, Prussia, Spain and Sweden.<sup>92</sup> Ainslie, writing in August 1787, was to make, in relation to Bulgakow, a comment not without interest, declaring: "The Russian Envoy does not even attempt to dissimulate his highly exclusive Connexions with the French Mission, who actually guides him and manages all his affairs at the Porte."<sup>93</sup> A passage from the despatches of the French ambassador to the Porte, Choiseul-Gouffier, would seem to be of relevance here. The ambassador, in a report to Versailles dated 3 August 1787, observed that the *Re'is Efendi*, Süleyman had intimated that Ainslie was advising the Turks to enter into a new war with Russia, and, well aware that France favoured a mediation of the difficulties existing between St. Petersburg and Istanbul, was assuring the Ottoman ministers of the perfidious character of the French intentions.<sup>94</sup> Perhaps the most forceful formulation of the charges raised against Ainslie is to be found in the memoirs of Count de Ségur, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg.<sup>95</sup> The ambassador noted that the Prussian minister Diez, instigated by Ainslie, "increased the alarm and inquietude of the Divan to such a degree, that from this moment every disposition was made for an almost unavoidable rupture."<sup>96</sup>

How then are these charges to be interpreted? It will perhaps be appropriate to begin with a brief consideration of the various factors, both remote and proximate, which contributed to bring about the new war. The more general factors are not difficult



to discern - the southward advance of Russia, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, towards the Black Sea; the alarm of the Ottomans, threatened with the destruction of their long sustained control over the territories bordering on that sea; the apprehensions, even resentment, on political and religious grounds felt amongst the Turks at the disappearance of the khanate of the Crimea; and, a matter of immediate moment, the fear arising from the recent activities of Russia in the Caucasus area.

As to the actual outbreak of the hostilities, the decision to enter into the renewed warfare with Russia rested of course, at Istanbul, with the influential dignitaries of the Porte. It is difficult on the basis of the available documents to see which of these dignitaries viewed with disfavour the decision to declare war on Russia. The Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid I in an undated *Hatt-i humayun*, the translation of which was included in a despatch of the Russian ambassador Bulgakow written in February 1787, expressed himself in a manner favourable to a mediation of the difficulties between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.<sup>97</sup> At a later date, in July 1787, his influence would seem to have hindered for a while the imprisonment of Bulgakow at the time when events were moving towards the outbreak of war.<sup>98</sup> The value of this evidence is slight and, whatever the personal attitude of the Sultan, he in fact failed to halt the drift towards a new conflict, fearing perhaps that too resolute an opposition to personalities working in favour of war might prove disadvantageous to himself and his throne.<sup>99</sup>

It is possible also that the *Beglikçi* Raşid Efendi viewed the decision in favour of war with doubt and dislike. Choiseul-Gouffier at least mentions him in December 1787 in terms of approval, referring to his "excellentes qualités",<sup>100</sup> and Ainslie in January 1788 described him as "a thorough Frenchman",<sup>101</sup> a man perhaps inclined therefore to approve the policies which Choiseul-Gouffier had followed hitherto at Istanbul. In his efforts to avert further hostilities between the Ottomans and the Russians, the most influential of the Ottoman dignitaries active at this time was beyond doubt the *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan, who, however, had gone to Egypt in June 1786 and did not return until November 1787, being absent therefore during the months when war became



imminent and at last actual fact. His actions at the Porte after his return from Egypt, when he arranged for the appointment of Raşid Efendi to the office of *Re'is-ul kuttab*<sup>102</sup> in place of the previous incumbent Süleyman Efendi, a known advocate of war, would suggest that he viewed with dissatisfaction the previous conduct of affairs which, during his absence in Egypt, had brought the Ottoman Empire once more into conflict with Russia.

The evidence defining which officials at the Porte inclined towards a peaceful solution is oblique and inconclusive. More cogent is the evidence indicating the dignitaries who favoured a declaration of war. Not the least important of these men was the *Re'is Efendi* of the moment, Süleyman Feyzullah Efendi, whose views on the situation existing a little before the outbreak of hostilities are given in a despatch of Ainslie dated 9 August 1787. Here the *Re'is Efendi* is said to have uttered the following words: "Things have gone so far that unless Justice is obtained for the just Demands of the Porte, I see very little Hopes of avoiding a Rupture with Russia, before many Months are elapsed."<sup>103</sup> Even more forthright is a comment which Choiseul-Gouffier made in December of the same year, describing Süleyman Efendi as "le plus ardent moteur de la Guerre."<sup>104</sup> The *Şeyh-ul-islam* of this time Müftizade Ahmed Efendi, issued a *fetva*<sup>105</sup> approving the decision to make war on Russia.<sup>106</sup> It is possible that this approval was a reflection of his own personal sentiments in relation to the difficulties between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand a remark of Choiseul-Gouffier indicates that his consent to the declaration of war was secured through arguments amounting to a misrepresentation of the prevailing situation. The French ambassador writes that "le Mufti a même osé dire que pour obtenir son fetva, on lui avait fait un faux exposé des ressources de l'Empire et des secours que promettaient certaines puissances étrangères."<sup>108</sup> Of the Grand Vizir himself Yusuf Paşa, the French ambassador was to write in a despatch to Versailles dated 3 August 1787 that "[il] veut absolument la guerre."<sup>109</sup> The sources offer several comments on the relations existing between Ainslie and those dignitaries who favoured the war. It must be admitted, however, that these comments are to be found in sources unfavourable to Ainslie. A despatch of the Russian



ambassador Bulgakow dated 1/12 February 1787 describes Yusuf Paşa as overwilling to listen to the advice of Ainslie, who flattered the Grand Vizir with lavish praise.<sup>110</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier, the ambassador of France, writing on 3 August 1787, refers to<sup>111</sup>:

*l'agitation perpétuelle du Ch. Ainslie qui dans la même journée anime le vizir, le presse de faire la Guerre et court ensuite offrir bassement ses services à l'envoyé de Russie.*

The same despatch contains a further passage of relevance here, declaring of the Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa, that<sup>112</sup>:

*sa profonde ignorance et la fermeté de son caractère qui jusqu'à présent l'a bien servi l'ont entraîné trop loin, les perfides conseils du Ch. Ainslie ont achevé de l'égarer et trop avancé aujourd'hui pour reculer sans un danger certain, il sacrifie l'intérêt public à sa conservation personnelle et se décide pour le parti qui en reculant sa perte, lui permet encore l'espérance d'un succès.*

A later despatch of Choiseul-Gouffier written on 25 August 1787 adds yet another observation of interest<sup>113</sup>:

*nous ne pouvons plus douter Monsieur le Comte que ces deux Ministres n'ayent beaucoup influé sur les déterminations violentes de la Porte, et le Grand Vizir dans un des musc-havérés qui on précédé la rupture, a dit formellement qu'il était assuré de Puissans secours. Cette assurance n'aurait cependant pu vaincre l'opposition de plusieurs uhléma s'il n'y avait ajouté la veille de la dernière assemblée une somme de 80 mille Ducats de hollande distribués à ceux qu'il avait été impossible de persuader moins chèrement.*

How far evidence of this kind should be construed to mean that Ainslie gave active encouragement to that faction at the Porte which was resolved on war with Russia is somewhat difficult to determine, not least because a large proportion of this evidence derives from sources anti-Ainslie in character; Ainslie's attitude and conduct, during the months which preceded the advent of hostilities, must be viewed in the light of the instructions sent to him from London on 19 December 1786 and received by him on 1st February 1787. The despatch of December enjoined on him two main duties. Of these duties, the first was that he should endeavour to counter the policies which Choiseul-Gouffier was pursuing at Istanbul in the name of France and which sought above all to bring the Turks to acceptance of



mediation in their difficulties with Russia. The second charge laid on Ainslie urged that, in pursuit of his anti-French objective, he should avoid all commitment of the British government to a serious intervention in the Ottoman-Russian confrontation. These instructions, while indicating in the positive sense the course that Ainslie was to follow at the Porte, represented at the same time a curb on his freedom of action. To oppose the aims of France meant in the prevailing context of affairs at Istanbul to hinder all approach towards effective mediation. One question can well be asked - though perhaps not answered - here: how far can an abstention from effective support of the principle of mediation be interpreted as an encouragement of the war-minded elements amongst the dignitaries at the Porte to enter into a new conflict?

Even in 1786, and still more in 1787, Ainslie was under repeated pressure from the Ottomans to undertake mediation between the Ottomans and the Russians in the name of the British government. The Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa made his request of Ainslie on a number of occasions at this time.<sup>114</sup> Ainslie, of course, was careful to inform Lord Carmarthen of the reiterated Ottoman request for mediation.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, in the face of the insistent queries of Yusuf Paşa for news of the response from London, Ainslie was careful to underline for the Grand Vizir that a British acceptance, even if forthcoming, would not of itself be sufficient - a Russian acceptance, too, was essential for a formal and effective mediation to occur.<sup>116</sup> It is possible that Yusuf Paşa and his colleagues at times drew too much confidence from the words of Ainslie and even that Ainslie expressed himself on occasion with greater freedom than was perhaps desirable; for example, the ambassador of France, Choiseul-Gouffier, was to observe not long before the outbreak of war that Ainslie<sup>117</sup>:

*pour faire sa cour au grand vizir et en obtenir quelques grâces dont il fait un commerce public ne cesse d'exalter les forces redoutables de l'Empire et a été jusqu'à lui dire en présence d'une foule de témoins que l'armée Ottomane manœuvrait mieux qu'aucune escadre Anglaise.*

At the same time the Ottomans sought from Ainslie reassurances as to the attitude of the British government, should the Tsarina



Catherine II attempt to send a Russian squadron from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, thus repeating the strategy which had been undertaken in the conflict of 1768-74. Ainslie, acting on his own initiative, was prompt to give the reassurance demanded of him, and that in forthright terms<sup>118</sup>:

I answered that, in all cases Great Britain would strictly conform to the Laws of the most perfect neutrality: - that without knowing exactly either the Intention or Extent of our pretended armaments, I could venture to assure His Excellency [i.e., the Re'is Efendi Süleyman] that they in no Way regarded the Ottoman, or either of the bordering Empires.

Statements of this kind perhaps encouraged the Ottomans to harden their attitudes towards Russia. None the less, if we can judge from his own words, Ainslie gave no war-inclined counsel to Yusuf Paşa and his ministers at this time. Indeed, during the weeks just preceding the Turkish declaration of war, he was recommending to the Grand Vizir the advantages of restraint and moderations. On 20 July 1787, while indicating that he had no formal authorization either from London or from St. Petersburg to act as mediator, Ainslie went so far as to declare to the Grand Vizir that<sup>119</sup>:

in case I was invited by His Highness [i.e., Yusuf Paşa], and by the Russian Minister Plenipotentiary [i.e., Bulgakow] to a personal interference in their disputes, I should not hesitate in fulfilling the office of a mutual Friend to both Courts; and forward, all in my Power the salutary Work of Peace; certain as I am, that this Conduct will meet, with my Royal Master's Approbation.

Moreover, with war now threatening, Ainslie did not hesitate to go beyond his instructions of 19 December 1786, which bade him oppose the policies of France at the Porte; in the course of a meeting with the *Re'is Efendi* held on 28 July 1787 he ventured to recommend that the Ottoman dignitaries should give some heed to the counsel of Choiseul-Gouffier - a conversation that he reported in his own despatch to London of 9 August 1787: "I took the liberty to recommend Peace as the greatest of all Blessings, and even advised due Attention to the Proposals made through the French Mission."<sup>120</sup>

It is worth noting that the British ambassador at Vienna,



Sir Robert Keith, wrote to London not long after the commencement of war, refuting the accusations made against Ainslie. On 29 August 1787 Keith addressed Lord Carmarthen in the following terms<sup>121</sup>:

Your Lordship will see what jealousy is entertained at Constantinople of the weight which Sir Robert Ainslie has acquired in the Ottoman Councils. I am sorry to find that the French Court lays hold of that pretext to insinuate here (and undoubtedly at Paris) that the haughty spirit of the Turks is fomented by the King's Ambassador. I am perfectly convinced that the accusation is false, and I do my utmost to give the lie to it, on every proper occasion. I beg of Your Lordship to authorise me, without loss of time to hold a precise ministerial Language upon this Business in order to put a stop to all injurious suspicions.

Keith also assured the Austrian Chancellor Prince Kaunitz that he considered the charge against Ainslie to be unfounded<sup>122</sup>:

I declared to Prince Kaunitz, in express terms on Friday last, that it was with real concern I heard the news of the unexpected Rupture. That an injurious Report had come to my Ears of the King's Ambassador at Constantinople having fomented the haughty Spirit of the Turks. That I took upon me to assure Him, from the Knowledge I have of the instructions under which you [i.e., Ainslie] acted, and from the constant perusal of every one of your Dispatches to the King's secretary of state, that that accusation from whatever quarter it came was absolutely false and groundless. Prince Kaunitz answered that He wished it might prove so. There our conversation ended.

The instructions to Ainslie formulated at London on 19 December 1786 committed him to a line of conduct which made his position at Istanbul both delicate and, at least to some extent, ambiguous. Of these ambiguities the rival ambassadors and governments, as we have seen, took full advantage. The truth of the matter would seem to be that Pitt and his ministers, resentful of the fact that France had been able to win a new commercial agreement from Russia, and resenting also the fact that Russia had declined to renew with Great Britain the earlier commercial agreement of 1766, had determined that Ainslie should oppose the policies of France carried out at the Porte through her ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier. Such an interpretation must not, however, be urged too far - it does not, for example, warrant an



inference that the authorities in London desired Ainslie, in opposing the attitudes of Choiseul-Gouffier, to persuade the Turks to begin a new war. A comment to be found in a despatch of the French minister Montmorin to Choiseul-Gouffier, dated 22 August 1787, is of relevance here<sup>123</sup>:

Il serait assez important M. de savoir si c'est par ordre de sa cour que M. le Ch. Ainslie travaille à porter les Turcs à la guerre et quels peuvent être les motifs qu'il a donné aux personnes avec lesquelles il a des rapports. A moins que l'Angleterre n'ai le dessin de mettre l'Europe en feu. Je ne vois pas ce qu'elle gagnerait à susciter une guerre à la Russie et d'un autre côté l'Imp.<sup>ce</sup> n'a pas besoin d'employer un Ministre Anglais pour faire faire quelque fausse démarche aux Turcs.

Also of interest in this context is the later comment of the United States ambassador to Versailles based on a conversation that he had with the former ambassador of France, de Ségur, in the year 1791<sup>124</sup>:

The reason of England was (says Ségur) that, being vexed with Russia for forming a treaty with France by which, among the other things, the principles of the armed neutrality are acknowledged, and for insisting on a like acknowledgment, in a proposed renewal of the treaty with England, she was in hopes of making a breach between France and her new ally, Russia, or her new ally the Turks.

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<sup>1</sup> A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, ed. *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919*, I (London, 1922), p. 143; cf. M. S. Anderson "European Diplomatic Relations, 1763-1790" in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VIII (London, 1968), pp. 266-75.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Richard Lodge, *Great Britain and Prussia in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1912), p. 158; cf. John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt* (London, 1969), p. 467.

<sup>3</sup> J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, (London, 1911), p. 301; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, p. 469.

<sup>4</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>5</sup> B. M. Add. MSS. 27914; cf., Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>6</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, p. 469.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-8, 304-5, 318-20; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, p. 470-75.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 467-71, 502-6; Rose, *op. cit.*, 299-303, 315.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. John Ehrman, *The British Government and Commercial Negotiations with Europe, 1783-1793* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 92-111.



- <sup>10</sup> See, Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 317; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, p. 472.
- <sup>11</sup> For details see, Alfred Cobban, *Ambassadors and Secret Agents (The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague)*, (London, 1954).
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 203-6; Rose, *op. cit.*, 368-90; *British Foreign Policy*, I, pp. 176-83; Lodge, *op. cit.*, 180-3.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Richard Willis, *A Short Account of the Ancient and Modern State of Crim Tatory*, (London, 1787), pp. 48-54; G. Soloveytchik, *Potemkin*, (new ed., London, 1949), pp. 116-27 Boris Nolde, *La Formation de l'Empire Russe*, II (Paris, 1953), pp. 177 ff.
- <sup>14</sup> L. Pingaud, Choiseul-Gouffier, *La France en Orient sous Louis XVI* (Paris, 1887), pp. 75-81; I. H. Uzunçarşılı, "Sadrazam Halil Hamid Paşa" in *T. M.*, V. (1935), pp. 213-63; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal, 1964), pp. 65-6.
- <sup>15</sup> Pingaud, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 ff; Salih Munir "Louis XVI et le Sultan Selim III" in *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, Année 26 (1912), pp. 516-48; I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *loc cit.*, 213-63; idem, "Selim III'un veliaht iken Fransa kralı Louis XVI ile muhabereleleri", in *Belleten*, II (1938), pp. 191-246; idem, "Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Paşaya dair" in *T. M.*, VII-VIII (1940-42), pp. 17-40; *E. I.*<sup>2</sup>, "Djeza'irli Ghazi Hasan Pasha".
- <sup>16</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, II, pp. 61-6, 273-6; III, pp. 160-4; cf. D. M. Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy 1658-1832* (New York, 1957), pp. 205-11; Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p. 11.
- <sup>17</sup> Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.* p. 206.
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 206-207.
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p. 13; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/I, pp. 501-3.
- <sup>21</sup> The memorial is dated 18 May 1786, and a copy of it can be found in P. R.O., F. O. 78/7.
- <sup>22</sup> A copy of the Porte's reply also can be found in P. R.O., F. O. 78/7.
- <sup>23</sup> Bulgakow to Catherine, in *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Oteshchestva*, xlvii, (St. Petersburg, 1885), pp. 162-8, no. 100, I (12) June 1786.
- <sup>24</sup> Catherine to Bulgakow, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, p. 169, no. 102, 15 July 1786.
- <sup>25</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, pp. 11 ff.
- <sup>26</sup> See below, p. 33.
- <sup>27</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 8, 27 March 1786.
- <sup>28</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 7, 11 March 1786.
- <sup>29</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 4, 10 February 1786.
- <sup>30</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 7, 11 March 1786.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> The exact locations is not given.
- <sup>34</sup> The masteria duty was a customs duty imposed on European commodities imported into the Ottoman Empire. The French merchants had enjoyed the privilege of exemption from such dues since 1740, but it was not until after the annexation of the Crimea that Ainslie in 1784, through the influence of the *Kapudan Paşa* was able to secure the same privilege for the English



- merchants. (See, Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/5, no. 11, 25 May 1784) and also Appendix III.
- <sup>35</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/, no. 10, 25 April 1786.
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> *ibid.* The law in question is: "A proclamation for Recalling and prohibiting seamen from serving foreign princes and States and for granting Rewards for discovering such seamen as shall conceal themselves". Dated 8th December 1777 By the King i.e., George III. (see, *Patent Rolls*, 1-18, Geo. III)
- <sup>38</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 11, 10 May 1786.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 2, 4 July 1786. Here - no doubt to the relief of Ainslie - the matter was allowed to rest, for the Ottoman ministers did not raise it again.
- <sup>41</sup> See above, p. 27.
- <sup>42</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 13, 10 June 1786.
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 16, 24 July 1786.
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 18, 25 August 1786.
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> The written statement of Ainslie was of course submitted to the Grand Vizir in Turkish. Ainslie's letter of 25 August to Carmarthen contained a literal translation of the document from the Turkish (see, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7).
- <sup>49</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 18, 25 August 1786.
- <sup>50</sup> Catherine to Bulgakow, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, p. 169, no. 102, 15 July 1786.
- <sup>51</sup> *Memoirs and Recollections of Count Ségur; ambassador from France to the Courts of Russia and Prussia written by himself*, II (London, 1826), p. 277.
- <sup>52</sup> See, J. L. van Regemorter, Commerce et Politique: Préparation et Négociation du Traité Franco-Russe de 1787, in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, VI, (1963), pp. 230 - 57.
- <sup>53</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 25, 10 November 1786.
- <sup>54</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 2, 25 January 1787; no. 3, 10 February 1787.
- <sup>55</sup> Ainslie wrote of this event "how far the Ottoman Cabinet is justifiable in abandoning the late passive system and again hazarding to incur the fatal consequences of a rupture with their powerful and more polished rival", (Russia). See Ainslie to Carmarthen, F. O. 78/8, no. 3, 10 February 1787.
- <sup>56</sup> The document is undated but it was included in a despatch of Bulgakow to Catherine, see *Sbornik*, xlvii, pp. 179-82.
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.* p. 196.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.* p. 197.
- <sup>59</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 8 19 December 1786.
- <sup>60</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 8 19 December 1786.
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>63</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 3, 10 February 1787.
- <sup>64</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 3, 10 February 1787.
- <sup>65</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>66</sup> The *Kapudan Hasan Paşa*, the admiral.



- <sup>67</sup> i.e., Küçük Kaynarca, signed in 1774.
- <sup>68</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 5, 10 March 1787.
- <sup>69</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 6, 24 March 1787.
- <sup>70</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 7, 7 April 1787.
- <sup>74</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 8, 25 April 1787.
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> See above, pp. 33 — 34.
- <sup>77</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F.O. 78/8, no. 3, 10 February 1787.
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 6, 24 March 1787.
- <sup>80</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 7, 7 April 1787.
- <sup>81</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 8, 25 April 1787.
- <sup>82</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 11, 25 May 1787.
- <sup>83</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 13, 25 June 1787.
- <sup>84</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 14, 10 July 1787.
- <sup>85</sup> The embassy's dragomans.
- <sup>86</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 15, 24 July 1787.
- <sup>87</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Vergennes, C. P. T., 175 (1787), 10 February 1787.  
Choiseul-Gouffier represents Ainslie as following this line of argument with the Turks even while, the commercial agreement between France and Russia was in negotiation. Cf. Choiseul-Gouffier to Vergennes, C. P. T., 174 (1786), 12 September 1786: "le Chev. Ainslies tourmenté d'un désir universel de nuire, ne cesse de l'inquiéter sur les dispositions de la Cour de France et lui a déjà présenté le traité de Commerce qui se négocie à Petersburg comme une alliance qui ne tardera pas à se diriger contre eux." It is perhaps worth noting that the Russian ambassador, Bulgakow, writing on 12 February 1787, depicts Ainslie as "incessantly whispering with the Dutch, Prussian, Spanish and Swedish ministers." (see, Bulgakow to Catherine, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, p. 199).
- <sup>88</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin (the new Foreign Minister), C. P. T., 175 (1787), 10 May 1787.
- <sup>89</sup> Cf. D. Gerhard, *England und der Aufstieg Russlands* (Munich-Berlin, 1933), p. 196, text and note 21, referring to earlier literature expressing the same judgment: see also a Russian scholar Stanislavskaya put forward the same charges in an article of 1948. Cf. A. Stanislavskaya "Angliya i Rossiya v gody vtoroi turetskoi voyny (1787-1791)", in *Voprosy Ystorii*, no. 11 (1948), pp. 26-49; and in addition, M. S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553-1815* (London, 1958), p. 144; idem, *The Eastern Question* (London, 1966), p. 17.
- <sup>90</sup> Stanislavskaya, *loc. cit.*, p. 30; see also a letter dated 19 February 1787, by Fitzherbert, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, inclined to put little trust to this adverse report about Ainslie, and also the letter which framed in general terms Carmarthen sent to Fitzherbert (Fitzherbert to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 97/341, no. 1, 19 February 1787 and Carmarthen to Fitzherbert, 6 April 1787).



- <sup>91</sup> No complete edition of Bulgakow's letters are available in print. Some of his letters and reports can be found, however, in *Sbornik*, xlvii (Petersburg, 1885).
- <sup>92</sup> Bulgakow to Catherine, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, p. 199, no. 111 1/12 February 1787.
- <sup>93</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 16, 9 August 1787.
- <sup>94</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 14, 3 August 1787. Choiseul-Gouffier quotes also "Süleyman n'est point disconvenu des manoeuvres...a même avoué qu'il [i.e., Ainslie] conseillait la Guerre et supposait à la Cour de France les intentions les plus perfides."
- <sup>95</sup> C. de Ségur, *Memoirs and Recollections written by himself*, III (London, 1827), pp. 205, 207-8, 210-2.
- <sup>96</sup> L. P. Ségur, *History of the Principal events of the Reign of Frederic William II, King of Prussia; and a political picture of Europe from 1786-1796*, I (London, 1801), p. 57. Ségur obtained his information about affairs in Istanbul from the letters which Choiseul-Gouffier sent at this time. On the fact that there was direct correspondence between Choiseul-Gouffier and Ségur, see also the printed documents available in the Archives Nationales (Paris): B7. Mar. 452, Numero LXXV, *Nouvelles Extraordinaires de Divers Endroits: du Mardi 18 Septembre 1787* - Extrait d'une lettre de Constantinople du 16 August "ce ministre [i.e., Le Baron d'Herbert, Internonce de la Cour de Vienne] s'est donné, aussi que l'Ambassadeur de France, la rupture, qu'on prévoyait déjà lors du voyage de l'Impératrice à Cherson: mais l'influence de l'Angleterre a prévalu: Et ce sont, dit-on, les conseils du Chevalier Ainslie, qui s'accordant avec le caractère du Grand-Vizir, ont attiré cette Guerre à la Russie.
- <sup>97</sup> *Sbornik*, xlvii, pp. 195-8.
- <sup>98</sup> *ibid.* p. 204.
- <sup>99</sup> See, for example, Ahmed Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, pp. 9. 26. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/1, p. 440.
- <sup>100</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 29, 28 December 1787.
- <sup>101</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 1, 10 January 1788.
- <sup>102</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>103</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O.; F. O. 78/8, no. 16, 9, August 1787. The same despatch represents Süleyman Efendi as stating that the Porte would not "purchase Peace on the dishonourable Terms held out by Russia, which committed the interests of the Empire, and of their Religion. He owned himself no Admirer of French Politicks, and said that the Trio composed of that ambassador [i.e., Choiseul-Gouffier], and the imperial Ministers [i.e., Baron d'Herbert and Bulgakow], could have little personal Influence with the present Administration, whom they had done all in their Power to overset."
- <sup>104</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 29, 28 December 1787.
- <sup>105</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>106</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, 25; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/I, p. 505.
- <sup>107</sup> Ahmed 'Azmi Efendi is described by one of the Ottoman historians as a man not devoid of intelligence and character. "Müftüzade Ahmed Efendi, fazil, müdekkik ve işinde hakşinas olup vakur ve hakim idi..., mevki'ini muhafaza



- için kavuk sallamasını bilenlerdendi." (Cf. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/II, p. 504.
- <sup>108</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 25, 10 November 1787.
- <sup>109</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 14, 3 August 1787; cf. also the remark of Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, p. 9 indicating that under influence of public sentiment at Istanbul and of the attitude which the ambassadors of England and Prussia assumed, at this time, Yusuf Paşa offered a firm resistance to the demands of Russia, even going so far as to claim the return of the Crimea to the Ottoman Empire - indeed this resolute attitude divided the dignitaries of the Porte into factions for and against war, the war-party being of course under his guidance and strong enough to overcome the pro-peace faction grouped around the Sultan.
- <sup>110</sup> Bulgakow to Catherine, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, p. 199, no. 111, 1/12 February 1787.
- <sup>111</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 14, 3 August 1787.
- <sup>112</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 19, 25 August 1787; in attempting to determine how far the personal influence of Yusuf Paşa contributed to the Ottoman decision in favour of war, due attention should be given to Ainslie's despatch of 25 September 1787, reporting the substance of remarks which the Grand Vizir had made to him and which indicated in fact that the Ottomans had but limited choice before them - i.e., either to yield without resistance to the Russian demands (and with the likelihood that further concessions would be asked of them in the not too-distant future) or to go to war in defence of Ottoman interests, however probable it was that recourse to arms would bring only ultimate defeat: "at all Events the Porte is prepared for the worst - the Sword is drawn, nor can she now retract. Indeed her situation never can be worse, nor was it in her Choice to preserve the Peace, but by the cession of all the Provinces one after the other; at the caprice of a Woman ambitious of her neighbours; an assertion for the Truth of which, he [i.e., Yusuf Paşa] appealed to the just God and his Creatures." (Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 21, 25 September 1787).
- <sup>114</sup> See the remarks of Ainslie on this matter in his despatches: P. R. O., F. O. 78/7, no. 13, 10 June 1786; no. 16, 24 July 1786; no. 18, 25 August 1786; and F. O. 78/7, no. 6, 24 March 1787; no. 7, 7 April 1787.
- <sup>115</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 15, 24 July 1787 and no. 16, 9 August 1787.
- <sup>116</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>117</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 13, 10 July 1787. The words of Choiseul-Gouffier should be considered, however, in conjunction with the subsequent statement which Ainslie included in his despatch to London dated 24 November 1787, and which runs as follows: "Permit me, My Lord, to repeat my most sincere acknowledgement for the very satisfactory manner in which Your Lordship has been pleased to contradict the insidious rumours circulated by those who in view to cover their own miscarriages, and in order to create injurious suspicions, have so awkwardly employed a miserable manoeuvre which, to this moment, subjects them to the ridicule of the Ottoman Cabinet. I am supposed to have held a language tending to encourage the



Turks to think well of their own Force in comparison with that of Russia. It is true, My Lord, I ever thought it a duty incumbent on Foreign Ministers, to conduct themselves with discretion, and to avoid giving offence to the Courts where they reside. Consistently with this Rule, I have always spoken guardedly (particularly in publick) of the Ottoman Power, and of their Preparations carried on for upwards of fifteen months, both in Asia and Europe." (see, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 27, 24 November 1787).

<sup>118</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 16, 9 August 1787.

<sup>119</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 15, 24 July 1787.

<sup>120</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 16, 9 August 1787.

<sup>121</sup> Keith to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 7/14, no. 82, 29 August 1787. See also despatch of Keith dated 1 September 1787, to his colleagues repeating his belief in the innocence of Ainslie.

<sup>122</sup> Keith to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 7/14, Confidential, 4 September 1787.

<sup>123</sup> Montmorin to Choiseul-Gouffier, C. P. T., 176 (1787), 22 August 1787; cf. also Archives Nationales, B7. Mar. 452, *Supplément aux Nouvelles Extraordinaires de Divers Endroits, du Numéro LXXV, Extrait d'une lettre de Versailles du 10 Septembre*; "L'opinion générale est, que les Anglais ont vivement excité le Ministère Ottoman à prendre cette résolution, afin de profiter de l'embarras de la Russie, et de lui dicter le Traité de Commerce, qu'ils veulent conclure avec elle. Il est certain, que, si la Russie est attaquée, elle a grand besoin des Anglais, sur-tout pour ses Flottes, qui manquent d'officiers; et alors il faut bien qu'elle achète leur secours par quelque condescendance: Ainsi raisonnent nos Spéculateurs."

<sup>124</sup> A. C. Morris, ed. *The Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris (Minister of the United States to France)*, I (London, 1899), p. 373.



## CHAPTER III

### The Triple Alliance and the Turco - Prussian Treaty 1788 - 1790

The diplomatic situation at Istanbul was to become more complex after the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war when new factors affecting the situation emerged, amongst which the influence of Prussia was not least important. A complex of events was to issue from that power's new involvement in eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire - events which through the influence of Ewart, the British ambassador in Berlin, were to draw in Britain involuntarily and to result in fresh instructions to Ainslie which afforded him the opportunity of an active role. Presages of these events occurred during the autumn of 1787, when it became clear that Austria would soon be involved in hostilities against the Turks.

The Prussian minister Count Hertzberg wrote to Diez, the Prussian ambassador at the Porte, in November 1787, outlining certain ideas he had conceived in relation to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> The substance of these ideas can be summarized in a few words. The Ottomans should cede to Austria the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, and to Russia the Crimea (already surrendered in 1783) and also Ochakov and Bessarabia. Prussia, France and the other powers of Europe would now guarantee the continued existence of the Ottoman state, south of the rivers Danube and Una. Furthermore, Russia should be induced to renounce all claims to control over the Kuban and Georgia and to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Hertzberg was to elaborate his views in further



despatches sent to Diez in the spring of 1788. Instructions dated 25 March urged Diez to do his utmost to hinder the Turks from making a sudden peace, and to secure from the Ottomans an acceptance of Prussian mediation.<sup>2</sup>

Still more explicit was the guidance offered to Diez in instructions dated 3 April 1788.<sup>3</sup> The basic idea of Hertzberg was that Austria, in return for her acquisition of Moldavia and Wallachia, should cede a portion of her own territories, i.e., Galicia, to Poland - a cession which, so Hertzberg believed, would enable Prussia to obtain for herself from Poland the two important towns of Danzig and Thorn, together with their dependent territories. This sequence of territorial exchanges represented indeed the foundation of his entire scheme.

Diez tried now to secure the approval and co-operation of the Porte in furtherance of the Prussian design. He was soon constrained, however, to inform Berlin that, so far as he could see, no effective progress would be made unless and until Prussia declared her readiness to assume a more positive attitude towards the Porte, i.e., to enter into an alliance with the Porte. The government at Berlin was not unwilling to accept a close involvement with the Turks - i.e., to move forward from mediation to alliance. None the less this willingness to envisage a formal alliance with the Ottomans was subject to certain limitations.

Initially, Hertzberg seems to have envisaged the proposed commitment to the Ottomans as being merely defensive in character<sup>4</sup> but was later to enlarge his conception of the alliance. The attack on Russia of the restless Swedish king, Gustavus III, in order to recover the lost trans-Baltic territories of Sweden, led in July 1789 to the signing of a Turco-Swedish alliance. The slow progress of Diez's negotiations with the Porte during 1788-89 now enabled Hertzberg to take cognizance of these new developments in elaborating a more ambitious policy towards the Ottomans. This policy was reflected in fresh instructions dated 18 September 1789 which empowered Diez to offer the Turks an offensive-defensive alliance, with a promise of Prussian direct participation in the war from the spring of 1790.<sup>5</sup> The conflict went ill for the Turks in 1789, especially the campaign against the Russian forces. Hertzberg therefore urged Diez again and



again at this time to bring his negotiations with the Porte to a successful conclusion. It was not from the part of Herzberg alone now that Diez came under pressure. The Ottoman ministers sought to exact from Prussia the utmost possible advantage in favour of the Ottoman cause.<sup>6</sup>

Diez was at last able to secure an alliance between Prussia and the Porte, but only at the cost of going beyond the intentions of Herzberg. This alliance, concluded on 31 January 1790, imposed on Prussia the obligation which the government at Berlin was not unwilling to accept, i.e., war against Austria, but also obliged her to fight Russia (a burden which those same ministers found to be far less welcome). It also involved a further obligation, that Prussia should give her armed support to the Turks until even the Crimea was restored to Ottoman rule - a prospect which had little chance of realization. Hertzberg, writing on 12 March 1790, demanded of Diez on what grounds he had ventured to involve Prussia in hostilities both against Austria and Russia and to commit her to maintain the conflict until the Ottoman reconquest of the Crimea, declaring that Prussia was prepared for war with Austria but not with Russia and stating that the restoration of the Crimea to the Ottomans was an impossible enterprise.<sup>7</sup> All that Hertzberg could now foresee was that the ratification of the alliance (due to be completed within five months) might perhaps be drawn out until a more favourable turn of events came to lighten the prospect for Prussia. An event of this order was indeed soon to occur. The death of the Emperor Joseph II on 20 February 1790 brought about a considerable change in the general context of the affair.

Another influence also of great importance made itself felt during the months when Diez was striving to give effect to Hertzberg's scheme. The source of this influence was Joseph Ewart, the British ambassador at Berlin. Ewart had risen to prominence through his role in the Dutch crisis in 1787. Holland had then been beset by internal dissention, in which one faction was pro-French (the so-called "Patriots") while the other (centring around the Stadtholder) inclined towards Great Britain for assistance.<sup>8</sup> Ewart, acting in accordance with the aspiration already expressed at London and exploiting the internal situation, had done much to secure in September 1787 a Prussian inter-



vention in Holland, to avoid a possible French interference. This sequence of events led in August 1788 to the creation of the Triple Alliance embracing Great Britain, Holland and Prussia, and directed primarily against France. To Great Britain, always sensitive about the situation in Holland, the *entente* with Prussia at this time was a political and diplomatic advantage of a high order. Her continuing apprehension as to the aims of France, her sense of the benefit to be drawn and her reluctance to impair the *entente* go far to explain the careful consideration bestowed on Ewart's representations and advice from Berlin. As to Ewart himself, his role in the Dutch affair had brought no small personal prestige and, no doubt, a firm conviction of the essential importance to England of the Prussian alliance and also perhaps of the need for a measure of compliance towards the aspirations of the Prussian government.<sup>9</sup>

In a despatch dated 15 January 1788 Ewart informed London of the scheme which Hertzberg had devised for an intervention in the affairs of Eastern Europe. Ewart underlined to Pitt and his ministers that Prussia, though prepared to see Russia gain some territories at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, would not allow Austria to make a similar acquisition, unless an equivalent reward fell to herself, i.e., at the expense of Poland.<sup>10</sup> Somewhat less than two months later Ewart made known to the British government the desire of Hertzberg that a close co-operation should be established at Istanbul between Diez and Ainslie, the Prussian and British ambassadors serving there.<sup>11</sup> And indeed Ewart, without formal authorization from London, sent a letter (6 April 1788) to Ainslie with the Prussian officer Von Goetz,<sup>12</sup> then about to leave Berlin in order to join Diez at the Porte - a letter explaining that there should be, if possible no end to the war unless with the "joint mediation"<sup>13</sup> of Prussia and England, and also urging that Ainslie should co-operate with Diez to gain this objective.

Ewart was careful to inform London that in fact he had communicated to Ainslie a despatch written to the Foreign Secretary, Carmarthen, two days after the letter to Ainslie, i.e., on 8 April 1788.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, however, before the arrival of this despatch from Ewart, Carmarthen had sent instructions (dated 2 April 1788) to Ewart,<sup>15</sup> indicating that, while Pitt and his



ministers would be willing to see Ainslie co-operate with Diez, their wish was to avoid all involvement in circumstances which might lead to the extension of hostilities <sup>16</sup> :

With respect to the manner of making use of any influence which either court [i.e., London and Berlin] possesses at the Porte. It will be unquestionably His Majesty's wish to enter sincerely and unreservedly into such a concert: but if [the] Proposal was meant to extend to any measures of actual Hostility under the present Circumstances against the two Imperial Courts, in order to form a Diversion in favour of the Turks, you must discourage such an idea to the utmost of Your Power.

In the present moment, our line seems to be that of a strict neutrality that with respect to the Affairs of Turkey it seems to be the interest of Prussia and Great Britain to promote an accommodation on reasonable Grounds and without too great sacrifices from the Porte.

Ewart continued to set before the British government the advantages of a joint Prussian-English mediation in the conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. He was of course under pressure from Hertzberg to bring England to a more effective co-operation with Prussia. Reporting a discussion held with Hertzberg, Ewart made it clear in January 1789 that the Prussian minister laid claim to such a co-operation under the terms of the Triple Alliance concluded in August 1788 between England, Holland and Prussia, and therefore desired the British government to ensure that Ainslie supported at Istanbul the efforts of Diez.<sup>17</sup>

The advice that Ewart sent to London was no more explicit than in his despatch to Carmarthen dated 28 May 1789.<sup>18</sup> He now informed his government that Prussia had resolved to enter into an alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Even if the armies of the Sultan were victorious, the ministers at Berlin would still strive for a mediation designed to safeguard the interests not of the Turks alone, but also of England and Prussia. Should the Turks be driven in defeat south of the Danube line, Prussia would be prepared to come to their assistance, using her strength to check Austria (no mention is made of the employment of Prussian arms against Russia). Ewart assured the British government that Prussia, while eager to secure from London a general



approval of her schemes, did not envisage the involvement of Britain in whatever hostilities might arise from the further prosecution of the Prussian design.<sup>19</sup> To reinforce his presentation of the Prussian scheme, Ewart referred in this despatch to a passage from the instruction which Carmarthen had written to him on 14 May 1788, quoting the actual words of Carmarthen<sup>20</sup>:

there will be a favourable opening for the joint Mediation of His Majesty and the King of Prussia, and possibly if a Peace were to be made under their influence, a subsequent Guaranty of the Dominions of the Porte might make a part of the proposed System, and the Porte itself be included in the general Defensive Alliance. With this view, it would certainly be much to be wished that the Porte should be enabled to reject any Terms, which would materially weaken its future Means of Defence: or at least, that any accession of Strength to its Rivals should, if possible, be counter-balanced by some proper equivalent to the King of Prussia.

Eward also referred once more in the despatch of 28 May 1789 to the obligations which England, Prussia and also Holland had assured towards one another under the terms of the Triple Alliance negotiated in August 1788. Also in this despatch he told Carmarthen that he had sent to Ainslie at Istanbul full details about the latest instructions sent to Diez and acquainting him with the Prussian intentions to make, at need, a formal "*entente*" with the Porte.<sup>21</sup>

Carmarthen hastened now to curb somewhat the activities of Ewart, which may have seemed to him over-zealous. Writing to Eward on 24 June 1789,<sup>22</sup> he characterized the scheme of Hertzberg as extending far "beyond the spirit of our treaty of Alliance, which is purely of a defensive Nature", adding that Great Britain under the provisions of the Triple Alliance, was in no ways:

bound to support a system of an offensive Nature, the great end of which appears to be Aggrandisement rather than security, and which, from its very Nature, is liable to provoke fresh Hostilities instead of contributing to the Restoration of general Tranquillity.

He urged Ewart to avoid all danger that England might find herself engaged in a war "on account of Turkey, either directly or indirectly" - Eward was to be "particularly careful, in Your



Language to prevent any intention of that Nature being imputed to us." Carmarthen was indeed more concerned to impose an attitude of restraint, since <sup>23</sup>:

I observe in one of Your Dispatches, you state the continuance of the northern war <sup>24</sup> as in some Degree advantageous, as it would be a powerful Diversion, in case the Allies should take Part in the Turkish war. This I must again observe to you is an object by no means in our view.

As to a possible guarantee in the future of the Ottoman territories, Carmarthen thought that it would be inappropriate to envisage such a commitment to active negotiations before an end of the Ottoman-Russian war had been set in train.<sup>25</sup>

The war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia had begun on 14 August 1787. Carmarthen wrote to Ainslie on 9 October, defining the attitude which the ambassador was to observe in relation to the conflict. Ainslie, in respect of a possible mediation in the war, was to adhere to<sup>26</sup>:

the answer you have already given [i.e., to the Turks], with great Discretion, namely, that Great Britain can by no means interfere in that Dispute, or offer any Mediation upon it, or even interfere any such Mediation, but upon the common application of both Powers.

Ainslie, on 10 October, - almost at the same moment - was writing to Carmarthen in London.<sup>27</sup> He assured the English minister that the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa, had declared himself unwilling to accept a mediation unless Great Britain acted as one of its members. The French ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier was still seeking to secure for France an official invitation to mediate between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. According to Ainslie, Choiseul-Gouffier was also seeking to weaken the English influence at the Porte. Ainslie believed that the French ambassador was attempting to persuade the Turks that England, as she had done during the years 1768-1774, might well give assistance once more to Russia, should the Tsarina decide to send a naval squadron from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. It is not clear how far Choiseul-Gouffier went in this endeavour, but he did at least suggest to the *Kapudan*, Hasan Paşa, that the Turks obtain from Ainslie a formal written assurance of England's intentions.<sup>28</sup> The *Kapudan Paşa* at once hastened to make the request of



Ainslie - a request which the English ambassador declined to comply with by submitting a written statement, while assuring the *Kapudan Paşa* of his readiness to renew the verbal declaration that he had made to the Ottoman minister on a number of occasions. Ainslie indeed, even before this moment, had characterized the attitude of Choiseul-Gouffier over the question of a possible naval aid from England to Russia as a manoeuvre intended "to destroy our Influence, - to alarm the Divan - and to favour their Endeavours for a Restoration of Peace, or at least, of procuring a Cessation of Hostilities with Russia".<sup>29</sup>

The influence of Ainslie at the Porte was called into question to some extent at this time through the existence of sharp differences of opinion and attitude amongst the Ottoman dignitaries. Not long after the outbreak of war the *Kapudan*, Hasan Paşa, had returned from Cairo to Istanbul. It would seem that, arriving at Istanbul in November 1787, he viewed without enthusiasm and even with open disfavour the decision to enter upon a new conflict with Russia.<sup>30</sup>

A brief interval of friction now ensued amongst the high officials of the Porte, during the course of which the *Re'is Efendi*, Süleyman, an advocate of the war, lost his appointment in favour of Raşid Efendi. At the time Choiseul-Gouffier, making use of his own contacts in the Ottoman Court, was seeking to bring about the dismissal of the Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa.<sup>31</sup> These developments might indeed have injured the influence of Ainslie at the Porte.<sup>32</sup> Such an outcome, however, was not to occur. Ainslie himself summarized the end result of these frictions in a despatch that he wrote to Lord Carmarthen on 25 January 1788:

All the Intrigues to overturn the Vizir have only served to advance his Credit, now greater than ever in the Seraglio, in the Corps of the Ulema, and with the Public, In the same proportion, the Capitan Bashaw, who grasped at Influence, has lost Ground. He has even been advised by the Sultan to limit his Attention to the important Concerns of the Naval Department; for some Time at least, he will interfere little in Politicks of the Forte; who now seem invariably fixed on the Recovery of the Crimea... I am not a little embarrassed how to act in the present delicate situation between the Vizir and the Capitan Bashaw. They certainly are not Enemies; but the latter, who is as ambitious as covetous,



aims at universal influence and has of late fomented dangerous Councils.<sup>33</sup>

The course of events was further complicated when, during the winter of 1787-88, it became clear that Austria might enter the war on the side of Russia in accordance with the terms of the agreement made between the Emperor Joseph II and the Tsarina Catherine II in 1781.<sup>34</sup> The prospect was sufficient to alarm the dignitaries of the Porte and to heighten the differences of attitude and interest existing amongst them. A despatch of Choiseul-Gouffier written on 10 November 1787 threw some light on the situation<sup>35</sup>:

on attend ici, avec une vive inquiétude, la décision de l'Empereur [i.e., Joseph II]. Déjà les Ministres Ottomans, revenu de leur première ivresse, commencent à redouter les suites de l'incendie qu'ils ont allumé, et chacun d'eux cherche à se justifier en rejetant sur ses confrères le blame d'une précipitation dont ils ne font cependant encore qu'entrevoir le danger. Le Reis Effendi [i.e., Süleyman Feyzi] pour séparer sa cause, s'il est possible, de celle du Grand Vizir feint de se jeter dans mes bras, maudit l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre, ses intrigues, ses mensonges et l'aveuglement de Yusuf Pasha [i.e., the Gran Vizir]. Les Gens de loi à qui j'ai fait parvenir le resultat des Démarches de M. de Ségur, se plaignent hautement qu'on n'en ait pas attendu le succès; et le Mufti [i.e., Ahmed Azmi Efendi] a même osé dire que pour obtenir son Fetva, on lui avait fait un faux exposé des ressources de l'Empire et des secours que promettaient certaines Puissances étrangères.

None the less the prevailing sentiment at the Porte was for a continuation of the war whether or not Austria entered it. Ainslie, writing to Carmarthen on 24 November 1787, defined the intentions of the Porte in the following words - "the Porte professes great Respect for the Imperial Courts and even resolves to give no just Cause of Offense; she declares that, in case of an unprovoked Rupture, she will trust to the Justice of her Cause, and defend Herself as well as she can".<sup>36</sup> The judgment ascribed to the *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan, in a despatch of Choiseul-Gouffier (28 December 1787),<sup>37</sup> can perhaps be taken as a guide to the feeling then dominant amongst the Ottoman officials. Choiseul-Gouffier indicated in this despatch the verdict of Hasan Pasa on the readiness of Yusuf Paşa to begin a conflict with Russia "qu'il n'avait que trop écouté des conseils au moins inutiles, que



puisqu'il avait déclaré à la Guerre son unique objet devoit être de la commencer", (i.e., pursue it with vigour).<sup>38</sup> Ainslie was to define the views of the *Kapudan Paşa* in not dissimilar terms. He informed London in a despatch dated 10 January 1788 that "the Kapudan Pashaw sees great Danger in retreating, and still advises perseverance in a War undertaken with Justice and founded on motives of Religion."<sup>39</sup>

The situation at the Porte was to undergo a further - and important - change with the continuing deployment of Prussian ambitions at Istanbul during the course of 1788. As noted earlier,<sup>40</sup> Ewart, the English ambassador at Berlin, wrote to Ainslie on 6 April 1788 informing him of the schemes of the Prussian minister Hertzberg. Ewart, after referring in this letter to "the general intimate cooperation established between Great Britain and Prussia", defined the main object in view as "to induce the Porte to accept no proposal whatever [for the termination of war], without the concurrence of the two Courts." At the same time Ewart indicated to Ainslie that Prussia would assume a posture, sufficient perhaps to prevent Austria from turning her force against the Turks and indeed would be willing to resort at need to "an armed mediation" on behalf of the Ottomans. He also informed Ainslie that Diez was to receive instructions enjoining him to take Ainslie into his confidence, the objective of the other two Courts at London and Berlin being to secure to themselves a joint mediation in the war.<sup>41</sup>

On 16 May 1788, Lord Carmarthen, already aware that Ewart had written directly to Ainslie, sent new instructions to Istanbul.<sup>42</sup> Carmarthen recommended now that Ainslie should establish a more confidential contact with Diez than he had enjoyed hitherto. At the same time Lord Carmarthen indicated that the British government was not unfavourable towards the idea of a joint mediation of Prussia and Britain. He was careful, however, to urge on Ainslie the need for considerable restraint. Carmarthen seems to have viewed with some reserve the motives and objectives hidden behind the schemes of the Prussian minister Hertzberg. He informed Ainslie therefore that the British government had no wish to be committed to the ambitions of Prussia beyond the bounds of a joint mediation. The entire passage is of particular interest in view of the subsequent course of events<sup>43</sup>:



My chief motive for writing to day is to inform Your Excellency of His Majesty's pleasure that you should endeavour to establish the most confidential intercourse with the Prussian Minister at the Porte, at the same time that you conduct yourself with your wonted caution in respect to such plans as he may wish you to assist him in beyond the general object of a joint mediation of this Court and that of Berlin with a view to terminate the present hostilities. I have good reason to suppose that the Prussian Minister has instructions respecting different modes of carrying on the war which he is ordered to communicate to the Ottoman Ministers and perhaps some eventual stipulation to recommend as conditions of Peace which it may not be necessary or expedient for us to discuss at present, and on which it would be imprudent for this Country to be at all committed. The admitting England and Prussia as mediators is a very desirable object and Your Excellency will not fail to encourage it as far as possible in the minds of the Turkish Ministers.

The difference in content between Carmarthen's instructions to Ewart (dated 14 May 1788)<sup>44</sup> and his instructions to Ainslie (dated 16 May 1788) is notable. A possible explanation is not far to seek. Carmarthen, in view of the great importance which the British government attached to the Prussian connection, had no wish to give offence to the court at Berlin - no doubt he sought therefore to frame his advice to Ewart in terms not unfriendly to the desires of Prussia. No such prudent restraint was required of him when he communicated with Ainslie at Istanbul - he might well feel himself free to express his own sense of unease at the possible implications of the Hertzberg scheme and to warn Ainslie of the need for caution in his envisaged co-operation with Diez, the Prussian ambassador at the Porte. Ainslie, answering Carmarthen's despatch on 1 July 1788, assured the Foreign Minister that he would improve his connection with Diez to "the most confidential Intercourse" and do his best to promote "a Cessation of Hostilities."<sup>45</sup> Early in August 1788, Ainslie was to inform Lord Carmarthen that, through Von Goetz (travelling under the assumed name of Schmit), there had come to him "a very explicit letter from Mr. Ewart", adding that he would fulfil the request of Ewart "to the Extent of my Instructions."<sup>46</sup>

The fall of Ochakov, in December 1788, brought the campaign of that year to an unfavourable close for the Ottomans. To the



Prussian authorities in Berlin it seemed that this serious reverse might well induce amongst the ministers of the Sultan a more compliant frame of mind. It was their hope that Diez would now press forward with increased vigour in his efforts to secure for Prussia a role of mediator in the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Russia.<sup>47</sup> Not until 9 February 1789 was Diez able to secure a formal audience with the Ottoman ministers at the Porte, an audience the importance of which was underlined by the presence not only of the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, and of the *Beglikçi*, but also of the *Kapudan Paşa*, Hasan, representing the Sultan and of the *Kazi'-asker of Anatolia*, 'Aziz Efendi, representing the 'ulema. The discussion centred around two main points: whether Diez should receive permission to go to the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa, then in winter quarters with the Ottoman army at Rusçuk on the Danube; and whether the Porte should undertake not to make peace without the mediation of Prussia. The *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, informed Diez that the office of mediation would not be assigned to Prussia unless that state entered into a formal alliance with the Porte. He also informed Diez that such an alliance must include a Prussian acceptance of the Ottoman conditions for peace: amongst them, the return of the Crimea to the Ottoman Empire; the return also of the conquests which the Austrians and Russians had made at the expense of the Turks during the present war; the exclusion of Austria and Russia from the navigation of the Black Sea; and the inclusion of Sweden in the projected peace.<sup>48</sup> Diez had received from Berlin no instructions empowering him to commit Prussia to such a course, and he therefore declared himself unable to make an agreement of this kind with the Porte. The most that he was able to obtain after further negotiations in a conference held on 16 February was the following vague and unprofitable solutions: the Porte was willing to promise not to end the war without the mediation of Prussia; but should another European state offer to the Ottoman Empire advantageous terms for an end of hostilities, then the Porte should be free, at need, to exploit such an offer in its own best interest.<sup>49</sup> The Porte, in fact, as yet a third meeting with the Ottoman ministers made made clear on 20 March, was prepared at this time to offer Prussia not an obligatory, but only a provisional, role of mediation.<sup>50</sup> It had become evident that the Porte would allow Prussia no decisive



voice in the negotiation for the future peace, unless Prussia entered a formal alliance, offensive as well as defensive, with the Ottoman Empire against Austria and Russia.<sup>51</sup>

Choiseul-Gouffier was to observe in a despatch dated 1 January 1789 that "L'Ambassadeur d' Angleterre et celui de Hollande agissent à la suite de l'envoyé de Prusse et aussi vivement que lui leur Dragomans se concertent tout soir et matin pour assiéger les Ministres de la Porte, tandis que leur émissaires vont exciter secrètement les gens de loi [i.e., the 'ulema]."<sup>52</sup> His word would seem, however, to over-estimate the degree of co-operation existing between Ainslie and Diez. Even before the fall of Ochakov in December 1788 Ainslie, when writing to London, had been less than enthusiastic in his observations about Diez. On 15 September 1788 he noted for the benefit of Carmarthen that<sup>53</sup>:

[Diez] went so far as to say peevishly, that my Court took no other Part in the present war than wishing to secure the mediation for Peace in Conjunction with the Court of Berlin, which sufficiently accounts for his remaining reserved respecting all other Business, although He continues to affect a great Intimacy, in which I also find my Accounts.

A later despatch of Ainslie dated 22 October 1788 also refers to Diez in terms which are a curious combination of compliment and criticism. Ainslie now informed Lord Carmarthen that<sup>54</sup>:

a particular Intimacy, and on my Part, a very cordial Regard has long existed between me and the Prussian minister who independent of an extravagant share of national Pride, and personal Reserve, which I have no doubt will be removed by Experience, is a most worthy, agreeable and very well informed Gentleman.

Ainslie noted in a later despatch to London of 15 February that Diez had failed to acquaint him with the substance of his discussions with the dignitaries of the Porte, held on 9 February 1789. Ainslie observed that so far as he could discover the discussion between Diez and the Ottoman officials had examined the possible establishment of a Prussian-Ottoman alliance which Poland and Sweden would later be asked to join. He added, however, that the Sultan 'Abd-ul-hamid I had been inclined to urge the inclusion of England and Holland (co-members with Prussia in the Triple Alliance of August 1788) in the projected



"*entente*".<sup>55</sup> A further despatch of Ainslie dated 22 February 1789 makes it clear that Diez did not communicate to him the result of his second meeting with the officials of the Porte held on 16 February 1789. Ainslie remarks that "as before [Diez] has not communed with me upon the subject the Meeting",<sup>56</sup> noting also that Diez had held a similar reserve towards the Dutch ambassador (i.e., the third member of the Triple Alliance of 1788).<sup>57</sup> None the less in order not to prejudice the eventual attainment of that joint Anglo-Prussian mediation which had been recommended to his attention in the instructions prepared for him from London on 16 May 1788,<sup>58</sup> Ainslie was careful to give no hint in public of the lack of effective co-operation existing between Diez and himself. Ainslie was of course mindful of the need for restraint and caution which the instructions of 16 May 1788 had enjoined on him. Writing on 22 January 1789 he was to declare<sup>59</sup>:

the Prussian Envoy has Pursuits which he endeavours to hide from me, which I shall if possible discover without exposing either of them, but I shall at all Events be particularly watchful in order that my Court shall not be committed by any Steps or even the most distant Insinuations beyond the Letter and Sense of my Instruction.

The sequence of moves and counter-moves among the ambassadors at the Porte was frustrated owing to the current serious friction among the officials and dignitaries surrounding the Sultan. Choiseul-Gouffier was to declare in a despatch dated 14 January 1789 that "*Jamais la Cour Ottomane n'avait été divisée en autant de partis, qui cherchant tous à s'emparer de l'esprit du Souverain, le faisaient sans cesse varier dans ses résolutions.*"<sup>60</sup> The ill success of the Ottoman campaign in the Black Sea during the course of 1788 - operation involving both the Crimea and the importance of the Ochakow fortress - heightened the rivalries already existing amongst the dignitaries at the Porte. Hasan Paşa, the *Kapudan*, returned to Istanbul in November 1788 with no positive result achieved from his naval operations against the forces of the Tsarina. His lack of success would seem indeed to have diminished his credit at Istanbul. He was reluctant to have contact with the Christian ambassadors, even with his friend Ainslie, who was moved to describe this reluctance as "a certain Proof that he does not enjoy his former Credit."<sup>61</sup> A letter to the *Kapudan Paşa* from the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa, then absent



from Istanbul as *ser' asker* (i.e., commander-in-chief) of the Ottoman armed forces on the Danube, indicates that the *Şeyh-ul-islâm* and the *Sâdir 'azâm Kâ'im-mâkam* of the moment had sought to obtain from the Sultan an order deposing Hasan Paşa from office.<sup>62</sup> Ainslie referred again to the tensions amongst the Ottoman officials in a despatch dated 15 February 1789<sup>63</sup>:

I shall continue to pay Court to all the Ottoman Ministers, but particularly to the Kaimacam now strictly connected with the Grand Admiral, who actually avowes his Enmity to my worthy Friend the Vizir whom He accuses of reprehensible Negligence, particularly for the defence of Oczakow, which last, he attributes to a design of ruining his own Reputation.

The British ambassador indeed described Hasan Paşa as being engaged during these first months of 1789 in an attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to bring about the dismissal of Yusuf Paşa<sup>64</sup>:

The Captain Pashaw has failed in his attempt to overthrow the Vizir, personally supported by the soldiery who cannot bear his competition on account of his violence and avarice, To that course may in a great measure be attributed the failure of the expedition against the Crimea last summer, and the loss of Oczakow by the absolute Refusal of the command of the troops collected on the coast of Asia to serve under his Command and the Destruction of the Camp at Ismail.

The true situation underlying the intrigues of the Ottoman dignitaries is perhaps to be found in a despatch which Ainslie wrote to Carmarthen on 8 March 1789. Ainslie underlines in this despatch the emergence of his friend the Grand Vizir as victor over his rivals, the downfall of the chief author of intrigue, and also the involvement of the French ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier, intent now as before to fulfil the instructions sent to him from Versailles<sup>65</sup>:

Yesterday, my Lord, the Kaimacham Seid Mehemmed Pashaw,<sup>66</sup> was deposed, and banished to Limnos. He is succeeded by the Kiaja<sup>67</sup> Bey Hagi Salih Aga, now created Pashaw of three Tails, and Ibrahim Effendi made Kiaja Bey. These two last are Creatures of the Grand Vizir's who, it is now clear, has regained all his former influence. The deposed minister is accused, probably with great reason, of having fomented the misintelligence between the Vizir, and the Grand Admiral,



in view to ruin them both, and occupy the first Place; also of having delayed the preparations, and the Funds for the pay of the Troops; in short of having, to the utmost of his power, stimulated a general discontent, in order to attain his ends. The French are in a scrape with the Vizir's Friends, being accused, and not without cause, of having seconded the Caimacam, who in Fact consulted that Ambassador, and to the utmost favoured the Interest of his Court. The truth however is, that the Ottoman Minister was well-paid for his Partiality, and the Ambassador had no other Choice.

The Sultan Abd-ul-hamid I died on 7 April 1789. Little is said about him in the sources relating to the years now under review. The few brief and scattered references to him suggest that he was not confident about the outcome of the war against Austria and Russia. His lack of confidence was increased as a result of the fall of Ochakov to the Russians in December 1788, and is well revealed in a letter he wrote to the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa, which underlined his doubt over the capacities of the Ottoman ministers charged with the conduct of the war.<sup>68</sup>

Far different was the attitude of the new Sultan Selim III who now ascended the throne. Ainslie, writing on 7 April 1789, believed that the change of sovereign might well result "in prolonging the war, and prosecuting it with redoubled efforts, in order to try the Fortune of the new Sultan."<sup>69</sup> Selim III in the first weeks of his reign even proposed<sup>70</sup>:

to transfer His Residence to Adrianople, from whence he could better direct the Military operations, assist the Armies with necessaries, and in case of need visit the Camps. This spirited advice was admired by all, but strongly combatted by the Mufty, and the Creatures of the Validé, who with great reason trembles at the dangers to which Youth, Inexperience, and a great share of personal courage, must needs expose her only Son.

Choiseul-Gouffier emphasized the enthusiasm of the new Sultan, attributing to Selim III the belief that nothing was impossible for the Muslims fighting on his behalf: "avec le souverain tout l'Empire est changé." Choiseul-Gouffier noted also that when the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid pointed out the difficulties of war against two powerful empires (i.e., Austria and Russia), Selim III "lui a brusquement répondu, tout cela était vrai le mois dernier, mais oubliez-vous que c'est moi qui règne aujourd'hui."<sup>71</sup>



During the winter of 1788-89, when friction was strong amongst the Ottoman ministers, Ainslie was concerned to maintain his own influence at the Porte. The credit of his old friend the *Kapudan*, Hasan Paşa, being called into question for a time, Ainslie did not fail to seek favour with those officials who opposed the Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa, and above all with the *Kâ'im-mâkam* a figure whose great importance is reflected in Ainslie's comments noted above p. 67. Other factors, too, no doubt helped to sustain the influence of Ainslie. As noted above, the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa in September 1787 (i.e., soon after the beginning of the hostilities against Russia) had invited the English merchants to supply the Porte with various munitions of war.<sup>72</sup> This invitations from the Grand Vizir had not remained unanswered. The English merchants trading in the Levant now transmitted to the Turks considerable supplies of war material, e.g., of gunpowder. A Board of Trade document of August 1790 indicated the amount of gunpowder exported from England during the years 1780-90, the total for 1789 rising to the notable figure of 614, 300 lbs.<sup>73</sup> It is also perhaps worth noting that the Turkish Archives contain several memoranda which Ainslie submitted to the Porte - memoranda claiming the payment of various monies due to an English merchant named Humphrey, who had supplied the Turks with munitions of war.<sup>74</sup> At the same time the English merchants sold a number of warships to the Porte - an English vessel of war, two French frigates captured in the recent conflict with France, and an American sloop.<sup>75</sup> Also in January 1789 the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa urged the *Kapudan Paşa* to use some of his personal resources for the purchase of the war vessels,<sup>76</sup> and indeed the *Kapudan Paşa* now contributed towards the purchase price which the English merchants demanded of the Porte.<sup>77</sup>

The accession of the new Sultan, Selim III, induced Choiseul-Gouffier to urge once more on the Turks an acceptance of French mediation with a view to terminating the war. Writing to Versailles on 8 May 1789, Choiseul-Gouffier described how the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, suggested that he should seek to turn Selim III from continuing the hostilities with Austria and Russia, underlining that the Crimea - the reconquest of which was a major aim of the Turks - was now in fact definitively lost to Russia. And



indeed, two days later, on 10 May 1789, Choiseul-Gouffier submitted to the Porte a memorandum which emphasized how far the armed strength of the Ottomans, both on land and sea, was inferior to the task of recovering the former territories of the Khan of the Crimea.<sup>78</sup> A despatch of Ainslie, slightly earlier in date (22 April 1789), relates at some length the endeavours of Choiseul-Gouffier and his allies to undermine the influence of England at the Porte. Ainslie refers in this despatch to<sup>79</sup>:

the insidious manoeuvres of the Bourbon Ministers, who in order to ruin our Credit, and in View to forward the Politicks of the Imperial Courts (calculated to intimidate the Turks) have not ceased to represent Great Britain on the Eve of contracting Engagements most inimical to the Interest of this Empire. Since the accession of the present Sultan they accuse the Grand Vizir [i.e., Yusuf Paşa] of having allowed himself to be suborned, or deceived by me to undertake a War altogether unnecessary, at the Time in its consequence the most unfortunate for the Porte, and in fact, useful only to Ourselves. No money or Intrigues have been Spared to propagate a Belief, that the contradictory Acts of ceding the Crimea and, afterwards stimulating the present War, both fatal to the Empire, and on that Account opposed by France, were operated by Our Influence. In short We are held out as the evil Genius of this People, even by many of the principal Greeks and Armenians hired for that Purpose.

The manoeuvres of Choiseul-Gouffier even led Ainslie, on 1 June 1789, to inform Ewart, that "if France and Spain are empowered to offer reasonable Terms of Peace the Future arrangement [i.e., the ending of the war] will be transacted under their Mediation."<sup>80</sup> A few days later on 8 June 1789, mindful of how little progress had been made thus far towards the achievement of Prussian and British aims at the Porte, Ainslie sought to define for the Duke of Leeds (i.e., the former Earl of Carmarthen) the attitude of the Ottoman dignitaries. He described the Ottomans as:

well informed of their obligations to the allied Courts [i.e., the states united in the Triple Alliance of 1788], but they suppose the advantage reciprocal, nay that hitherto they have fought our Battles without Fee or Reward: - And, independent of their apprehension of being left in the Lurch, they claim a Right of making the most of their situation,

adding that "The French flatter them with the Hope of an advantageous Peace."<sup>81</sup>



Ainslie alluded in his despatch of 1 June to another factor which no doubt strengthened the attitude of the Turks:<sup>82</sup>

the want of concert between the British and Prussian Missions has not escaped the notice of the Porte, and that this circumstance esteemed of the greatest Importance, has not only affected the Influence of Prussia, but cannot fail to assist the Views of Our Rivals, who are incessantly employed in circulating Doubts respecting the real Purposes and ulterior Intentions of that Court. The Divan has more than once testified much Surprise at my Silence on matters proposed (without my knowledge) by the Prussian Envoy, which to avoid doing Harm, I have hitherto dissimulated.

The failure to achieve an effective Anglo-Prussian co-operation at the Porte is often mentioned in the despatches of Ainslie at this time. It seemed to him that Diez had<sup>83</sup>:

all along persisted in a System of Reserve respecting his Pursuits at the Porte, including the Business of his repeated Conferences with the Ottoman Ministers, which was not only embarrassing to our avowed Plan, but to me appeared a Deviation from the intimate Connection so happily subsisting between Our Courts.

Diez is also described as "a Man of Low Education and inordinate Pride, but this shall not put me out of my way or prevent me adhering to my Instructions."<sup>84</sup> Ainslie was to observe, moreover, that "Mr. Dietz's general Conduct with His Majesty's Mission, seems to indicate something more than a mere Desire to be thought the leading or principal Agent of the Allied Powers in this Residence, whict I have neither a Wish nor hitherto an Interest to dispute."<sup>85</sup> The continuing lack of co-operation between Diez and Ainslie acted to the disadvantage of Diez at Berlin. Extracts from the despatches of Ainslie to the British government had been sent from London to Ewart, the British ambassador at Berlin. Carmarthen told Ewart on 17 February 1789 that he was sending to him<sup>86</sup>:

extracts of the Dispatches which I have lately received from Sir Robert Ainslie, as they contain some particulars which may be of use to you in your conversations with the Pussian Ministers, and they enable you [to] convince them that the King's Ambassador at the Porte has shown the greatest Desire to act with Monsieur Dietz on the Footing of the most unreserved confidence, though it does not appear that Sir



Robert Ainslie has always experienced the same inclination on the Part of the Prussian Minister.

Ewart, late in August 1789, informed Ainslie that<sup>87</sup>:

in conformity to the unbounded Confidence that prevails between the Courts of London and Berlin he [i.e., Ewart] had furnished to the Prussian Ministers an Extract of all my Letters, - that he had seen all Mr. Dietz's dispatches which only manifested his extravagant Vanity without containing any interesting Intelligence whatever, - and that his misconduct, as also his Behaviour towards me, continued to be highly disapproved

A letter - also dated 22 October 1789 - from Ainslie to Ewart reveals the somewhat dubious situation of Diez at Istanbul. Ainslie indicates to Ewart in this letter that France and her allies have endeavoured to discredit Prussia in the eyes of the Ottoman dignitaries, representing the court of Berlin as always "ready to sacrifice them [i.e., the Turks] to the Interest of the moment."<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the manoeuvres designed to weaken the influence of Prussia at the Porte had been extended even to the transmission, to the Turks, of "such parts of the late King's posthumous Works as answer their Purpose."<sup>89</sup> Ainslie notes that the extracts from the "posthumous works" had been sent to Istanbul from Vienna. And he adds that the extracts, with the appropriate comments attached to them had, indeed, been conveyed into the Seraglio. The same letter from Ainslie to Ewart, of 22 October, offers some indication of the attitude prevalent amongst the Ottoman ministers in relation to Diez. After noting that "Mors". Diez's unbounded confidence in his own ability to be superior to all opposition"<sup>90</sup> had led him into numerous blunders, Ainslie attempted to analyse for Ewart the main current of opinion amongst the Ottoman officials. He underlined first, the suspicion at the Porte that serious differences of aim and judgment divided the members of the Triple Alliance [i.e., Great Britain, Prussia and the United Provinces]; second, that "the Cabinet of Berlin and the Diet of Poland endeavour, all in their Power to prolong a War in which the Turks have hitherto fought their Battles"; third, the belief of some at least amongst the Ottoman ministers that it might now be best for the Turks to make peace with Austria and Russia, unless the states of the Triple Alliance should declare forthwith their readiness to oppose



in a direct and practical manner the ambitions of the Emperor Joseph and of the Tsarina Catherine.<sup>91</sup>

The position of Diez was therefore fraught with difficulties, all the more since he was subjected to increasing pressure from Berlin. Hertzberg, anxious to achieve some positive advance towards the realization of his scheme, had written to Diez on 26 May 1789, giving him new instructions. The Prussian minister authorized Diez to offer to the Turks a defensive alliance with Prussia - with the further assurance that, should the armies of Russia cross southward over the rivers Danube and Una, Prussia would undertake an armed intervention in aid of the Porte.<sup>92</sup> The position of Diez, though he was furnished with an enlarged freedom of manoeuvre, did not in fact relieve him of his anxieties, for towards the end of August the Ottomans, through the French ambassador, Choiseul-Gouffier, received full details of the instructions which Hertzberg had formulated for Diez on 26 May 1789, so that the Porte was forewarned about the intentions of Prussia. The Ottomans were also resolved, not least through the diplomatic skill of the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, to draw the maximum advantage from this knowledge, i.e., to drive Diez if possible into a two-fold commitment: first, to an armed intervention (i.e., an offensive alliance) on behalf of the Porte; and second to a formal involvement in the restoration of the Crimea to Ottoman rule.<sup>93</sup> Diez, now under strong pressure both from the Prussian and the Ottoman authorities, turned in his moment of need to Sir Robert Ainslie. He asked the British ambassador, on 2 October 1789, to support his own endeavours to secure from the Porte a definite engagement that a mediation in the war, should it ever come about, would be entrusted to the members of the Triple Alliance. Diez also sought to obtain from Ainslie precise details as to the extent and nature of the instructions which he had received from London - a request that Diez ("better acquainted with Chicanery than Civility", as Ainslie observes) reiterated with such insistence as to awaken a measure of ill-humour in the British ambassador, who was not in fact prepared, to reveal the orders which the authorities at London had transmitted to him. In the course of this same meeting with Diez, Ainslie recommended that the states united in the Triple Alliance of August 1788<sup>94</sup> should make a joint



representation to the Porte. Diez, however, preferred that each member of the Triple Alliance should undertake a separate and private approach to the Ottoman ministers, an attitude which led Ainslie to underline once more his conviction that Diez wished, if possible, to retain for himself a major share of the credit which would ensue from successful negotiations.<sup>95</sup>

Ainslie, at the interview with Diez on 2 October, assured the Prussian ambassador that he would use his influence at the Porte on behalf of Prussia. After a consultation with the Dutch ambassador, he submitted to the Ottoman authorities a note (dated 10 October 1789) asking for clarification as to the views of the Porte about an eventual mediation.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Ainslie sought to reinforce his present approach to the Ottoman ministers through the use of private rather than public methods of communication: "I even found Means to transmit my Opinion into the Seraglio, and to interest the Valide<sup>97</sup> and the new Sultan in the Glory and Security of his future Reign, so clearly dependant on the present Measures."<sup>98</sup> Ainslie indeed summarized in a few brief and forceful words the purpose of his intervention at the Porte: "In short it was high Time that we should interfere for the support of Diets's sinking Credit"<sup>99</sup> amongst the Ottoman dignitaries. Ainslie - to judge from his own words - was able to bring some degree of relief to Diez. He noted in a despatch to London (8 December 1789) that his endeavours, both at the Porte and in the Seraglio, had contributed to thwart the still continuing intrigues of Choiseul-Gouffier and, at the same time, to dispose of "the apprehensions conceived by many Members of the Divan respecting the interested Views, and the uncertain Systems of the Prussian Ministers' Politicks."<sup>100</sup> As for Diez himself, Ainslie still felt that the Prussian ambassador was reluctant to countenance an effective co-operation between himself and the British and Dutch ambassadors. Writing to London on 22 November 1789, Ainslie declared himself unable<sup>101</sup>:

[to] assign the Cause of such repeated and striking Variance between his conduct [i.e., of Diez] and the instructions, under which, I am informed, he was to act. But I cannot think his Behaviour to the ambassadors of Great Britain and Holland will find an Apologist, when it is equally inconsistent with Civility and Reason - no more than his Pretext that it is our Duty to forward, and consequently to



engage Our Court to maintain all his speculations nay such of his Transactions which he does not deign to communicate.

The intervention of Ainslie - and also those of the Dutch and Swedish representatives<sup>102</sup> - helped no doubt to push forward the negotiations between Diez and the Ottoman ministers. This intervention, however, did not ease the pressures which still beset Diez. He had also to meet the insistence of the Porte, now resolute to extract the maximum possible advantage from Prussia and, with this aim in view, to force Diez beyond the strict limit of his instructions from Berlin (dated 26 May and 18 September).<sup>103</sup> Diez yielded at last to the demands made of him, concluding a formal alliance with the Porte at the end of January 1790 - an alliance unwelcome at Berlin on two main grounds: first, that it committed Prussia to the employment of her armed forces against both Austria and Russia; and second, that it involved her in support of the Ottoman desire to recover control of the Crimea.<sup>104</sup>

One phase in the long chain of manoeuvre and negotiation had now in fact come into an end. Diez - under the guidance of Hertzberg at Berlin - had moved from mediation to an alliance at first limited and defensive in character, thence to an alliance avowedly offensive in nature and, finally, to an agreement which exceeded his instructions. Ainslie had remained throughout the negotiations within the strict limit of his instructions from London, but - after a long period of friction and frustration between himself and the Prussian ambassador - had used his influence at the Porte, and not without effect, to bring Diez nearer to the fulfilment of his negotiations with the Porte. The situation created by the offer of the Prussian alliance in January 1790, was fraught with grave possibilities. It was, however, a situation destined to have only a momentary existence.

<sup>1</sup> Hertzberg to Diez, 20 November 1787, mentioned in J. W. Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa*, VI. (Gotha, 1859), p. 674; cf. W. Kalinka, "La Politique Prussienne en Orient à la fin du Siècle Dernier", in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, LX (1883), p. 666.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 679-80; Kalinka, *loc. cit.*, p. 667.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 668; Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 680-1.

<sup>4</sup> Hertzberg to Diez, 23 May 1789 mentioned in Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 762.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 735-40.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, VI, pp. 727 ff.



- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, VI, pp. 753-54.
- <sup>8</sup> See above p. 24.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, I (London, 1922), pp. 176-82.
- <sup>10</sup> Ewart to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 64/13, no. 5, 15 January 1788.
- <sup>11</sup> Ewart to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 64/13, no. 16, 4 March 1788.
- <sup>12</sup> Ewart to Ainslie, 6 April 1788. This letter can be found among Ewart Papers located in Edinburgh University Library. Cf., Ewart to Carmarthen, P.R.O., F. O. 64/13, no. 23, 8 April 1788.
- <sup>13</sup> Ewart to Ainslie, 6 April 1788, in Ewart Papers.
- <sup>14</sup> Eward to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 64/13, no. 23, 8 April 1788.
- <sup>15</sup> Carmarthen to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/13, Secret and Confidential, no. 5, 2 April 1788.
- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Ewart to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, no. 5, 28 January 1789.
- <sup>18</sup> Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, Secret, no. 32, 28 May 1789.
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, see also Carmarthen to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/13, no. 8, 14 May 1788.
- <sup>21</sup> Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, Secret, no. 32, 28 May 1789.
- <sup>22</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, no. 10, 24 June 1789.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> The Russo-Swedish war which began in July 1788.
- <sup>25</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, no. 10, 24 June 1789.
- <sup>26</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 3, 9 October 1787.
- <sup>27</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 22, 10 October 1787.
- <sup>28</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 29, 28 December 1787.
- <sup>29</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 28, 10 December 1787.
- <sup>30</sup> Cf. W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1799), p. 446 ("Among the Turks themselves it [i.e., the War] was regarded, by every man of information, as rash and impolitic; and the great Captain - pasha, Gazi - Hassan, was in the highest degree offended at the proceeding. The declaration of war took place while he was absent in Egypt."); see also Dedem von de Gelder, *Memoires du général von de Dedem de Gelder, 1774-1825*, ed., Elisabeth Lecky (Paris, 1900); I. H. Uzunçarşılı's article "Hasan Paşa" in *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1950), p. 322.
- <sup>31</sup> Cf. Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 27, 10 December 1787; no. 29, 28 December 1787; 178 (1788), no., 2, 25 January 1788; no. 3, 11 February 1788.
- <sup>32</sup> Cf. Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 1, 10 January 1788: "The old story of my Influence has been received, in so much that the Sultan, who truly esteems his Vizir, told him - 'Your Friend though certainly a worthy man is nevertheless a Foreign Agent, and may have Interest to deceive you.' He was answered, that I had invariably recommended Peace, nay had advised attention to the Proposals through France for preventing a War."
- <sup>33</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 3, 25 January 1788. Another factor tending no doubt to secure the continuance of English influence amongst the Ottomans was the readiness of Ainslie to facilitate the flow of munitions



of war from the English merchants to the armed forces of the Sultan, Cf., e.g., his despatch dated 25 September 1787, where the ambassador writes about "the Execution of a Commission given by the Porte to our merchants, amounting to a million of Piastres for Roper, anchors, nails, Tin, Gun Powder, Iron, Cannon and Balls, Marters and Shells, and if possible, three Ships, to serve as Frigates. He [i.e., Yusuf Paşa] assured me, and I am convinced with Truth, that the Preference had been solicited both by the French and Swedes, which he reserved for us, from his sincere Wish to augment, as much as possible, the Friendship and Intercourse between the two nations - a Disposition I did not fail to encourage all in my Power." (P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 27, 25 September 1787).

- <sup>34</sup> See on this agreement: Isabel de Madariaga, "The Secret Austro-Russian Treaty of 1781" in *The Slavonic Review* XXXVIII (1959-1960), pp. 114-45.
- <sup>35</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 25, 10 November 1787.
- <sup>36</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/8, no. 27, 24 November 1787; Ainslie on 10 January 1788, wrote once more to Carmarthen in similar terms: "No just cause of Complaint must be given to the Emperor [i.e., Joseph II] but if He attacks, The Porte must defend Her Rights and trust to Providence for Success over all Enemies. In short, Peace is made now to depend on the Evacuation of the Crimea and it is most probable this will prove the permanent Resolution." (see P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 1, 10 January 1788).
- <sup>37</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 176 (1787), no. 29, 28 December 1787.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 1, 10 January 1788.
- <sup>40</sup> See above pp. 56-57.
- <sup>41</sup> Ewart to Ainslie, Ewart Papers, 6 April 1788.
- <sup>42</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 6, 16 May 1788; cf. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 494-5.
- <sup>43</sup> Carmarthen to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 6, 16 May 1788.
- <sup>44</sup> See above, a quotation from this document p. 58.
- <sup>45</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 22, 1 July 1788.
- <sup>46</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 29, 8 August 1788.
- <sup>47</sup> Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 704.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 710-11.
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 713-716.
- <sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 715-17.
- <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 718.
- <sup>52</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 11, 1 January 1789.
- <sup>53</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 35, 15 September 1788.
- <sup>54</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 40, 22 October 1788.
- <sup>55</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 7, 15 February 1789.
- <sup>56</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 8, 22 February 1789.
- <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> See above pp. 62-63.
- <sup>59</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 4, 22 January 1789.
- <sup>60</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 2, 14 January 1789.



- <sup>61</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/9, no. 47, 15 December 1788.
- <sup>62</sup> Yusuf Paşa to Hasan Paşa, 2 Cumada E 1203/29 January 1789, I. H. Uzunçarşılı's article "Tarihde Vesikacılığın Ehemmiyetine dair Küçük bir Misal, in *Belieten*, II (1938), pp. 373-78.
- <sup>63</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 15 February 1789.
- <sup>64</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 9, 1 March 1789; see also, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 8, 22 February 1789, where the British ambassador also refers to the fact that the Grand Vizir stands "very high in the opinion of the Sultan and of the Troops in general."
- <sup>65</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 8 March 1789.
- <sup>66</sup> It would seem that Ainslie has made a mistake here. The Ottoman sources indicate that the *ka'im-makam* dismissed at this juncture was in fact named Mustafa (cf., Edib, *Ta'rih*, in Istanbul University Library MS., No. 3320, f. 45 a-b); see also Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, p. 221 (following most probably the Chronicle of Edib). Edib, however, does not mention a *Kapu Kethudası* named Sa'id Beg in connection with this dismissal, Edib, *Ta'rih*, f. 45. b.
- <sup>67</sup> See glossary.
- <sup>68</sup> Cf. Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, IV/I, pp. 541-2; see also Bulgakow to Catherine, in *Sbornik*, xlvii, pp. 163, 166, no. 100, 1/12 June 1786; p. 174, no. 105, 1/22 September 1786; p. 204, no. 113, 22 July/2 August 1787.
- <sup>69</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 15, 7 April 1789.
- <sup>70</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 23, 22 May 1789.
- <sup>71</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 19, 8 May 1789.
- <sup>72</sup> See above p. 76 n. 33.
- <sup>73</sup> See, P. R. O., B. T.: Custom House, 11 August 1790. The superscription on this document contains no reference to the Ottoman Empire. None the less, two considerations support the inference that it does in fact refer to that empire: (a) the fact that the document is included amongst other papers relating to the Levant Trade; (b) the presence, at the foot of the document, of a note declaring that "during these years Salt Petre was exported to Turkey."
- <sup>74</sup> Cf., (1) *Başbakanlık Arşivi: Cevdet Hariciye*, no. 7277, 7 Receb 1204/23 March 1790; (2) B. A.: *Ali Emiri, Selim III*, no. 1364, 25 Muharrem 1204/15 October 1790; (3) B. A.: *Ali Emiri, Selim III*, no. 7071, 12 Rebi's II 1204/19 December 1790, each of these documents bears Ainslie's seal.
- <sup>75</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 9, 10 March 1789; no. 11, 15 March 1789. Choiseul-Gouffier, writing in January 1789, had described the proposed role of warships to the Turks as being, for Ainslie, "un moyen de se faire valoir." (Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 14, 29 January 1789).
- <sup>76</sup> Yusuf Paşa to Hasan Paşa, *loc. cit.*, in note 62, above.
- <sup>77</sup> The role of the *Kapudan Paşa* in this matter is also mentioned in two other Turkish documents. Cf., B. A.: (1) *Hatt-i Humayun*, 446, 13 Cumada II 1203/10 March 1789; and also (2) B. A.: *Hatt-i Humayun*, 673, undated.
- <sup>78</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 19, 8 May 1789. Note remise par l'ambassadeur de France, le 10 Mai 1789.
- <sup>79</sup> Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 18, 22 April 1789.
- <sup>80</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 261/6, 1 June 1789. A copy of this letter was



- also sent to the Duke of Leeds (i.e., the former Earl of Carmarthen) and is to be found in P. R. O., F. O. 78/10.
- <sup>81</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 25, 8 June 1789; This letter was communicated also to Ewart at Berlin.
- <sup>82</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 261/6, 1 June 1789, a copy of this letter is also to be found in P. R. O., F. O. 78/10; see also Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., 78/10, no. 24, 1 June 1789; and no. 25, 8 June 1789.
- <sup>83</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, 1 June 1789. Cf., P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 25, 8 June 1789.
- <sup>84</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 30, 14 July 1789; Cf., Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 689 for the unfavourable opinion of Diez on Ainslie (A despatch of Diez dating from 22 May 1789).
- <sup>85</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 32, 22 July 1789; cf., also the judgment of Von Gotze on Diez, quoted in Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 733 note 2: "La trop grande idée, qu'il a de son esprit et de ses talens, le retient souvent d'agréer et de vouloir concevoir une idée, qui ne vient pas directement de lui ce que je laisse toujours faire tant que l'intérêt du Roi n'y souffre pas directement, pour ne pas l'aigrir; car il est déjà piqué, que le Roi n'entre pas dans toutes ses idées." Choiseul-Gouffier, the French ambassador at the Porte, had noted earlier of Diez that "il a des formes absolument a lui, et un genre d'arrogant auquel il est difficile que personne veuille se prêter." Choiseul-Gouffier to Montmorin, C. P. T., 179 (1789), no. 7, 20 February 1789.
- <sup>86</sup> Carmarthen to Ewart, P. R. O., FF. O. 64/15, no. 3, 17 February 1789, see also Ewart to Carmarthen: "The extracts of Sir Robert Ainslie's Dispatches, which Your Lordship has been pleased to communicate to me, will be of great use in enabling me to explain to this Court some essential circumstances, respecting the situation of affairs at Constantinople which have not been exactly stated here and consequently not well understood." (P. R. O., F. O. 64/15, no. 11, 3 March 1789).
- <sup>87</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 39, 22 October 1789, referring to a letter of Ewart to Ainslie dated 29 August 1789 (Ainslie received this letter at Istanbul on 12 October 1789). It is also worth noting that Ainslie was careful to enclose in his letter of 22 October copies of his recent correspondence with Diez, for the consideration of the Duke of Leeds.
- <sup>88</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, 22 October 1789.
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.* The "posthumous works" here mentioned refer no doubt to the writings of Frederick the Great, who had died at the end of 1786. A posthumous edition of his works was in fact published at Berlin in 1788: *Oeuvres Posthumes de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse 15 volumes*, (Berlin, 1788).
- <sup>90</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, 22 October 1789.
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, Ainslie enclosed in this letter - as he had done in his despatch of the same date sent to Leeds - all copies of his recent correspondence with Diez. Ainslie sent also with his letter of 22 October 1789 to the Duke of Leeds a copy of his letter to Ewart of the same date.
- <sup>92</sup> Diez received this letter about the middle of July 1789 (cf., Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 730).
- <sup>93</sup> Cf., Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 735-40.
- <sup>94</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 38, 8 October 1789. Diez also



made a similar approach at this time to the Dutch ambassador, Dedem, at Istanbul, and with same purpose in view that he had expounded to Ainslie.

- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, (enclosed with this despatch were copies of Diez's letter to Ainslie, dated 3 October 1789, and of Ainslie's written answer, dated 4 October 1789).
- <sup>96</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 39, 22 October 1789, (Ainslie enclosed with this letter his own note dated 10 October 1789).
- <sup>97</sup> The *validé* Sultan, i. e., the mother of the ruling Selim III - a personage, therefore, of exalted rank and great influence.
- <sup>98</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, 22 October 1789; see also Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 39, 22 October 1789: "I have formed a connection in the Seraglio upon which I believe we day depend, and I am certain that my verbal Representations reached the Sultan, and I can not doubt did Influence his Refusal to adopt the precipitate Measures proposed by the Bourbon Ministers, supported by the most extensive Corruption." Ainslie gives no exact indications as to the nature of his contact inside the Seraglio. It is very probable, however, that he is referring here to the Sultan's chief physician, a certain Dr. Gobis. Ainslie mentioned him in an earlier despatch of 7 April 1789: "A Mons<sup>r</sup>. Gobis, Physician of the Seraglio intimately known to the reigning Sultan and his Mother is likely to enjoy great Favour. Fortunately I have great Influence with the Doctor, and made him a Present of a Coach about six Weeks ago." (Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 15, 7 April 1789) Dr. Gobis is also mentioned in a list of Ainslie's expenses and disbursements dating from 7 March 1789: "a coach to the principal Physician of the Seraglio - three hundred and fifty Piasters." (Ainslie to Carmarthen, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 20, 8 May 1789, list of expenses).
- <sup>99</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, 22 October 1789. It is appropriate to note that Ainslie was careful to ensure that London had full information about his own actions at Istanbul. To achieve this end - and thus, to win, so he hoped, the approval of the English government - Ainslie sent to the Duke of Leeds copies of the letters that he had received from Diez and also of the letters which he himself wrote to Diez. At the same time he forwarded to Ewart at Berlin copies of the same correspondence. Ainslie seems to have begun this practice with his despatch of 8 October 1789 to the Duke of Leeds; and he continued thereafter to send various letters and documents to Leeds and Ewart as occasion arose. On this despatch of information to London and Berlin (F. O. 78/10, Ainslie to Leeds, no. 38, 8 October 1789) see, for example, Ainslie to Leeds, no. 39, 22 October 1789; "As my constant endeavours in the present Business have been to forward the common Cause, and to conciliate my Conduct with my Instructions to the Sense of which I have scrupulously adhered. I hope to be honoured with Your Grace's Approbation."
- <sup>100</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 42, 8 December 1789. The words in inverted commas, "the Prussian Ministers", referred no doubt to Hertzberg.
- <sup>101</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/10, no. 41, 22 November 1789.
- <sup>102</sup> Holland was of course allied with England and Prussia in 1788; while Sweden was at this time allied to the Ottoman Empire and, like the Turks, engaged in war with Russia.
- <sup>103</sup> Cf., Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 726-40.





PORTRAIT D' HASSAN PACHA.

Hasan Paşa  
The Kapudan Paşa





Comte de Choiseul - Gouffier  
French Ambassador at Istanbul





Selim III  
Ottoman Sultan 1787 - 1807





Yusuf Agah Efendi,  
First Ottoman Ambassador to England.



- <sup>104</sup> News of this agreement arrived on 10 March 1790. Ewart, writing to the Duke of Leeds next day, enclosed with his letter an extract from a despatch which Diez had sent to Berlin, justifying to the Prussian government the terms of the alliance concluded with the Turks. In his letter to London Ewart observes of Diez that "He has certainly exceeded his instructions in several respects, and particularly in the Stipulation of the first Article, that Prussia should attack Russia and Austria." (Ewart to Leeds, F. O. 64/17, no. 21, 11 March 1790).

### The Reichenbach Convention

July 1790

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Writing to Ewart, the British ambassador at Berlin, on 26 February 1790, the Duke of Leeds stated that:

offensive operations [i.e. against Austria or Russia] which Prussia may feel it her interest to adopt, would go beyond the line which this country [i.e. England] has uniformly laid down, and from which it does not appear that the present circumstances should induce her to depart.

Leeds also declared, however, that should the members of the Triple Alliance be able, through their mediation, to bring the states involved in the war on the Danube to accept a peace settlement on the basis of the status quo, then Great Britain would be willing to encourage the inclusion in the Triple Alliance of the Ottoman Empire, and also of Poland and Sweden, thus guaranteeing to them the terms embraced within the treaties of pacification. This was a clear indication, therefore, that Great Britain would not afford to Prussia an unqualified support for the schemes cherished at the court of Berlin.

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First Ottoman Ambassador to England



## CHAPTER IV

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The news of Joseph II's death reached his heir and successor, Leopold II, at Florence on 25 February 1790. The following day,



the new Emperor of Austria held a secret interview with Lord Hervey, the British ambassador at the Tuscan court. Leopold II indicated his readiness to bring to an end the current hostilities between Austria and the Ottoman Empire; his wish to avoid a conflict with Prussia; and his desire that Great Britain might undertake the role of mediator in these matters.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after receiving this information from Florence, the Duke of Leeds wrote to Ewart on 19 March and informed him that the new Emperor of Austria seemed to be "sincerely desirous to conclude Peace upon fair terms; having no object of ambition or aggrandisement in view, and wishing to avoid any measure which can give umbrage to other Powers." There was now, so the Duke inclined to believe, a good prospect of a peace "accomplished on the Terms proposed by the Allies, I mean, the Status quo, or nearly such."<sup>4</sup>

On 30 March, the Duke of Leeds sent a further, and a much more forthright, despatch to Ewart. Declaring the readiness of the British government to mediate if not between the Porte and both Austria and Russia, then at least between the Porte and Austria the Duke of Leeds informed Eward that:

the Status Quo appears to be the only and natural Idea which can be proposed as the General Basis of Pacification. Such an Idea however does not necessarily preclude any reasonable modifications of it, should any such come in question in the course of the Negotiation.

To this statement of principle, the Duke added, however, a firm disapproval of those Prussian aspirations which had found expression in the schemes of Hertzberg<sup>5</sup>:

it will however be proper to state explicitly that, at all events, the Idea of proposing Sacrifices on the Part of the Porte, by re-establishing with Austria the Limits of the Peace of Passarowitz, and by making cessions of some sort or other to Russia, on condition that Austria shall agree to relinquish Gallicia [to Poland] and it seems totally inconsistent with the Essential object (which every day renders more pressing) of re-establishing the General Tranquillity. Nothing but the most extensive necessity could undoubtedly bring Austria to agree to such a Proposal and that court would certainly first try the Event of a concert. There appears indeed to be so little justice in insisting upon such



an arrangement, between Powers not engaged in the war, as a condition of the Peace between those who are Parties to it, and it is so evidently contrary to our Defensive System, that, on the Principles already repeatedly stated, it would be impossible for this Country to give any Expectation of supporting Prussia in a contest begun on such grounds.

At the same time, Austria was making an official approach to Prussia - an approach designed to resolve the current difficulties existing between the two states. The Emperor Leopold II wrote a letter to Frederick William on 25 March 1790, which reached Berlin on 2 April.<sup>6</sup> A little more than a week later (i.e., 11 April), Ewart received from London Leeds's despatch of 30 March, copies of which he handed over to the Prussian authorities on the following day, 12 April. It was, therefore, with a full knowledge of the British government's attitude that Frederick William and his ministers, on 15 April, answered the letters which had come from Vienna on 25 March 1790. Prussia, on 15 April, accepted the amicable approach of Austria and indicated her readiness to enter into negotiations.

At Berlin the desire to realize the scheme of Hertzberg, at least in its main features, was still not yet extinct on 11 May 1790. Hertzberg himself submitted to the Austrian ambassador as a basis for the imminent negotiations between Prussia and Austria (a) the ending of the Turkish war through the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*, the members of the Triple Alliance acting as mediators - a solution which Hertzberg characterized as "dur et humiliant pour les deux cours de Vienne et de Petersbourg";<sup>7</sup> and (b) the establishment of peace through that interchange of territories, involving Wallachia, Moldavia, Galicia, Danzig and Thorn, which had formed the core of the Hertzberg scheme.<sup>8</sup>

The Emperor Leopold II, writing to Frederick William of Prussia on 25 May, made known the reaction of Austria to the Prussian proposals.<sup>9</sup> Leopold II declared his preference for a peace negotiated on the basis of the *status quo*. At the same time, he stated that Austria was obliged to reject all solutions which involved Austria in the loss of Galicia, observing in forthright terms that "La Prusse y gagnerait seule, et son gain seroit payé aux dépens de l'Autriche."<sup>10</sup> On 2 June 1790 Frederick



William wrote to Leopold II hoping that he might induce the Emperor to cede Galicia to Poland and thus enable Prussia to secure Danzig and Thorn.<sup>11</sup> His arguments in this regard were renewed in a further document addressed to Leopold II, dated 17 June.<sup>12</sup> But this continued effort to achieve the objectives of the Hertzberg scheme met with no success. Already on 17 June Leopold II had written to Frederick William, indicating firmly that he wished to achieve a peace settlement on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* and rejecting no less firmly the idea that Galicia might be surrendered to Poland<sup>13</sup>:

S. M. A. s'est formellement déclarée disposée à donner les mains à la paix sur la base du *status quo*, proposé par l'Angleterre, ... qu'aucune puissance, et la Prusse moins qu'aucune autre, n'a le droit d'exiger de l'Autriche de rendre une partie de la Gallicie à la Pologne.

It was now on 20 June at Schönwalte, where Prussian troops had been gathered close to the frontier of Bohemia, that Frederick William signed the ratification of the alliance concluded between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire in January 1790. It must be pointed out that the ambiguous and delicate nature of this move can be seen in the fact that the actual ratification was in terms far different from the words and intentions embodied in the agreement of January 1790. The danger that Prussia might through this alliance be involved in a conflict with Russia was avoided by the addition of a limiting phrase: Prussia would fulfil the terms of the agreement "autant qu'il sera en notre pouvoir et que les circonstances le permettront." Moreover the ratification did not mention the return of the Crimea to the Turks which the Porte, in fact, had not lost in the current war.<sup>14</sup>

It is difficult to define the reasons which led Frederick William to make this ratification of the Prussian-Ottoman alliance. His action perhaps was undertaken as a response to the attitude of Leopold II. For Austria was unwilling to yield Galicia to Poland, preferring a solution on the basis of the *status quo*. But might not Prussia draw advantage even from this actual preference of Austria? Prussia, faced with the possible failure of her own territorial ambitions, could not insist on a strict interpretation of the *status quo*, thus ensuring that Austria also obtain no territorial advantages from the prevailing situa-



tion. Prussia, however, when it came to actual negotiation with the Turks, would still be free to suggest that she use her influence at the Porte (consolidated there since the recent ratification) to secure territorial advantages for Austria - in return for which favour Austria would be expected of course to adopt a more compliant attitude over Galicia. And, indeed, a divergence of view was visible over the exact interpretation of the term *status quo*. Frederick William, writing to Leopold II at the beginning of June,<sup>15</sup> had referred to "le rétablissement du status quo plénier ou limité, tel que je l'ai proposé."<sup>16</sup> Hertzberg was later to insist on the same conception during the negotiations of the Convention of Reichenbach, "le status quo plénier avant la présente guerre."<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, as noted earlier, Leeds had written to Ewart on 30 March 1790, indicating that the British government would approve a return either to the exact *status quo ante bellum* or to an approximate version of it.<sup>18</sup> In other words, a somewhat less than literal interpretation of the term would be admissible. On the same date, Leeds had sent a similar despatch to the British ambassador at Vienna, Sir Robert Keith.<sup>19</sup> This had reached him on 14 April, and he was not slow to make its message known to the Austrian authorities.

It was not improbable, therefore, that Austria might seek to exploit the declared attitude of the British government in order to avoid a complete renunciation of all territorial advantage. For a successful manoeuvre along these lines would diminish whatever hope remained to Prussia at this particular moment of realizing her own territorial ambitions.

At the same time it cannot be excluded that other factors might well have influenced the decision of Frederick William to send Istanbul the ratification of the Ottoman-Prussian alliance. For on 5 May the Prussian ambassador at Istanbul had written to Berlin, stating that during the direct peace discussions then in progress between the Turks and the Russians at the front, Prince Potemkin, acting in the name of Catherine, had offered to the Porte a settlement of the conflict on terms representing virtually a return to the *status quo* before the war.<sup>20</sup> A sudden Turkish withdrawal from the war against Russia - and this at



a time when Austria was also moving towards peace - would have nullified the hopes of Prussia for a favourable territorial adjustment involving Danzig and Thorn. There is also a further point of relevance in that the time interval laid down in the alliance between Prussia and the Porte, for an exchange of ratification, a time interval in fact of five months, was now almost at an end.

The envoys of Prussia and the Austrian Empire now met for the purpose of direct negotiation at the village of Reichenbach on 27 June 1790. The first two sessions were held on this and the following day. At first, it would seem, Frederick William, fearing that the British ambassador to Berlin, Ewart, might urge the views of the British government so forcefully as to eliminate from discussion all mention of Galicia and to restrict the interchange of ideas to the solution of the *status quo*, managed to exclude him from the deliberations. Ewart and also the Dutch ambassador brought pressure to bear on Frederick William and urged that England and Holland, as members with Prussia of the Triple Alliance and also as states invited to undertake the role of mediation, should be represented at the Reichenbach talks. The King of Prussia was now constrained to yield to this demand. And Ewart, indeed, during the subsequent meeting of the Conference urged firmly on Prussia and on Austria the appropriateness of a peace settlement founded on a return to the *status quo*.<sup>21</sup>

The conference ended its deliberations on 27 July with the signing of the Convention of Reichenbach. This convention laid down as the basis of the future settlement between Austria and the Ottoman Empire a restoration of peace "sur la base du *status quo strict*, tel qu'il a été avant la guerre actuelle."<sup>22</sup> However the convention also included a clause allowing the Emperor Leopold II:

de faire, dans le cours des prochaines négociations de paix avec la Porte Ottomane, quelques modifications conciliatoires, pour la sûreté de Ses frontières, S. M. Prussienne entend que ces modifications soient absolument volontaires et dépendantes du bon gré de la Porte Ottomane et de la médiation de S. M. et de Ses alliés,

with the proviso "que si S. M. le roi de Hongrie et de Bohême



en retire quelques acquisitions ou autres avantages, Elle en donnera un équivalent proportionné à S. M. Prussienne."<sup>23</sup>

Sir Robert Ainslie, throughout the long months extending from the Prusso-Turkish alliance of January 1790 to the signing of the Convention of Reichenbach at the end of July 1790, had had but a limited role to play.

Once it had become aware that the new Emperor of Austria was inclined towards peace, the British government sent to Ainslie a despatch dated 16 March 1790 which instructed him to discover the attitude of the Ottoman ministers towards the possible negotiation of a peace settlement, either on the *status quo* terms or on terms involving no more than a moderate adjustment of the *status quo ante bellum*. Ainslie was authorized in the same despatch to make clear to the Turks that Great Britain and the allies would be most willing to undertake a role of mediation.<sup>24</sup> This despatch reached Ainslie at Istanbul on 1 May 1790.

The British ambassador hastened to make contact with the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, but only to receive from a message to the fact that matters had gone too far for the Porte "to act independent of Her Allies", but no approach had been made from the side of Austria and that negotiations therefore at that time were out of the question.<sup>25</sup> A month later, in June, Ainslie was still seeking to discover what terms the Porte regarded as necessary for an acceptable proposal for peace with Austria, although he had very little success.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile the Ottoman ministers were becoming anxious that no ratification of the alliance with Prussia had been received as yet from Berlin. Finally, on 20 June 1790, the *Re'is Efendi*, Raşid, sought Ainslie's advice on the matter. The British ambassador strove to reassure the Ottomans, urging them to have confidence in the good intentions of the Prussian Court.<sup>27</sup>

The term of five months (February to June) allotted to the exchange of the ratification was now at last at an end. On 20 June, the *Re'is Efendi* went so far as to inform Ainslie that "the Court of Berlin having neglected to comply with the Stipulations of the Treaty, it was now determined to transact all Matters



relating to that Business with the Interposition of the English and Dutch Ambassadors."<sup>28</sup> Ainslie at once communicated this news to Von Knobelsdorff, the Prussian ambassador, who was able to reassure the Turks, and allay for the moment their apprehensions of the attitude of Prussia.<sup>29</sup>

None the less, the *Re'is Efendi* on 12 July, asked Ainslie once more why a ratification of the treaty with Prussia had not arrived from Berlin; and Ainslie, acting in conjunction with the Dutch ambassador, urged yet again on the Ottomans the need to have faith in the good intentions of the Prussian government.<sup>30</sup> A little later, the Prussian ambassador, on 25 July, communicated to the *Re'is Efendi* the news that Frederick William was at Schönwalte, near the Austrian frontier, at the head of the Prussian army. Raşid Efendi once more contacted Ainslie, and received from him his private assurance that the Porte would do well to have full confidence in the conduct and the intentions of Prussia. At the same time the *Re'is Efendi* also assured the Prussian ambassador, Von Knobelsdorff, that the Porte reposed "unlimited Confidence in His Court."<sup>31</sup>

There was still, however, a certain residual uneasiness amongst the Ottoman dignitaries which was to be dispelled only on 27 August when Von Knobelsdorff informed them that he had received safely at last from Frederick William the ratification of the Prusso-Turkish alliance.<sup>32</sup> It was also towards the end of August that the news of the Convention of Reichenbach between Austria and Prussia reached Istanbul.

At the same time Ainslie received, on 26 August, additional instructions from London, in the form of despatches of 30 March and 8 June 1790.<sup>33</sup> These two despatches had been forwarded to Vienna, the British ambassador at Vienna, Sir Robert Keith, being ordered to hold back these documents, and to send them to Ainslie at Istanbul only when the negotiations at Reichenbach had been brought to a successful conclusion.<sup>34</sup> The Convention of Reichenbach was signed on 27 July 1790. On 2 August Sir Robert Keith forwarded the two despatches to Istanbul, Ainslie receiving them on 26 August.

The tenor of these despatches is quite clear. Ainslie was to assure the Ottomans that Great Britain favoured the end of



hostilities between the Porte and Austria and the negotiation of peace on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* or at least on terms approximate to it. Ainslie therefore was now to urge on the Ottoman ministers the need to consider forthwith the appointment of plenipotentiaries for the projected peace with Austria.<sup>35</sup>

Sir Robert Keith also sent his own observations with the two despatches to Ainslie, recommending him to make it clear to the Turks that the Reichenbach Convention concerned only the question of relations between Austria and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>36</sup> These developments at Istanbul in the last days of August 1790 now set before Ainslie the prospect of a more active role than he had been able to fulfil in recent months.

<sup>1</sup> Diez was recalled from his post as ambassador at the Porte even before the conclusion of the alliance. The decision to recall him was taken at Berlin in December 1789. Diez in fact left Istanbul in May 1790.

<sup>2</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 4, 26 February 1790. See also Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Hervey to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 528/3, no. 6, 28 February 1790.

<sup>4</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 6, 19 March 1790. This despatch was received in Berlin on 3 April 1790, see, Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 25, 3 April 1790.

<sup>5</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 8, 30 March 1790. This despatch reached Berlin on 11 April 1790, see, Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 27, 18 April 1790.

<sup>6</sup> See, Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/17, no. 27, 18 April 1790.

<sup>7</sup> L. P. J. Van de Spiegel, *Resumé des Négociations, qui accompagnèrent la Révolution des Pays-bas autrichiens, avec des pièces justificatives*, (Amsterdam, 1841) p. 239. The truth was that Prussia had little inclination for a peace settlement on the basis of the *status quo*, for such a solution would per force make it difficult for Prussia to acquire Danzig and Thorn, either through the Hertzberg scheme or some similar arrangement; cf., Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, no. 45, 24 June 1790: "His Prussian Majesty and His Minister are very averse to the Reestablishment of the status quo."

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 239-43.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 243-48.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 246.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 250-54.

<sup>12</sup> This document is to be found in Spiegel, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>14</sup> Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 781.

<sup>15</sup> Frederick William to Leopold, dated 2 June 1790, text to be found in Spiegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-54.



- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 251. The "limited return to the status quo" mentioned here is a reference to the proposals for a territorial exchange involving Galicia which Frederick William had proposed in an earlier letter to Leopold II dated 10-11 May 1790.
- <sup>17</sup> Hertzberg to the Austrian negotiators at Reichenbach, 15 July 1790, in Spiegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-90; Ewart also mentioned the Prussian insistence on "the strict status quo" (Eward to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, no. 51, Reichenbach, 16 July 1790).
- <sup>18</sup> See above, pp. 84.
- <sup>19</sup> Leeds to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 7/19, no. 7, 30 March 1790; Keith to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 7/19, no. 47, 17 April 1790; no. 50, 24 April 1790.
- <sup>20</sup> This despatch reached Berlin probably in the early days of June. Ewart transmitted a copy of Knobelsdorff's despatch to London with his own communication to London dated 11 June 1790 (see, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18).
- <sup>21</sup> Eward to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, no. 46, Breslaw, 27 June 1790; see also his no. 48, Reichenbach, 1 July 1790; no. 50, Reichenbach, 8 July 1790; no. 51, Reichenbach, 16 July 1790; no. 52, Reichenbach, 18 July 1790; no. 54, Reichenbach, 22 July 1790.
- <sup>22</sup> Spiegel, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 299.
- <sup>24</sup> Leeds to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 3, 16 March 1790.
- <sup>25</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 10, 8 May 1790.
- <sup>26</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 12, 8 June 1790; no. 13, 22 June 1790.
- <sup>27</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 13, 22 June 1790.
- <sup>28</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 15, 3 July 1790.
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 17, 22 July 1790. See also the enclosure with this letter, a note given to the Porte by Ainslie and the Dutch ambassador F. G. Van Dedem, dated 14 July 1790.
- <sup>31</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 18, 30 July 1790.
- <sup>32</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 21, 29 August 1790. The ratification had reached Von Knobelsdorff at Istanbul on 22 August 1790.
- <sup>33</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 21, 29 August 1790.
- <sup>34</sup> Leeds to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 7/19, no. 7, 30 March 1790 and no. 13, 8 June 1790. Cf., Leeds to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 4, 30 March 1790 and no. 8, 8 June 1790.
- <sup>35</sup> Keith to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, 2 August 1790.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*



## CHAPTER V

### The British Interest - The Integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the Government Crisis of 1791

The Convention of Reichenbach concluded at the end of July 1790 had resolved the immediate questions in dispute between Prussia and Austria. This Convention now left Austria free to bring to an end her conflict with the Ottoman Empire. It also laid down that the peace to be made between the Austrians and the Turks should rest on the principle of the *status quo ante bellum* or at least on terms approximate to that condition. It was also envisaged that the three states constituting the Triple Alliance of 1788 (i.e., Prussia, Holland and England) would assume the role of mediation in the negotiations preceding the peace settlement.

The Convention of Reichenbach was not, however, the sole factor defining the situation of Prussia. Frederick William had, in June 1790, ratified the alliance made between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire in January of that same year. It is true that the ratification itself was so framed as to avoid a commitment of Prussia to support the Ottoman Empire in its desire to regain from Russia control of the Crimea; and it was also framed in such a manner as to free Prussia, at need, from any obligation to wage war against Russia on behalf of the Porte. None the less the fact remained that Prussia had entered into a formal alliance with the Ottoman Empire - an alliance, moreover, which it was still possible to construe as offensive rather than defensive in character and which might yet cause trouble between the courts



of Berlin and St. Petersburg. It is understandable, therefore, that Prussia should seek to learn in some detail what the attitude of her partners in the Triple Alliance would be, if difficulties did in fact arise between Prussia and Russia. On 4 August 1790 Frederick William observed to Ewart, the British ambassador at Berlin, that it "remained to be considered what measures ought to be adopted to induce Russia to agree to the same terms of Pacification [i.e., the Convention of Reichenbach.]" He added also that <sup>1</sup>:

should this not be the case, and should [he] be obliged to enforce His Demand [i.e., compliance with the Reichenbach Convention], some cooperation by Sea might become necessary, in which case He relied on His Majesty's friendship and assistance, in support of their common interests and in order to effectuate a general Peace, on such equitable terms.

The objective underlying the request of Frederick William "for some cooperations" is indicated clearly in a note which the Prussian ministers Finckenstein and Hertzberg addressed to Ewart on 26 September 1790. The two ministers informed Ewart that the King of Prussia would be<sup>2</sup>:

bien aise de savoir d'une manière positive les intentions de Sa Majesté Britannique, sur quelle assistance et sur quel envoi de vaisseaux dans la Baltique Elle pourrait Compter au printems prochain. C'est après avoir cette assurance précise que le Roi voudrait se concerter avec Sa Majesté Britannique sur les Formes d'une déclaration énergique et commune à faire à la Cour de Russie

— a passage which underlines the strong desire of Frederick William to secure the visible and evident support of George III, before allowing himself to run the risk of a serious confrontation with Catherine II.<sup>3</sup>

The response evoked from London reflected the continuing importance which Pitt and his ministers set on the alliance between Great Britain and Prussia (and therefore their inclination to meet, at least in some measure, the wishes of Frederick William) and also a certain apprehension about the possible involvement of England in new difficulties with Russia.

The Duke of Leeds, writing to Ewart on 14 August 1790,



stated that the government at London viewed with favour an approach to the court of St. Petersburg, urging that Russia accept (as Austria proposed to do) a peace settlement on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* or not far remote from it. The Duke indicated also that the British ambassador at St. Petersburg would be instructed to support the representations of the Prussian ambassador there;<sup>4</sup> and that orders would be given at London for gathering together a naval squadron.<sup>5</sup> At the same time the Duke pointed out that various difficulties might make it impossible for Great Britain in fact to send that squadron into the Baltic: "His Majesty cannot answer for being able actually to send a Squadron into the Baltic."<sup>6</sup>

Ewart, on grounds of ill-health, returned from Berlin to London in October 1790. He continued throughout the winter of 1790-91 to emphasize to Pitt and his colleagues the vital importance of the Prussian alliance to Great Britain. Ewart also pointed out the complications which might arise with Prussia from the reluctance of the British government - a reluctance maintained throughout these months - to meet the desire of Frederick William for the presence of a British naval squadron in the Baltic. His attitude is well exemplified in a letter which he wrote to Pitt on 15 January 1791.<sup>7</sup> Here Ewart stresses the impatient wish of Frederick William that Pitt send a naval force into the Baltic, adding that the King of Prussia was becoming more and more distrustful of Great Britain on account of rumours then current that the English ministers would never order a naval squadron to sail into the Baltic Sea on behalf of Prussia.<sup>8</sup> To Ewart, as this letter makes clear, effective co-operation between Britain and Prussia was of major importance. For him, not to support such a co-operation meant that "all our influence at Berlin and in the North, in general, would soon be of no avail, would make it impossible to maintain the present system<sup>9</sup> long and still more so to extend it."

Ewart, to his emphasis on the vital importance of the Prussian connection for Great Britain, added considerations of a different order. The effectiveness of the Triple Alliance rested, in his judgment, on the continuing dominance of Prussia in the affairs of central and eastern Europe. A threat of the most formidable nature now threatened that dominance - a threat



arising from the southwards advance of Russia towards the Black Sea. Ewart argued that in order to maintain the effectiveness of Prussia as a power of the first importance and, therefore, as a member of the Triple Alliance, it would be essential to check the ambition of Russia (and, indeed, of Austria) to win new territories at the expence of the Ottoman Empire and also of Poland. Failure to halt these ambitions - above all, in the case of Russia - might well lead to a most unwelcome and even fatal diminution in the status and strength of Prussia. Nowhere does Ewart express his general argument more forcefully than in a memorandum which he submitted to Pitt late in 1790<sup>10</sup>:

it is conceived that, in every case of Turkey or Poland being attacked, the Allies would be obliged to interfere, both on account of Prussia, and of the common interests of the two Maritime Powers to preserve peace, and prevent any changes from happening in the present state of things. The situation of the King of Prussia makes it absolutely necessary for Him, to oppose every attempt made by the two Imperial Courts, conjointly or separately, to encroach upon Poland or Turkey, as has been sufficiently proved by recent transactions, which have obliged Him to contract defensive engagements with those two Powers, and His resources as an Ally, as well as His general political consequence depend on their being confirmed. For, it is evident that had the two Imperial Courts succeeded in executing their plans of aggrandisement, no proportion would have remained between their resources and those of Prussia, which would have become an inferior and subordinate Power; and it is no less certain that had Russia been allowed to acquire the direction of Poland (as she had so nearly done two years ago by the conclusion of an offensive and defensive Alliance) Prussia being entirely open on that side, could no longer have secured her own frontier, and would have been rendered an useless and even burthensome Ally. It follows, from this reasoning, that in proportion as the Prussian connection is of importance to Great Britain and Holland, they are interested in maintaining the guarantee of Poland and Turkey, for which purpose a defensive *casus foederis* applying to a naval support would be chiefly necessary, as Prussia can protect them sufficiently by land; but it is certain that unless this is done, there is no security even for Constantinople, while Russia is in possession of the Crimea.

Ewart, on several occasions, reduced his comments on the



southwards advance of Russia to a narrower focus, considering now about the importance of Ochakov, an Ottoman fortress located at the mouth of the river Dniestr and destined to have a prominent role in the course of the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-92. Of this fortress Ewart, writing to Pitt on 16 January 1791, will observe that<sup>11</sup>:

The possession of Oczakow is allowed by everybody to be very essential for enabling the Turks to maintain a defensive frontier against Russia; and it is equally admitted that its being retained by the latter along with the Crimea furnishes every advantage for carrying on offensive operations against the remaining Ottoman dominions in Europe, Constantinople not excepted.

He returned to this theme in a subsequent letter to Pitt dated 11 February 1791, describing as fallacious the Dutch claim that the cession of Ochakov and its dependent territories to Russia would mean, for the Ottomans, little more than the loss of a "desert tract of ground between two rivers [i.e., the Dniestr and the Bog]." <sup>12</sup>

Ewart explained his views about Ochakov with no less vigour when he sought to counter the opinion of Lord Auckland, the British ambassador at The Hague. Auckland, addressing himself to Pitt on 29 January 1791, declared that the progress of Russia would be<sup>13</sup>:

little advanced by the possession of Oczakow. If the Turks proceed to fortify the banks of the Dniester, or if they restore only their fortifications on the banks of the Danube upon a better system of defence, I am assured that, in any future war, they would have at least as good means of resistance as in the case of the present disastrous war.

On 12 February 1791 Ewart set before Lord Auckland his own judgment of the Ochakov situation:

all the military men whom I have consulted insist that the possession of Oczakow is essential for enabling the Turks to maintain a defensive frontier against Russia, since its being retained by the latter, along with the Crimea, would furnish every advantage for carrying on offensive operations, against the remaining Ottoman dominions in Europe, Constantinople not excepted.



Ewart, having delivered himself of this verdict, proceeded at once in the same letter to link the fate of Ochakov with the future of Prussia, indicating to Auckland that<sup>14</sup>:

Without, however examining at length your Lordship's observation, that the political existence and safety of the Turks would probably not be diminished if they were obliged to have their barrier on the western borders of the Dniester, or even of the Danube, I only ask what would become of Prussia, if the two Imperial Courts either separately or conjointly were allowed to make any farther acquisitions, or to put themselves in a situation to do so when they might think proper?

The arguments by Ewart are repeated and not merely repeated, but often amplified and elaborated in other sources dating from this time. These repetitions and amplifications can be found in the pamphlet literature published in London during these years,<sup>15</sup> and also in the correspondence and dispatches of various people connected with government circles in London. Several lines of arguments, distinct but of course interrelated, are discernible in this material.

Some of the documents indicate a measure of the serious concern for the possible fate of the Ottoman Empire, should the southwards advance of Russia be allowed to continue unchecked. To one English official serving under the Duke of Leeds, the extension of Russian influence into the lands around the Black Sea was so momentous as to raise in his mind the question whether or not "she [i.e., Russia] shall hold the Turkish Empire at her absolute disposal".<sup>16</sup> Lord Belgrave, speaking in Parliament on 12 April 1791, ascertained that.<sup>17</sup>

"if the empress was suffered to proceed in her career of victories, he made no doubt but they would terminate in the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and the conquest of the Ottoman provinces in this quarter of the globe, and of Constantinople itself. The consequences might then be truly alarming to every maritime power. As soon as the Russians should have passed the Dardanelles, they would to a certainty be joined by the faithless Greeks; and where their victories would afterwards end, God alone could tell!"

No less forthright was the language of a pamphlet (perhaps government - inspired), which made its appearance in 1791<sup>18</sup>:



"without some strong maritime power to assist her [i.e., The Ottoman Empire] and to contribute to her defence, her reformation and improvement, the Turks in perhaps a single campaign, but, in all human probability in less than a generation, must inevitably fall a prey to the stubborn ambition, rancour, and reiterated blows of Russia. Turkey can alone be preserved from final and approaching ruin by a powerful British fleet; by uniting the interest of the latter power more closely with her own, by the reciprocal ties of commerce and mutual benefit."

This concern for the fate of the Ottoman Empire confronted now with the menacing power of Russia was linked, of course, with other considerations. It was feared that Russia might soon become a formidable naval power in the Black Sea and- a more disturbing prospect - in the Mediterranean also. One document argued that the possession of Oczakov might bestow on Russia<sup>19</sup>

"such a command in the Black Sea as to enable her to avail herself of all the advantages of the Crimea to erect a formidable maritime power to command Constantinople and indeed, the whole of the east of Europe."

Yet another document refers to<sup>20</sup>

"[the] consequences not only to be dreaded by the Turks, but which must be alarming to every maritime power whether situated upon, or in any way concerned in the commerce of the Mediterranean".

A further instance can be cited from 12 April 1791, when the Parliament at Westminster was informed that <sup>21</sup>

"Constantinople itself was endangered; and if this country had not interfered to prevent the utter and impending annihilation of the Turkish power in Europe the time might not be very remote, when the fleets of Russia would triumph in the Mediterranean, an object to the whole world, of her activity, adroitness, and power and of our supineness, impotence, and disgrace."

There was apprehension, too, that the commerce of Russia might now be extended - on a large scale - throughout the Black Sea and thence into the Mediterranean. One member of parliament, speaking in April 1791, was to declare that<sup>22</sup>

"the Turks are every day more and more imitating our manners, and accustoming themselves to require our manuf-



actures, and the articles we export to their country; they are emerging from their inactivity and indolence, and improvements of various kinds are introduced among them. Printing presses have been very lately established in their capital; and we may reasonably hope, that soon the demand for our articles of exportation in Turkey will be very great, and that we may count the Levant among the best markets our manufacturers have."

A large development of the Russian commerce in a Southerly direction might well render doubtful all prospect of an increase in English trade with the Levant. No document of this time is more explicit than the book of David Sutherland entitled "*A Tour up the Straits, from Gibraltar to Constantinople.*" Sutherland alluded to the varied resources of the Ottoman Empire, adding that<sup>23</sup>

"the Turks, happily for us, are not a commercial people, notwithstanding their Empire has every advantage to induce them to become so. We cannot do without those valuable articles which their soil produces almost spontaneously; and the Turk, like the easy possessor of a very rich mine, allows us to enrich ourselves at our pleasure", and asking at once "would the Empress [of Russia] be equally moderate if in possession of this fertile region Believe me, she would not."

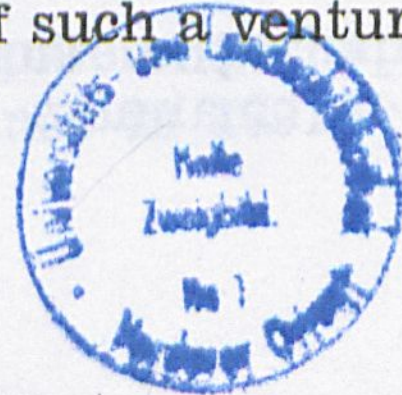
It seemed to Sutherland that should Russia be allowed to advance unchecked<sup>24</sup>

"all her politics would be directed to increase her trade and shipping, and consequently her naval force: and, thus inclined, with such a country, she would soon rise to a maritime power much beyond what the world has ever experienced."

His firm belief was that<sup>25</sup>

"England will never derive such advantages from Turkey, as while it remains in the hands of the Ottomans."

The arguments outlined above did not go unopposed. A counter - assault was raised against them on various lines of approach. Lord Auckland, the British ambassador at The Hague, viewing with apprehension the possible involvement of Great Britain in a naval confrontation with Russia, underlined the practical difficulties, and also the large expense of such a venture - a venture which he characterized as<sup>26</sup>





"extremely difficult in the execution, and certain to produce an expense far beyond any adequate object to be attained."

Charles James Fox was to observe of such an involvement that "it certainly held out the alarm of taxes and additional burdens upon the public."<sup>27</sup>

Included in the arguments of those who favoured the intervention of England in the war in 1787 was the belief that the southward advance of Russia endangered the future of the Ottoman Empire; that, in so doing, it threatened the European balance of power; and that these dangers might best be met through the association of the Ottoman Empire, at least in some degree, with the political alignments and attitudes embodied in the Triple Alliance of 1788. These views, however, did not remain unchallenged. Fox, alluding to the belief that<sup>28</sup>

"if the empress of Russia was suffered to make conquests upon the Turks, the balance of power would be destroyed, and Russia would become so powerful, as to endanger either our greatness or our existence",

declared in forthright words that<sup>29</sup>

"the progress of the Russian arms was but an empty and a false pretence for a war with Russia."

Burke - meriting perhaps rebuke on the grounds of an impercipient and prejudice reminiscent of an earlier and less tolerant age than his own saw no real occasion for assistance to the Turks<sup>30</sup>:

"He had never before heard it held forth, that the Turkish empire was ever considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They had nothing to do with European power; they considered themselves as wholly Asiatic. Where was the Turkish resident at our court, the court of Prussia, or of Holland? They despised and condemned all christian princes, as infidels, and only wished to subdue and exterminate them and their people. What had these worse than savages to do with the powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction, and pestilence amongst them?"

The fear that Russia, through her continuing conquests, might extend her maritime and commercial influence from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean was also subject to criticism. Fox, bearing in mind the dominant role of France at the Porte in earlier times, informed the Parliament at Westminster that<sup>31</sup>



"it would be madness in us to show the most lively jealousy of the growing power of Russia in the Black Sea, a sea in which of all the seas in the globe, not a single British ship ever appears. But it might be said, that if the Russians became masters of the Black Sea, they would soon appear in the Mediterranean. It was indifferent to him if they did ... Why we should assist the Turks in preserving to them the dominion of the Black Sea, he could not tell, unless it was that we should leave it in their power to give France, our rival, the monopoly of the levant trade, a monopoly not derived from the cheapness of her merchandise or its superiority over ours, but from the open and avowed partiality and kindness of the Turkish government to the French."

A pamphlet written in 1791, asked roundly and directly<sup>32</sup>:

"What in the name of wonder has the navigation in the Black Sea to do with our trade in the Baltic, or indeed with our trade any where? It is a question if ever a British flag appeared there. In short, we have as much to say to the Yellow Sea, in China."

At the same time a further tract, also in 1791, saw in the southward advance of Russia large commercial opportunities for England in the not distant future and described Russia as<sup>33</sup>

"a country which, from its natural productions, can supply all our wants, and will require for generation to come, an immense supply from our manufactures ... every new subject acquired by Russia, will be a new consumer gained to our industrious merchant, and ingenious mechanic."

The situation prevailing at this time in the lands around the Black Sea had also evoked some comment from Sir Robert Ainslie. Writing to the Duke of Leeds on 19 January 1791, he gave it as his opinion that<sup>34</sup>

"The Porte has long esteemed the Recovery of the Crimea, and the Expulsion of all Christian Flags from the navigation of the Black Sea as consistent with the interests of Religion, and necessary to the Existence of their Power in Europe."

Bearing in mind that, at the moment of his writing a Polish ambassador was at the Porte, seeking to negotiate an alliance with the Turks, Ainslie observed in this same letter that the Ottomans had little trust in the continued independence of Poland and little inclination, therefore, towards an *entente* with that state. One line of argument propounded during these years



was that a new Polish trade running southwards to the coast of the Black Sea might offer to England, with the co-operation of the Turks, a possible replacement for the important trade in naval stores hitherto maintained between Russia and England through the Baltic.<sup>35</sup> It was envisaged also that new commercial advantages might fall to England in the territories adjacent to the Black Sea. Ainslie was far from sanguine in relation to this matter. His letter to the Duke of Leeds underlines the expense involved in the navigation of English ships to the Black Sea, the restricted nature of the market which, in his view, English manufactures would find there, and the inferior character of the raw materials that England might draw from that region.<sup>36</sup>

The references assembled here on the southward advance of Russia, on the future of the Ottoman Empire and on the situation developing within the territories around the Black Sea deserve some additional comment. It is worth noting that through the debates of this time centring on the fate of Oczakov there runs a note of cold and unfavourable criticism directed against that earlier entente between Great Britain and Russia which had found its embodiment in the Anglo-Russian agreements of 1742, and in particular, of 1766. A memoir of unknown origin but preserved amongst the papers of William Pitt and dating from June 1791, expresses in a clear form the doubts about the Russian connection now beginning to be heard in England. This document enquires<sup>37</sup>:

“why are we to shew an imprudent and impolitick Complaisance to a Sovereign [i.e., Catherine] who far from ever having shewn any inclination to be on good terms with us, has constantly preferred our Enemies, and has uniformly repaid our friendship with indifference and our services with ingratitude”

and continues with the assertion that

for these last “twenty years we have tried every means to be on good terms with the Empress; the most servile flattery as well as substantial advantageous offers have been in vain tried by all Parties; and England is perhaps the only one in the voluminous list of those who have aspired to that Lady’s favours, who after a long constant and diligent courtship has remained totally unsuccessful. Twenty years ago, actuated perhaps more by mistaken policy than real wisdom, we



assisted the Empress in carrying her Fleet round into the Mediterranean and by that means laid the foundation of all her future glory, for the Turks never recovered the blow they received at Chesme; how was this service repaid? how did Her Imp:<sup>1</sup> Majesty express her gratitude? By repeatedly refusing the most friendly advances made by Us towards a connection and Alliance with her, by constantly treating us with cold indifference, ... since the Peace of 1783, we have constantly renewed our friendly offers and have met with nothing but the most humiliating refusals."

At the same time there was a sense that a new situation, perhaps formidable in its implications for the future, had arisen in Eastern Europe. The memoir of June 1791 mentioned above observes that :

"the Peace of Kaidnardjy,<sup>38</sup> the seizure of the Crimea,<sup>39</sup> and the late rapid increase of the Russian power, have given a new turn to the politicks as well as interests of the Court of Petersburg,"

while David Sutherland, reflecting on the uncertain prospect which now confronted the Turks describes the settlement of Küçük Kaynarca as<sup>40</sup>

"a treaty which created [the] present distress [of the Turks] - a treaty to which we ourselves, in an hour of mistaken policy compelled [them] to submit, and which now, that we know our true interests, we are bound to redress."

Another document dating from these years reveals a sensitive, even an acute awareness of what was involved in the southward advance of Russia. There was a realization that the southern steppe lands now falling under the effective control of St. Petersburg constituted a region endowed with vast resources; and that the natural outlet for this wealth would lie along the lines of the great rivers (e.g., Don, Dnepr, Bug, Dnestr) flowing into the Black Sea. This realization is well exemplified in the address of Thomas Stanley to the Parliament in London, on 12 April 1791. Stanley on this occasion declared of Russia that<sup>41</sup>

"the prosperity of her new Country is rising fast towards its meridian. Possessor of provinces the richest in the world, such as Astrachan, Georgia, the Crimea, and parts of the Cuban, in which are to be procured every article requisite for the construction and fitting out of fleets; possessor of the



navigation of rivers, down which, stores and productions of every kind may be brought, either from the interior provinces of her own dominions, or the provinces of Poland, and of Moldavia and Wallachia, she will be acquiring a strenght which, in a few years, will be increased to a degree that will give those countries alone, independent of her northern provinces, a power that will alarm Europe: be capable when it pleases, of overrunning every province of the Turks; will make even Poland fearful for the fate of her southern provinces, and prove most fatal to the safety and consequence of so near a neighbour to them as Prussia. An extensive commerce will be its own. Whenever Turkey is overpowered (and the time must come, if we watch not this growing country, when Turkey will be overpowered), at once the richest of all these provinces surrounding the Black Sea will be poured into the Mediterranean; navies sufficiently powerful to protect this commerce, and even to aim at conquests, will break into the Mediterranean at the same time."

Russia, once she had established herself in firm control of the lands around the Black Sea would seek to develop and exploit the natural wealth of those territories and, through the development of her maritime resources in the Black Sea, would attempt to export them into the Mediterranean area. One comment made in June 1791 is of relevance here<sup>42</sup>

"Russia taking advantage of that stipulation of the Treaty of Kaidnarjy by which her marine enjoyed the free navigation of the Dardanelles, sent orders to all her Consuls, who swarmed in the Archipelago, to give Russian colours and Passes to all Ships of all Nations who chose to trade with the Crimea, and though the War soon put a stop to this Commerce the face of the Crimea and the Southern Provinces already began to wear a new appearance."

Some of the participants in the continuing debate of these years even went so far as to envisage the extension of Russian influence, commercial and naval, in directions most unwelcome to Great Britain - i.e., to Egypt, to the Red Sea, and even to India. Lord Belgrave, addressing the Parliament in London on 12 April 1791, warned that Russia might establish herself in Lower Egypt, at Alexandria, and thus dominate much of the Levantine world.<sup>43</sup> Thomas Stanley, also speaking in Parliament, declared in February 1792 his fear that, should the future course of events bring Istanbul into the hands of Russia, one result might well be the



establishment of new "emporiums of [Russian] trade" both on the coasts of the Mediterranean and also along the shore of the Red Sea,

"where every temptation would be held out to bold and speculative adventurers."<sup>44</sup>

Henry Dundas, also addressing Parliament, in February 1792

"owned he should fear for our possessions in India, if Russia were mistress of those islands [i.e., the archipelago]; of Egypt and the Red Sea."<sup>45</sup>

A sober evaluation of the various arguments outlined above requires a measure of caution and restraint. Some of the comments uttered at this time are, beyond doubt, of "inspired" origin, i.e., pro-government or anti-government in character. Other comments have, as it were, an "academic" air, reflecting perhaps the exigencies of debate rather than the realities of the moment. Of the arguments here under review some are reflections of attitudes orientated as much towards the past rather than towards the future - e.g., the not infrequent preoccupation with the - for Great Britain - more unrewarding aspects of the Russian connection or not infrequent predisposition to overestimate the importance of states like Sweden, Poland, and even the Ottoman Empire as possible obstacles to the further enlargement of Russian influence. Not a few of the arguments are "speculative" in tone and substance - none perhaps more so than the occasional references to Egypt, the Red Sea and India. Such references served to fortify a particular line of discussion rather than to reflect a genuine and elaborate conviction. It would be a mistake to read into them the fears of the Victorian age for the English dominions in India, fears which owed their gradual emergence in no small degree to the advance of Russia, during the later years, in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

None the less, scepticism must not be carried too far. The debates centred around the "Oczakow Crisis" do reveal a certain awareness, as yet somewhat hesitant and ill-formed, of new perspectives opening out before Europe. There was now a growing awareness of Russia as a formidable state established along the shores of the Black Sea and enriched with vast additional resources. There was also an awareness that the fate of the Ottoman



Empire was now in the balance - and that *its future* would be of great and indeed inescapable significance for the powers of Europe. It is true that this awakening realization of change arose from the importance, to Great Britain of the *entente* with Prussia and from the ambitions of Prussia in Eastern Europe; and yet there remains a solid ground of justification for the remark of Edmund Burke quoted earlier in this chapter that "considering the Turkish empire as any part of the balance of power in Europe, was new"<sup>46</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Ewart to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, no. 59, 5 August 1790. See also on this theme Ewart to Leeds, no. 57, 28 July 1790; no. 61, 8 August 1790; no. 64, 1 September 1790; no. 71, 26 September 1790.
- <sup>2</sup> Finckenstein [Karl Wilhelm, Count von] and Hertzberg to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, 26 September 1790.
- <sup>3</sup> See, Jackson to Leeds, B. M. Egerton MSS., 3501, Private, 28 August 1790.
- <sup>4</sup> See, Leeds to Whitworth, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 17 August 1790.
- <sup>5</sup> Leeds to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 64/18, Secret, no. 23, 14 August 1790.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> Ewart to Pitt, Ewart Papers, 15 January 1791.
- <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> i.e., the political alignment set up in 1788.
- <sup>10</sup> This document is undated, but it can perhaps be assigned to November 1790. See, P. R. O., P. R. O. 30/8/332, part 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Ewart to Pitt, Ewart Papers, Bath, 16 January 1791.
- <sup>12</sup> Ewart to Pitt, Ewart Papers, Bath, 11 February 1791.
- <sup>13</sup> Auckland to Pitt, H. M. C., *Dropmore MSS.*, II, p. 22, 29 January 1791; see also Auckland to Pitt, 2 February 1791, *ibid.*, pp. 23-25.
- <sup>14</sup> Ewart to Auckland, Ewart Papers, Bath, 12 February 1791.
- <sup>15</sup> The general characteristics of this pamphlet literature are well illustrated by the following examples: (a) A. Brough, *A View of the Importance of the Trade between Great Britain and Russia* (London 1789), (b) *An address to the People of England upon the Subject of the intended War with Russia* (London 1791); (c) *Consideration on the Approach of War and the Conduct of His Majesty's Ministers* (London 1791). For a detailed study of this pamphlet literature. see M.S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia 1553-1815* (London 1958).
- <sup>16</sup> Burges to Auckland: 22 February 1791 in *Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Bland Burgess* ed. S. Hutton (London 1885), p. 160.
- <sup>17</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX (London 1817), "Debate on Mr. Gray's Motion respecting the Preparations for a War with Russia", p. 180
- <sup>18</sup> *A Comparative Estimate of the Advantages Great Britain would derive from a Commercial Alliance with the Ottoman in preference to the Russian Empire* (London 1791). pp. 7-8. The Duke of Leeds writing to Lord Auckland on



11 March 1791 was to observe that" when the Czar took Azoph towards the end of the last century, Bp. Burnet remarked «this opened the Euxine sea to him; so that if he be furnished with men skilled in the building and sailing of ships, this may have consequences that may much distress Constantinople and be in the end fatal to that Empire». The Bishop's remarks was just even at that early period of Russian aggrandisement, the progress it has since made ... justifies those apprehensions respecting the fate of Turkey". (Leeds to Auckland, 11 March 1791; *B. M. Add. MSS.* 34436, fols. 186-187); Other allusions to this theme of the threat to the Ottoman Empire can be found in the parliamentary debates, cf. *Parliamentary History*, XXIX pp. 180, 235, 427, 852, 948. The same apprehension is shown also in the various attempts to assess the real importance of the fortress of Oczakov, (see, for example, *Auckland's Journal*, op. cit., pp. 382-383, Pitt to Auckland : 7 March 1791); P. R. O. 338/8 Chatham Papers, (*Memoires concerning the Trade in Petersburg and Present Situation of Russia* (London, June 1791).

- <sup>19</sup> Burges to Auckland : 1 March 1791 in *Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Burges*, p. 161.
- <sup>20</sup> Leeds to Auckland : *Add. MSS.* 34436 f. 187.
- <sup>21</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 184; further references to a possible and threatening increase in the naval strength of Russia are to be found in *Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Bland Burges*, pp. 160-162.
- <sup>22</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 196. See also *ibid*, p. 235 an observation that" the trade with Turkey might be so improved as to become of greater consequence than that with Russia now has".
- <sup>23</sup> Captain David Sutherland, *A Tour up the Straits from Gibraltar to Constantinople*, 2nd edit. (London 1790), pp. 182-3.
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p. 183.
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p. 184.
- <sup>26</sup> Auckland to Pitt : *H. M. C., Dropmore MSS.*, p. 22, 22 January 1791, see also *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 211 speech of Sheridan given on 12 April 1791: "the lot of England would be to pay the piper, and that the expense which we might incur would be all that would fall to our share".
- <sup>27</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 62 speech of 29 March 1791.
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 63.
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 65.
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 76-77 (speech of 29 March 1791). See also for a similar judgment the speech of Mr. Whitbread delivered to Parliament on 12 April 1791 : "Suppose that the Empress could realize all her ambition, and get possession of Constantinople and expel the Turks from all their European provinces : would any unprejudiced man contend that by such an act mankind would not be largely benefited? Would any man contend that the expulsion of a race of beings, whose abominable tyranny proscribed the arts and literature, and every thing that was good and great and amiable would not conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the World? He was convinced it would." (*Parliamentary History*, XXIX, pp. 201-212).
- <sup>31</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 67 (speech of Fox, 29 March 1791).
- <sup>32</sup> *Observations and Reflections on a War with Russia*, (London 1791) p. 25.
- <sup>33</sup> *Thoughts concerning the Present Critical Situation of Europe addressed to the*



*King and both House of Parliament, by a Friend to his Country*, (London 1791), p. 191. Fox himself had alluded briefly in Parliament to the possible commercial benefit that England might derive from the Russian acquisition of new territories around the Black Sea: "If we were on good terms with Russia, we might then perhaps derive a chance of trading to her conquests from which we were shut out while they belonged to the Porte." (*Parliamentary History*, XXIX, p. 68).

<sup>34</sup> Sir Robert Ainslie sent an extract of this letter to Sir Robert Keith, the British ambassador to the Emperor, who was then at Sistova involved in the peace negotiations between Austria and the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>35</sup> Cf., on this theme the unfavourable comments in the pamphlet of 1791, *Observations and reflections on a War with Russia* p. 25.

<sup>36</sup> Ainslie to Leeds: P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 19 January 1791.

<sup>37</sup> P. R. O. 30/8/337, Chatham Papers, Memoir concerning the Trade, Interests and present Situation of Russia, (London June 1791), ff. 18-20 see also *ibid.*, ff. 10-11; additional references can be found in David Sutherland, *A Tour up the Straits*, pp. 171-182; and also, *Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Burges*, *op. cit.*, p. 161, Burges to Auckland, 1 March 1791.

<sup>38</sup> The peace of Küçük Kaynarca concluded between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in July 1774.

<sup>39</sup> *op. cit.*, note 37 f. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 335, see also *ibidem*, p. 171. "our prejudice in favour of Russia made us adopt a line of conduct in a high degree contrary to our own interest ... thus did an Englishman give a fatal blow to the Turkish Empire - a blow from which I much doubt whether the Porte will ever recover", The reference here is to the English Naval officer Captain John Elphinston, present at the battle of Çeşme in 1770. On this episode see M. S. Anderson "Great Britain and the Russian Fleet, 1769-70," in *The Slavonic Review*, 31 (1952-1953) pp. 148-163.

<sup>41</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, pp. 194-195.

<sup>42</sup> *Memoirs Concerning the Trade.. op. cit.*, p. 16a.

<sup>43</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXIX, pp. 180-181.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 927.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 949. It is of some interest to note here that F. Daniel writing in a memorandum in March 1794, considered the extension of the British commercial interest into the Black Sea as a safeguard for "our India Possessions which the progress of the Russians in Persia gives great cause for alarm, tho' not immediate." see *B. M. Add. M. S. S.* 38229 f. 170).

<sup>46</sup> *Parliamentary History*, *op. cit.*, p. 75







## CHAPTER VI

### The Ottoman Struggle with Austria and Russia; the final phase and the peace treaties 1791 - 1792

The instructions received by Ainslie towards the end of August, 1790, were now to enable him to play a more active role than he had done in the previous months. As has been noted before,<sup>1</sup> his major tasks were to urge the Porte to seek an immediate armistice and at the same time to hasten the appointment of the plenipotentiaries for the projected peace with Austria. To achieve this end, a joint action was no doubt needed with the Dutch and the Prussian ambassadors - a joint action which would enable them to overcome certain difficulties which might occur on the Ottoman side - in order that negotiations at the congress might begin.

Von Knobelsdorff, too had received his instructions, and in order to report the long delayed ratification of the Prusso-Ottoman treaty and also to press the Turks for an immediate armistice, on 27 August 1790 he met the Re'is Efendi.<sup>2</sup> He made it clear to the Re'is Efendi that the Sultan should not attempt to raise the Crimean question, as any such attempt would be premature, and, in any case, contrary to the Reichenbach Convention. The Porte should make a separate armistice with Austria, which would agree to the *status quo ante bellum*. The Re'is Efendi, however, refused any discussion on the new proposals.<sup>3</sup>

Von Knobelsdorff, having obtained no formal answer from the Re'is Efendi, at once sought Ainslie's assistance in order to press the Porte on these matters. Ainslie, now acting with full power, did not hesitate to comply with the request and on 28



August, in conjunction with the Dutch ambassador, submitted a memorial to the Porte.<sup>4</sup> Both ambassadors emphasized that their courts would have "l'honneur de presser la conclusion immédiate de l'armistice". They also pointed out that this agreement was considered by their courts "comme également agréable à la Grande-Bretagne, à la Prusse, à l'Autriche, et à la Hollande", adding that the armistice was: "le point essentiel, qui doit nécessairement précéder le Congrès des plénipotentiaires".<sup>5</sup>

The response of the Porte was not long in coming. A week later, on 6 September 1790, the Porte invited Ainslie and the Dutch ambassador to a meeting, with the Ottoman officials, at the Sultan's summer kiosk.<sup>6</sup> There the Re'is Efendi declared that the Porte had agreed to an immediate armistice with Austria and that the preparations had already started for the appointment of plenipotentiaries.<sup>7</sup> As we have seen, the Reichenbach Convention had been concluded without the Turks being consulted. Nevertheless the outcome of it was so favourable to them that they had not hesitated to comply with it. As Ainslie informed the Duke of Leeds in his dispatch of 8 September 1790<sup>8</sup>:

"the Turks, naturally haughty, suspicious and vindictive, could not deny their obligation to Prussia nor hide their disapprobation of an arrangement concluded without their knowledge and concurrence".

In another dispatch dated 16 September, however, he emphasized<sup>9</sup>:

"It is beyond doubt that this Ministry, the Ulema and the Publick in general, are heartily tired of the war."

It is hardly surprising that the Sultan was so ready to make peace with Austria. The Convention of Reichenbach, although it did not promise anything in regard to Russia or the return of the Crimea, at least offered the Sultan the recovery of all the territories he had lost to Austria during the present war. Furthermore he would now find himself free on the Austrian side and would be able to concentrate all his forces on Russia, his most formidable enemy. The Sultan certainly found it wise to comply with the policies of the Allied Courts, for he was still expecting Prussia to join him against Russia. After all, although Frederick William had not agreed to fight the Russians for the recovery of the Crimea, he was still bound by the treaty which



promised a return to the *status quo ante bellum*. The Sultan, indeed, ordered the Grand Vizir, Şerif Hasan Paşa, to sign an armistice with Austria without delay. The Grand Vizir, too, was disposed to peace, as he had no faith in his armies' ability to continue the war.<sup>10</sup> Thus, on 17 September 1790, the armistice was signed by the Prince de Saxe Cobourg and Şerif Hasan Paşa at Georgiova.<sup>11</sup>

Soon after the conclusion of the Reichenbach Convention in July 1790, Sweden, believing that she would receive no assistance from the Triple Alliance, made peace with Russia on 14 August 1790.<sup>12</sup> Gustavus III now wanted his ally Selim III to make peace with Russia and promised that he would obtain the most advantageous terms from Catherine. Therefore in order to persuade the Sultan, the Swedish ambassador, acting in co-operation with the Spanish ambassador, submitted, on 26 September 1790, a long memorial to the Porte.<sup>13</sup> It urged that the Sultan should not listen to the Allied Powers' promises and that he should entrust his interests to the hands of Gustavus III. This turn of affairs had obviously caused uneasiness to Ainslie, who felt himself obliged at this juncture to combat the intrigues of the rival ministers. Ainslie informed Leeds in a dispatch dated 7 October 1790 that<sup>14</sup>

"The Cabal, now openly assisted by the Swedes, did not cease to assert in public and in the Seraglio, that even the Maritime Powers were inimical to the Demands formed against Russia and disapproved the Measures of Prussia [i.e., that Prussia should declare war against Russia in favour of the Turks]; that [the] interference at Reichenbach had been combined to favour the Interests of Austria with whom they meditated an alliance; and that this Disposition will soon appear manifest at the Congress, their Ministers are destined to officiate as Plenipotentiaries."

Ainslie believed that the intrigues of the rival ministers were in fact aimed not only against the Allied Powers but also against his personal influence. His apprehension, however, soon dissolved when the Sultan refused to make peace with Russia. The Sultan at the same time ordered the Re'is Efendi to inform the Divan not to discuss any peace proposal in regard to Russia. Ainslie on 7 October informed Leeds that the Sultan even<sup>15</sup>

"had transmitted orders to the Vizir by which he is directed



to decline whatever Proposal for peace (with Russia) without the direct interference of Prussia."

Ainslie thought it was high time again to act in a more vigorous way in support of the Prussian policy in the Ottoman Empire. In order to remove doubts in the minds of the Ottoman officials created by the Swedish ambassador, and at the same time to support the Sultan's determination, on 1 October 1790, in a note to the Porte, he refuted the Spanish and the Swedish ambassador's accusations against the Allied Powers. His dispatch of 7 October is relevant here<sup>16</sup>:

"I could not, consistently with my Instructions hesitate a moment in taking the necessary Steps for securing the mediation, and opposing, particularly at this moment the dangerous Intrigues of the Bourbon faction headed by Spain, accordingly I used my utmost Influence in justifying the Intentions and Conduct of Prussia with Regard to the Porte: I reprobated the Idea of weakening, at least for the present, a connection, which even after the defection of Sweden, overawed Russia into Sentiments of Moderation: and I insisted on the Propriety of fulfilling every Engagement; particularly those which relate to future Mediation." He did not doubt that "my Efforts have material Influence in defeating the extensive and I must suppose dangerous Intrigues of Spain, and in averting the Consequences of the Defection of Sweden, whose credit is now absolutely null."

The Porte, perhaps with the idea of seeing how far Ainslie really was disposed towards their policy, now took a new step. On the day that Ainslie submitted the above-mentioned note, the dragoman of the Porte brought an official invitation<sup>17</sup> - asking him whether or not he was ready to take upon himself the office of plenipotentiary of the British Government. The dragoman, at the same time transmitted a letter of the Grand Vizir Şerif Hasan Paşa addressed to Ainslie (dated 23 September 1790) requesting him to be present at the camp and then to proceed to the place where the ensuing congress was to be held.<sup>18</sup> Ainslie, at this critical moment of affairs, found it difficult not to comply with the Porte's request. He also thought that it would be more appropriate to respond to the Porte in order to demonstrate Britain's good intentions towards the Ottomans; furthermore, the latter should not leave any room for a manoeuvre of the other ambassadors. In his dispatch dated 7 October 1790,



Ainslie explained to Leeds the reason why he had accepted such an invitation. He declared that "in virtue of my Full Power I was ready to co-operate in anything wanted". Moreover, he was ready "to proceed at a Moment's Warning to the Place of Congress and there wait His Majesty's orders."<sup>19</sup> Writing two days later, on 9 October, Ainslie believed that<sup>20</sup>

"In this critical and for every reason unfortunate crisis, I think it my Duty to encourage as much as possible and without committing my Court, the perseverance of the Turks in their Engagements with Prussia."

Finally, he pointed out to Leeds that the rival ambassadors were trying "to ruin our Influence to precipitate a Peace with Russia and possibly to unite their Forces against the allied Courts."

Leeds received the dispatch of 7 October on 12 November 1790. He at once instructed Ainslie that<sup>21</sup>

"there is not the slightest Intention of sending Your Excellency from Constantinople to assist, as His Majesty's Plenipotentiary, at the Congress, and in case a Contrary opinion should have gone forth, Your Excellency is directed to contradict it, in most explicit Terms."

The fact was that, on 15 October, the Duke had already appointed Sir Robert Keith as plenipotentiary to the congress.<sup>22</sup> Keith, on 26 October 1790, informed Ainslie of the fact that "His Majesty's Commission" was entrusted to him.<sup>23</sup> Ainslie, who received Keith's letter on 30 November, though disappointed, the same day informed the Porte of Keith's appointment.<sup>24</sup> Following the Sultan's proposal, the congress was to take place at Sistova, a small town in Bulgaria, on the Danube, as he was unwilling to send his plenipotentiaries to the lands of a Christian power, on the ground that this would have been an insult to his dignity.<sup>25</sup>

The two sides, the Austrians and the Ottomans, met under the mediation of the Allied Powers [i.e., Prussia, Britain and Holland] on 31 December 1790, at Sistova.<sup>26</sup> According to the Reichenbach Convention the Sultan's dominions were to be guaranteed by the Allied Powers.<sup>27</sup> The Ottoman and the Austrian plenipotentiaries wanted to know whether the Allied Powers were now ready to accept that the negotiations should continue on the same principles.<sup>28</sup> Lucchesini, the Prussian plenipotentiary,



supported the Austrians and the Ottomans. But Keith insisted that his court promised no such basis for negotiations.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, after the Reichenbach Convention, Leeds, writing to Keith in August 1790, had already made it clear that<sup>30</sup>

“with respect to the Guaranty of the Definitive Treaty, it will be impossible for His Majesty to decide positively on that Point till the precise terms on which it is to be concluded shall be settled at the proposed congress.”

Throughout the negotiations, therefore, Keith made it clear that Britain would not become a guaranteeing power until after the conclusion of the treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Austria. Later Austria started to show signs of unwillingness to comply with the terms of the Convention of Reichenbach, the congress, therefore, could not continue and in February 1791, the negotiations were broken off by the Austrian plenipotentiaries. They were not resumed until June 1791.

Meanwhile, the Sultan, in order to discover why Frederick William did not declare war against Russia, sent Ahmed Azmi Efendi as special envoy to Berlin.<sup>31</sup> He also continued to strengthen his forces on the Russian frontiers for the coming campaigns. But the Grand Vizir, Şerif Hasan Paşa, knowing the limited capacities of his forces and their lack of discipline, advised the Sultan to make peace with Russia,<sup>32</sup> continuing to urge this policy until his execution in February 1791. The Sultan replaced him by the former Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa, the most ardent of the supporters of the war with Russia.<sup>33</sup> The Sultan's mother, like Şerif Hasan Paşa, favoured peace. Ainslie, in a dispatch dated 22 January 1791, thus described the situation at Istanbul<sup>34</sup>:

“The Validé is at the head of a Party, who in conjunction with the Bourbon Faction and the other Russian agents, do all in their Power to depreciate the Prussian Alliance, and to clap up a Peace with Russia.”

He, none the less, referred in the same dispatch to the Sultan's determination

“to fulfil his Engagements, and refuse whatever Proposal may be made independent of the Allied Courts, and particular of Great Britain in whom He chiefly confides.”

Ainslie, indeed, sought to encourage the Sultan to be more



confident that the Allied Powers supported his policy. When, on 15 January 1791, the Re's Efendi, Raşid, asked Ainslie what the attitude of Britain was towards the Russian court, he openly declared that "His Majesty in conjunction with his Allies, have made the most serious Representations to the Empress upon the dangerous tendency of the present war, and of persisting in refusing their offered Mediation for restoring Tranquillity". At the same time he gave it as his private opinion that "the Ulterior Resolution of My Court would be guided by the Determination (which could not long be retarded)."<sup>35</sup> In early May 1791, on receiving through Keith the news of George III's message to Parliament regarding the augmentation of the navy, Ainslie took a further step:<sup>36</sup> in a dispatch dated 8 May 1791 he informed Leeds<sup>37</sup> that he had told the Re's Efendi that<sup>38</sup> "His Majesty's resolution to augment his naval Force, sufficiently indicated an Intention to do whatever is necessary to forward the views of Great Britain and Her Allies." Ainslie was convinced that this step was "necessary for removing doubts circulated here respecting the perfect understanding between Great Britain and Prussia", and he now informed Leeds that as a result "the Sultan has prohibited His Ministers from opening any Negotiation whatever for Peace, [i.e., to be concluded with Russia] but in conjunction with his Ally the King of Prussia."<sup>39</sup> While Ainslie and Von Knobelsdorff were assuring the Porte that the Allied Powers would force Russia to make peace on the strict *status quo*, events had developed in London in a rather negative way, and soon Ainslie was to be instructed to adopt a new line of policy.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the immediate question after the Convention of Reichenbach was whether or not Russia would follow Austria and make peace with the Ottomans on the basis of the *status quo*.<sup>40</sup> But soon it was to become clear that the Tsarina would not listen to any foreign court which did not promise her the cession of Oczakov and its district. Prussia, now bound by treaty to the Porte, was intending to force Catherine to make peace with the Turks, as her ally Austria had done. Pitt and Leeds, although willing to support Prussia with a fleet in the Baltic, would have preferred peaceful means. None the less, Pitt, hesitant and undecided,



went on investigating the importance of Oczakov and its district, both to the Ottomans and the Triple Alliance; the dispute developed over the issue as to whether they should come into a open conflict with Russia; and the crisis reached its culmination in March 1791.<sup>41</sup>

Frederick William's impatience grew each day, as he had not yet received a final decision from Britain. Doubtless the Ottoman envoy who had been in Berlin since February, was urging Prussia to declare war against Russia. Eventually the decision came from Frederick William himself. The Prussian ambassador in London on 11 March 1791 presented his King's letter to the British government. Frederick William urged<sup>42</sup>

"England to consider whether the best course of action would not be that of inducing Russia by means of superior forces, both naval and military, to follow the example of the Emperor";

but he made it clear that

"in case England cannot resolve on so vigorous a course of action, the cession of Oczakoff would be its natural outcome. It seems to me incontestable that Russia by the possession of that place gains over Turkey a superiority which may be very prejudicial to the interests even of England. As the decisive moment is drawing near, I wait a definitive declaration on this subject."

Pitt and the Foreign Secretary, Leeds, responded positively: on 27 March an ultimatum was sent off to St. Petersburg by which Catherine was asked to make clear her resolution within ten days. Failure to do so would be considered by Britain a declaration of war.<sup>43</sup> The next day George III's message, in which he asked for the augmentation of the British navy, was presented to both Houses. The opposition to Pitt was so strong that he soon had to abandon his original plan.<sup>44</sup> Leeds, however, insisting on firmness, resigned a few days later, on 21 April 1791, and was replaced by Lord Grenville.<sup>45</sup>

Thereafter the course of affairs took a different line. Ewart had, on 20 April, been instructed to leave for Berlin in order to explain to Frederick William the difficulties with which the British government was confronted. At the same time he was to urge the King to join Britain in a new plan to be proposed



to Catherine, i. e., on a modification of the strict *status quo*.<sup>46</sup> His arrival at Berlin on 29 April was welcomed by the King. Frederick William agreed now not to insist on Russia making peace with the Ottoman Empire on the strict *status quo*, but to be satisfied with a modified version of it. Hertzberg, too, who always preferred diplomacy to force, equally welcomed the new plan.<sup>47</sup> The Tsarina now was to be induced to make peace in exchange for Ochakov and its district as far as the Dniestr. In May of the same year, William Fawkeners was sent off as special envoy to Catherine to persuade her to adopt the new proposals. This endeavour, pursued throughout the summer, came to nothing; Catherine refused to co-operate with the Allied Powers and wanted to settle her affairs with the Turks on absolute principles.<sup>48</sup> The Sultan was, indeed, reluctant to give in, but nevertheless a few months later, seeing himself isolated, he consented to make concessions.

Pitt, offering an alliance to the Emperor and also wishing to end the long and interrupted negotiations at Sistova, sent Lord Elgin to Florence - requesting him to conclude his negotiations with the Ottomans in accordance with the Reichenbach Convention.<sup>49</sup> Frederick William too pressed the Emperor to adopt the same course. Finally on 4 August 1791, with the Allied Powers' mediation, a treaty was concluded between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, at Sistova.<sup>50</sup>

Ewart, having obtained from Frederick William a promise of co-operation, i. e., that Prussia would persuade the Turks to make concessions to Russia, informed Ainslie on 5 May 1791 of the new course of events.<sup>51</sup> Ainslie received Ewart's letter on 9 June. Lord Grenville also now wrote to Ainslie, sending new instructions in a dispatch dated 20 May 1791. He emphasized to Ainslie that<sup>52</sup>

"the Conclusion of a separate Peace between Russia and the Porte, on the ground of the Modification of the Status Quo mentioned to you by Mr. Ewart, or of such other Modification as may be agreed upon, short of the unqualified Cession of Oczakow and of the whole District as far as Dniester is a point which is certainly extremely desirable with a view to the present circumstance and it is probable that the consent of the Turks to such an agreement, may be the more readily given, but on account of the recent success of Russia, and



from the Expectation and assurance which you may now feel yourself authorized to put out to them, of a Disposition in the Two Allied Courts and in the Court of Madrid to join in a Guaranty to them of their remaining Possession subsequent to the Conclusion of a Peace on these Terms, you will therefore exert yourself to this effect, in concert with the Prussian Minister."

Ainslie received the instruction on 9 June 1791 and at once communicated with Von Knobelsdorff, who was already informed of the new plan. Both of them without losing time requested a meeting of the Porte, and this was granted for 11 June.<sup>53</sup> Ainslie opened the conference by informing the Re'is Efendi of the recent changes that had occurred in the European states and their effect on the Allied Courts' policy. He stressed that Denmark and Spain opposed any intention by the Allied Courts to employ force to compel Russia to make peace with the Ottomans on the strict *status quo ante bellum*. Ainslie now requested the Porte to co-operate with the Allied Powers by sacrificing some territories to Russia, and pointed out that the Allied Powers would guarantee the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire. He, indeed, emphasized that William Fawkener had left for St. Petersburg to urge Catherine to make an immediate peace. Von Knobelsdorff, too, argued the same points and requested the Sultan to end the war with Russia.<sup>54</sup> The observations of Von Knobelsdorff are, perhaps, relevant here<sup>55</sup>:

"L'ambassadeur d'Angleterre, qui m'a toujours dans cette conférence assisté avec tout le zèle et le feu possible, son expérience et le grand usage des affaires lui fournissant des Ressources inépuisables fit observer qu'une Guerre ouverte ne pouvait pas leur procurer des plus grands avantages que la position armée dans la quelle se trouvait V. M. et le Roi Son Maitre, puisqu'elle occupoit les deux Tiers de l'Armée Russe, et tenoit enchainé sa Flotte dans la Mer Baltique."

Meanwhile, the Turkish envoy to Berlin, having discussed the recent development of affairs with Ewart, promised that he would recommend the Porte to comply with the new proposals.<sup>56</sup> But in fact, the attitude at Istanbul had changed; and Ainslie had difficulties in persuading the officials of the Porte to make concessions to Russia. Writing to Keith on 14 June 1791, he reported<sup>57</sup>:

"I have it from undoubted authority, that the Mufti has



declared against any concessions of territory whatever, and even against a suspension of hostilities with Russia."

A month later, Ainslie still had had no success in persuading the Ottomans to make peace with Russia. In a dispatch dated 14 July, he again informed Keith that the Sultan was not<sup>58</sup>

"disposed to make important concessions to Russia, whom he esteems unable to maintain her conquests in Turkey and much more than himself, perplexed and embarrassed, by the continuation of the war."

In the same dispatch he declared that<sup>59</sup>

"the Ottoman Cabinet, the ulemah, and the camp, all approve the sultan's determination to reject, as inexpedient whatever modifications of the strict status quo ante bellum for the basis of reconciliation with Russia."

At the same time, writing to Ewart on 14 July 1791, Ainslie described his unsuccessful endeavours to induce the Turks to adopt the new plan<sup>60</sup>:

"I am sorry to say that the Porte is by no means inclined to make concessions to Russia; nay it is already determined to prosecute the campaign; from which much is expected, and nothing apprehended."

Ainslie, indeed, in more forthright words, gave it as his private opinion that<sup>61</sup> "In short this Court was originally encouraged by us, by the Swedes, by the Poles, and underhand by the Austrians to expect that the strict *status quo* would be the basis of the future peace with Russia, and I can perceive no symptom of a disposition to relinquish Ocsakow."

Ainslie believed that unless the Russians obtain a distinct advantage over the Ottoman armies, there was no real chance that any intervention, from whatever quarter it might come, would make the Turks sign a peace with the Russians on the basis of the new proposals.<sup>62</sup>

None the less, Ainslie on 8 July 1791 was informing Grenville that<sup>63</sup>

"the Grand question of the Seraglio, at the Porte, and in the Porte, and in the Divan is, will His Prussian Majesty consistently with His Engagements, and repeated Promises, declare war against Russia, and will the guaranteeing Courts resent the notorious infractions of the Reichenbach Convention?"



Ainslie assured Grenville however, that he had done his utmost, with the co-operation of Von Knobelsdorff, to answer these questions in accordance with their instructions. But he found it embarrassing to give a satisfactory answer to the question which the officials of the Porte evidently had in their minds<sup>64</sup>:

"How far the Porte can, and ought to trust for the present and in future, to our Guaranty of their Possessions, subsequent to the Peace now proposed by us, with Russia?"

It would seem that Ainslie came to the conclusion that he had no alternative but to await new instructions for his guidance in the following weeks; his contacts with the officials of the Porte became less frequent.

Meanwhile the Russian armies won new victories over the Ottomans, and this development made it increasingly difficult for Britain and Prussia to insist on the negotiation of modified terms with Catherine.

Grenville now took a new step, and on 29 July 1791 sent further instructions to Ainslie. Urging him to use his "utmost endeavours to convince the Ministers of the Porte how much it is for their interest to enter into direct negotiations with the Russians for the termination of the War." Grenville, however, recommended Ainslie<sup>65</sup>

"to be particularly cautious not to use, without express instructions ... any expressions either in written memorials, or minutes of conferences, or even in conversation with the Turkish Ministers, which can be construed to pledge His Majesty in any manner, with respect to the line of conduct which He may think proper to pursue in the event of the failure of the negotiations at Petersburg."

These negotiations were, indeed, fruitless so that Grenville in the light of these developments, two weeks later, i. e., on 19 August 1791,<sup>66</sup> sent another dispatch to Ainslie which curbed all his activities. Thereafter he was gradually to fall into the background at Istanbul.

Ainslie was informed that in view of "the inability of the Turks to resist the progress of the Russian arms", Britain could not take any<sup>67</sup>

"further step with a view to the attainment of more favourable



terms than those which are now offered by Russia [i. e., the absolute cession of the territories as far as the Dniestr] or even with a view to press these terms upon the Empress, supposing that the refusal of the Porte at the present moment should lead to further success on the part of the Russians."

Furthermore, Ainslie was urged to point out to the Porte

"how materially the Turks have been assisted by considerable diversion of the Russian force which has been occasioned by the Armaments of His Majesty and the King of Prussia in the present year",

and to stress that his Britannic Majesty

"feels it therefore a mark of His friendship towards the Porte to point out the necessity of closing with the present offers, in order to prevent the risk of further losses [and] without involving His own subjects in the expences and disadvantages of war."

Grenville also instructed Ainslie

"to be particularly careful to abstain from giving assurances on the subject of a guaranty of the possession [sic] of the Porte subsequent to the conclusion of the Peace"

between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, in another dispatch bearing the same date, Grenville instructed Ainslie not to feel himself thereafter "at liberty" to co-operate with the Prussian ambassador; he nevertheless recommended Ainslie to be careful as far as possible to avoid "any public step which may mark any difference of opinion between you"<sup>68</sup> and Von Knobelsdorff.

Ainslie received these dispatches on 8 and 19 September 1791. He, in accordance with the instructions given, contacted the Porte and recommended that the peace should be made without delay to avoid the consequences of Catherine's ambition. But the Porte received "with great coolness" his advice and no answer thus had been given to his representations. In a dispatch dated 8 September he wrote of "the Disappointment of this People ... can hardly be exaggerated, no more than the ill humour of the Sultan, who always maintained the Validity of the Prussian Promises",<sup>69</sup> to declare war against Russia.



Ainslie with the idea of persuading the Turks, sought the Prussian and the Dutch ambassadors' assistance, but was told that they had no intention of intervening between the Ottomans and the Russians, believing that their intervention would only "discredit" them at the Porte, as Prussia had no positive offer to make to the Sultan.<sup>70</sup> Hence, the relations between Ainslie and the ambassadors of the Triple Alliance became increasingly reserved. He, however, continued in his endeavour to bring the Turks to an early settlement with Russia. On 8 October 1791,<sup>71</sup> he declared that<sup>72</sup>

"I have consistently with my Instructions, seized every opportunity of recommending and forwarding the earliest Conclusion of the Pacification ... and I shall continue most carefully to avoid all Distinctions, whatever is discussed, without Committing in any Manner or shape the absolute independence of my Court, from whatever Foreign Engagement."

Meanwhile, the Grand Vizir Yusuf Paşa, realizing at last the weakness of the Ottoman armies, concluded that peace was to be made with Russia. Moreover, the Re'is Efendi and most of the Ottoman officials openly began to support the views of the Grand Vizir.<sup>73</sup> But on the other hand the Sultan was not yet prepared to end the war on dishonourable terms. Ainslie in his dispatch of 25 October informed Grenville that "the Sultan who is both - head strong and capricious unexpectedly refused his Ear to the Deputation of the Cabinet, composed of the Mufti, the Reis Efendi and the Vizir's Lieutenant",<sup>74</sup> when they advised him to make peace.

While the Sultan was obstructing the road to peace, Ainslie received a new instruction, dated 9 September 1791; ordering him to continue his representations at the Porte "till the [war] is finally concluded."<sup>75</sup> He, without losing time on 8 November submitted a memorandum to the Porte, by which he urged the Ottomans for the<sup>76</sup>

"conclusion la plus prompte possible de la Paix avec la Russie; puisque les circonstances actuelles de L'Europe présentent en général plusieurs motifs d'apprehension, et aucune probabilité d'avantages dans le cas d'un trop long délai de se rendre aux conseils des véritables Amis, et d'écouter les vœux de l'humanité."



As the Prussian ambassador had "lost much of [his] Influence" at the Porte, Ainslie on 21 December was to declare that "For My Part I lose no opportunity of recommending the desirable Peace, and I have the satisfaction to find that the Vizir, and the best part of the Council",<sup>77</sup> supported his recommendations. A few days later, he informed Grenville that the Seraglio had requested his opinion on the general political situation in Europe. Of this event he emphasized that<sup>78</sup>

"I did not lose the favourable opportunity to recommend Peace ... as more consistent with the Honor and with the Interests of this Empire than contracting any Engagements, tending to prolong the Duration of the ruinous War, risking its dangerous Consequences."

Eventually by the end of 1791, the Sultan had abandoned his hope of seeing Prussia declare war against Russia and he agreed with his ministers' advice to end the long Russo-Turkish war. The negotiations for the peace settlement began at Yasi, and ended on 31 January 1792.<sup>78</sup> Thus a peace treaty had been signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire without the intervention of the Triple Alliance,<sup>79</sup> as Catherine had desired.

Following the conclusion of the peace, Selim III now devoted himself to the internal problems of his empire and gradually started to plan reforms, by which a new era was to begin in the Ottoman Empire.

After the conclusion of peace, diplomatic activity, at Istanbul diminished, at least for the time being. In consequence, during the closing years of his embassy to the Porte, Sir Robert Ainslie had no major role to play and it may therefore be supposed that much of his time must have been taken up by improving his collection of Byzantine coins, which still commemorates his name.<sup>80</sup> Such elegant past times notwithstanding, Ainslie continued to send home despatches fairly regularly but these contain little information on international affairs though they may prove more valuable for students of Ottoman social history. A large number of these despatches written during this final period of his Embassy relate to altercations in 1792-93 with certain British merchants at Istanbul who had light-heartedly flaunted the cockade upon the French revolution. These activi-



ties led Ainslie to complain repeatedly and bitterly to his superiors, asking<sup>81</sup>

“how I ought to treat those of my Mad Countrymen, who renouncing every rule of reason and obligation of allegiance for the modern doctrines of Liberty and Equality still presume to claim the Rights and Privileges of Englishmen, with the French Cockade in their Hats.”

Ainslie received no answer to his complaints, but in August 1793, he was informed by Lord Grenville that the King, “having thought proper to make some changes in his foreign missions”, had appointed the then British Ambassador in Sweden, Robert Liston, to succeed Ainslie in Istanbul.<sup>82</sup> There was evidently no urgency in implementing this decision, however, for it was not until June 1794 that Ainslie left the Porte, bringing to a close a diplomatic career which had lasted the best part of eighteen years. His lengthy representation of His Britannic Majesty at the court of the Ottoman Sultan was rewarded by the grant of a pension of one thousand pounds<sup>83</sup> “as a mark of His Majesty’s Royal Favour”<sup>84</sup> towards him.

It should also be added that, Sir Robert Ainslie before left Istanbul, played some role in the appointment of Yusuf Agah Efendi, the first Ottoman ambassador, to London.<sup>85</sup> However there is no evidence that Ainslie had a contact with the Ottoman ambassador during his stay in Britain

<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter IV, p.

<sup>2</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 21, 29 August 1790. Cf. Zinkeisen, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 798-800.

<sup>3</sup> Ainslie, however, informed Leeds that the Reis Efendi: “fairly confessed that the Porte had already been too often deceived, to admit of unbounded confidence in the views of Prussia”. (see Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no 21, 29 August 1790).

<sup>4</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 21, 29 August 1790.

<sup>5</sup> The joint memorial, dated, Pera 28 August 1790 as found in (P. R. O., F. O. 78/11).

<sup>6</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 23, 8 September 1790. At this meeting the kadiasker of Rumeli and the Beglikçi were also present.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 24, 16 September 1790.

<sup>10</sup> *Mükaleme Mazbatası*, I (Istanbul, 1853-1856), pp. 26-29; 44-5; Cevdet, *Ta’rih*, V, pp. 55-82; cf. Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, p. 570.



- <sup>11</sup> See, Geo. Fréd. de Martens, *Recueil de Traités... des Puissances et états de l'Europe tant dans leur rapport mutuel que dans celui envers les Puissances et états dans d'autres parties du globe Depuis 1761 jusqu'à présent*, IV (2nd edition, Gottingen 1818) pp. 466-471; Leopold Neumann and Adolphe de Mason, *Recueil des Traités et Conventions conclus par l'Autriche avec les Puissances étrangères depuis 1763 jusqu'à nos jours*, I (Leipsic, 1855), pp. 431-35.
- <sup>12</sup> R. H. Lord, *The Second Partition of Poland* (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), pp. 166-67. Stanislawskaya, loc. cit., pp. 46-7; Anderson, *The Discovery*, p. 149
- <sup>13</sup> Ainslie sent a copy of this memorial to London (see Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11 no. 26, 7 October 1790).
- <sup>14</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 26, 7 October 1790.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> The same invitation was also made to the Dutch Ambassador.
- <sup>18</sup> Ainslie sent a copy of the Grand Vizir's letter to London (see enclosure to his letter to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11 no. 26, 7 October 1790).
- <sup>19</sup> Ainslie to Leeds P. R. O., F. O. 78/11 no. 26, 7 October 1790.
- <sup>20</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, no. 27, 9 October 1790. It is perhaps worthwhile to quote here at some length Ainslie's despatch of 9 October, where he clearly defined his policy to Leeds: "Since some years past, my great object has been to establish a preponderating credit at this Court, founded on the principle that His Majesty is desirous of cultivating the best understanding with the Porte and disposed to prompt its interests. My antagonists were ancient prejudices and the infuse of money which upon that occasion did not prevail."  
 "Since the epoch of the Treaty of Berlin I have co-operated with the Prussians and the Dutch Ministers in securing the exclusive mediation for future peace and I hope I may be permitted to say my success in both pursuits is evinced by the great enemies it has procured me."  
 "Since the Convention of Reichenbach, I have consistently with Your Grace's laws and His Majesty's benevolent intentions, communicated by Sir Robert Keith, incessantly pressed whatever tended to the completion of the separate peace with Austria; and finally since the unexpected Swedish Arrangement concluded thro' the mediation of Spain, have done all in my power to oppose the Spanish and Neapolitan intrigues, assisted by the Swedes in order to counteract the impertinent allegations of our rivals and not to lose the fruits of all my past trouble, and at the same time those of our acquired influence, that I did not hesitate in accepting the invitation of the Grand Vizir, and in declaring my readiness to proceed directly (if judged necessary) to the Camp and there wait your Grace's instructions."
- <sup>21</sup> Leeds to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, 12 November 1790. It was a common practice of the Porte for the Sultan to make considerable gifts of money to the foreign plenipotentiaries, at the conclusion of a peace treaty. Thus, Ainslee by not being employed at the Sistova Congress had lost, an estimated figure of nearly thirty thousand pounds in presents (see B. M. Add. MSS. 38229, f. 161) Cf. D. B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789* (Oxford 1961), pp. 57-8, where the author considers this sum a "gross over-statement".
- <sup>22</sup> Leeds to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 7/22, no. 23, 15 October 1790.
- <sup>23</sup> Keith to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/11, Vienna, 27 October 1790.



- <sup>24</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., P. 78/11, no. 37, 8 December 1790, On this occasion (8 December 1790), Ainslie wrote to Keith: "I heartily wish you the most distinguished success, with all personal satisfaction. Be assured My dear Sir, I feel no ways awkward in paying this compliment to a Minister of your superior merit, for after all I know the respect due to our Royal Master's Choise, and even admitting that fourteen years of residence in Turkey might justify my hopes, yet I am still convinced that I shall be the only loser by that choise having fallen upon you". (P. R. O., F. O. 78/11).
- <sup>25</sup> See, *Mükâleme Mazbatası*, I, pp. 47-9; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/I, pp. 570-71. Although in a work it is stated that Ainslie "encouraged the Ottomans to insists on one of their own cities", neither the Turkish sources nor Ainslie's despatches confirm such an allegation. Cf. Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New, The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807*. (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1971). p. 57.
- <sup>26</sup> The details of the Sistova negotiations can be found in, Mrs. Gillespie Smyth, ed. *Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir Robert Keith*, II (London 1849), pp. 335-447; *Mükâleme Mazbatası*, I, pp. 96-212; see also Burenstem, "Les Négociations de paix entre l'Autriche et la Turquie à Schistova (Décembre 1790-Acût 1791)," in *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, Douzième Année (Paris, 1898), pp. 225-56.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf., Spiegel, op. cit., pp. 297-300.
- <sup>28</sup> *Memoirs of Keith*, II, pp. 335-350; *Mükâleme Mazbatası*, I, pp. 96, 107-108, 125-30.
- <sup>29</sup> *Memoirs of Keith*, II, pp. 355.
- <sup>30</sup> Leeds to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 7/21, no. 18, 16 August 1790, see also no. 23, 15 October 1790.
- <sup>31</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, IV, pp. 12-80; cf., Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaret-nâmeleri* (Ankara, 1968), pp. 149-54. Ahmet Azmi Efendi's account which in to be found in Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, V, pp. 346-69 contains no reference to the political events which occasioned his mission to Berlin.
- <sup>32</sup> Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, V, pp. 81-82; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV/I, pp. 577-78.
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid*, pp. 578-82; Cevdet, *Ta'rih*, V, pp. 102-4.
- <sup>34</sup> Ainslie to Leeds P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 2, 22 January 1791.
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid*.
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid*. Since November 1790, Ainslie had received, in fact, no instructions from London.
- <sup>37</sup> Leeds resigned on 21 April 1791.
- <sup>38</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 9, 8 May 1791.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid*.
- <sup>40</sup> See Chapter V.
- <sup>41</sup> For detailed studies of the government crisis in London during this period, see, *The Political Memoranda of Francis, Fifth Duke of Leeds*, ed. O. Browning (Camden Society; London 1884), pp. 148-74; G. B. Hertz, *British Imperialism in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1908), pp. 153-209; Rose, op. cit., pp. 598-607; 608-32; Lord, op. cit., pp. 164-77, 184-91; D. G. Barnes, *George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806* (London, 1939), pp. 229-39; Anderson, *The Discovery*, pp. 154-95; Allan Cunningham, "The Oczakow Debate" in *Middle Studies* 1, (1964-65), pp. 209-34.
- <sup>42</sup> quoted in Rose, op. cit., p. 608.



- <sup>43</sup> Leeds Memoranda, p. 152; Rose, *ibid.*, pp. 609-10.
- <sup>44</sup> For details see, Anderson, *The Discovery*, p. 156 ff.
- <sup>45</sup> Leeds Memorandum, p. 173.
- <sup>46</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 619; Anderson, *The Discovery*, p. 157.
- <sup>47</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 619.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 621-24; Anderson, *The Discovery*, p. 257.
- <sup>49</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 619-20.
- <sup>50</sup> See Ch. de Martens, *Recueil des Principaux Traités conclus par les Puissances de l'Europe depuis 1761 jusqu'au présent*, V. (2nd ed., Gottingue, 1826) pp. 249-59.
- <sup>51</sup> Ewart to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 64/21, 5 May 1791. Ewart sent also to Ainslie copies for the instructions which he had received from Grenville, dated 20 April and 26 April 1791; see also, Ewart to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 64/21, no. 2, 6 May 1791.
- <sup>52</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 2, 20 May 1791.
- <sup>53</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 14, 14 June 1791.
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> Knobelsdorff to Frederick William, (undated, in P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A).
- <sup>56</sup> Ewart to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 64/21, no. 7, 13 May 1791.
- <sup>57</sup> Ainslie to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 14 June 1791. Ainslie sent copies of this dispatch to Grenville and Eward. He continued the same practice in future, reporting his activities to all the British ministers concerned.
- <sup>58</sup> Ainslie to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 14 July 1791.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>60</sup> Ainslie to Ewart, P. R. O., F. O. 261/7, 14 July 1791.
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 17, 14 July 1791.
- <sup>63</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 16, 8 July 1791.
- <sup>64</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>65</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 4, 29 July 1791.
- <sup>66</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 5, 19 August 1791 and no. 6, 19 August 1791.
- <sup>67</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 5, 19 August 1791.
- <sup>68</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 6, 19 August 1791.
- <sup>69</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 24, 23 September 1791.
- <sup>70</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 22, 8 September 1791.
- <sup>71</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 25, 8 October 1791.
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, IV/L, pp. 589-90.
- <sup>74</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 26, 25 October 1791.
- <sup>75</sup> Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 9 September 1791.
- <sup>76</sup> The memorandum is in P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, see also Ainslie to Grenville, F. O. 12A, no. 27, 10 November 1791.
- <sup>77</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 32, 21 December 1791.
- <sup>78</sup> Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, no. 34, 24 December 1791.
- <sup>79</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, IV/I, pp. 590-93.
- <sup>80</sup> G.E. Noradounghian, *Recueil d'Actes Internationaux de L'Empire Ottoman*, N (Paris, 1900), pp. 16-21.



- 81 See, D. N. B: Ainslie.
- 82 Ainslie to Grenville, P. R. O., F. O., 78/14, no. 7, 26 March 1793.
- 83 Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/14, no. 6, 2 August 1793.
- 86 D. N. B: Ainslie.
- 85 Grenville to Ainslie, P. R. O., F. O. 78/14 no. 6, 2 August 1793.
- 86 For details see, E. Kuran, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Ikamet Elçiliklerinin kuruluşu ve ilk Elçilerin Siyasi Faaliyetleri, 1739-1821*, (Ankara, 1968).



## CONCLUSION

The Empress Catherine II of Russia was not satisfied with the implementations of the terms of the 1774 treaty of Küçük Kaynarca as interpreted by the Turks whose conduct created continuing friction between the two powers. The Aynalıkavak Convention of 1779 mediated by France failed to prevent a further deterioration in Russo-Turkish relations which resulted in the final annexation of the Crimea by Russia in 1783. The good offices of the French and British ambassadors in Istanbul were effective in obtaining a suspension of open warfare at this point.

The change in the administration in England had implied only a temporary preoccupation with domestic problems. For Pitt was no isolationist but patiently sought means to secure a part in continental affairs. At this time the main concern of Russia and Austria was with the Ottoman Empire and the British Prime Minister's refusal to acquiesce in supporting Catherine's expansionist policy was to cost Britain the renewal of the Anglo-Russian commercial agreement of 1766, which would have been due for renewal in 1786. In her place France was raised to the status of most favoured nation, as a reward for abandoning her traditional friendship with the Turks. As a result of this change vis-a-vis Russia, Pitt initiated an obstructive policy at the Porte, ordering his ambassador there, Sir Robert Ainslie, to oppose any French initiatives such as mediation and the furthering of France's Black Sea commerce.

Ainslie, earlier, had seen no solution for the Russo-Turkish problem except further concessions by the Porte and quiescence on the part of Britain: his instructions of December 1786 was to change all this, and he worked faithfully at frustrating the peace moves of the French ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier, a line of conduct much criticized by the French and the Russians who, perhaps exaggerating, accused Ainslie of being the real cause of war. It must be said in his defence that once he realized that



war was inevitable, he offered, contrary to his instructions, his own mediation to both Courts, even if this necessitated co-operation with Chciseul-Gouffier; the Russian ambassador's refusal made the suggestion abortive.

In the event, the isolation of Britain after the treaty of Versailles of 1783 was ended by the creation of the Triple Alliance in August 1788 as a result of internal troubles in Holland and the evolution of Prussia's policy following the Russo-Turkish war. Ewart, the British ambassador at Berlin, was largely instrumental in pressing upon the British government the supposed advantages implicit in what M. S. Anderson refers to as the "complex, cynical and impracticable scheme"<sup>1</sup> of territorial exchanges embodied in Hertzberg's plan - a plan which depended for its success upon full Turkish co-operation, which was unforthcoming unless Prussia was willing for her part to compel Russia and her ally Austria to restore the Crimea.

Ewart's support of the Hertzberg plan involved Ainslie in fresh diplomatic activity requiring co-operation with the Prussian ambassador and mediation by the Prussian and British governments to end the hostilities between the Turks and the imperial powers. Although rejecting the Hertzberg plan in all its ramifications, Pitt favoured Ainslie's co-operation but without his committing Britain. Even while experiencing some friction with Diez, whose excessive zeal led him to commit his government too far by concluding an offensive-defensive alliance with the Porte - an act which led to his recall - Ainslie was successful in helping the Prussian ambassador while yet remaining within the strict letter of his own instructions.

Pitt's apprehension concerning this treaty was somewhat relieved by the death of Joseph II, for his successor Leopold II was anxious to end hostilities with the Turks and to settle his differences with Prussia. It was due to Ewart that Austria and Prussia were enabled to conclude the Reichenbach Convention in July 1790, under the mediation of the Triple Alliance and to make peace with the Turks on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*. Ainslie's part in this was to join with the Prussian ambassador, Von Knobelsdorff, in explaining the advantages of the Convention to the Sultan who, perceiving these, soon made



an armistice with the Austrians, although his hope of an early settlement was frustrated by the prolongation of the negotiations by Leopold until the August of 1791.

Despite the Reichenbach Convention Catherine pursued her inexorable policy towards the Porte and cleared her flank for fresh hostilities by concluding peace with Sweden. The Turkish refusal to seize the opportunity to make peace at the same time may have been due to the influence of Ainslie.

Frederick William of Prussia was still bound by the Diez treaty, which committed him to assist the Turks in regaining their lost territories, though this did not extend to recovering the Crimea. In spite of Ewart's persistence in arguing the importance of the Prussian alliance, British hesitation alternately led to a failure to support Prussia in compelling Russia to make peace on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*. The upshot was that Ainslie was instructed afresh from London to urge the need of concessions upon the Turks, a task rendered more difficult since he had been assuring them of the support of the Triple Alliance and even more difficult because he received no assistance from the Prussian and the Dutch ambassadors in this matter, Von Knobelsdorff having abandoned his earlier support. In the end, events themselves compelled the Turks to make peace without the mediation of the Triple Alliance and at the price of an abandonment of the *status quo ante bellum*. Nevertheless Ainslie was not slow to claim some credit for having influenced the Porte in concluding peace with Russia.

In assessing the success or failure of the embassy of Sir Robert Ainslie at Istanbul it would be well to begin by remembering that the good and amicable relations which had existed between the Porte and the British governments had been much weakened by the Çeşme incident in 1770. A coolness crept into the Turkish attitude towards the British ambassador at the Porte and Ainslie's predecessor, Murray, had left behind him a need for the re-establishment of the good relations which had become overlaid by Turkish fears of some future re-appearance of Russian warships in the Mediterranean.

In so unpromising a situation Sir Robert Ainslie was, surprisingly quickly able to develop good relations with the



dignitaries of the Porte, for example the *Kapudan Paşa* and, later, his creature, the Grand Vizir, Yusuf Paşa. This success was due to a combination of factors. In the first place he was as an individual sufficiently flexible to adopt Turkish customs<sup>2</sup>:

being strongly attached to the manner of the people... in his house, his garden, and his table he assumed the style and fashion of a Mussulman of rank; in fine, he lived *en Turc*, and pleased the natives so much by this seeming policy... that he became more popular than any of the Christian Ministers.

It is a further indication of his instinctive *savoir faire* at the Porte that he did not let pass the occasion provided by the religious festivals to "caress" the ministers by giving them rich presents such as watches and telescopes which he had imported especially for this purpose. On a larger scale and perhaps more significantly, he was careful during the period of the Ottoman wars with the Russians to maintain a flow of military supplies and to provide for the sale of a number of warships for the Turks. Fourthly, although paid by the Levant Company, he was not much concerned to press the Turks in regard of fresh trade concessions to British merchants, preferring always to remain on good terms with the Ottoman officials in order to pursue government policy rather than drawing their attention to the complaints of the merchants. This neglect of the British trading interests was not without its risks, for the Levant Company felt free at the end to complain to his successor concerning Ainslie's inactivity.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this neglect lay in Ainslie's basic scepticism concerning the development of the British trading interests in Egypt<sup>4</sup> and the Black Sea, the commercial future of the latter area he in 1784 tartly dismissed as being "much cry and little Wool",<sup>5</sup> this at a time when the French were much concerned to expand their trading interests there. Much later in 1791 he offered unprompted the opinion that such a market was bound to be restricted by the inferior character of the raw material originating in the Black Sea region, comparing them with those available in the Baltic area: "the Exports i. e., Black Sea consist chiefly of very indifferent Wheat and Barley, Caviare, Iron, Hemp, Masts and Timber, all which we procure cheap and better from the Baltic."<sup>6</sup>

From the point of view of his superiors in London, Ainslie -



often for long periods, sometimes as much as eight or nine months, without precise instructions in a remote embassy - was uniformly successful in pursuing the general aims of the British government and its restless ally Prussia, without allowing himself to engage in any embarrassing or dangerous formal commitments to the Turks.

Even during the tensest period of the "Ochakow Crisis", Pitt and Leeds did not trouble to consult Ainslie and it must stand to his personal credit that, although the members of the Triple Alliance failed to come to the aid of the Turks at this time, he was still able to maintain his own influence upon the dignitaries of the Porte - an influence which he enjoyed up to the closing days of his embassy.

30 November 1776

The King of Great Britain my Royal and Most Gracious Sovereign having been pleased to honour me with the Character of his Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and in Consequence of His appointment to give me Credential Letters for His Imperial Majesty, and for your Highness; I have the Honour to present myself in order to deliver this most friendly Letter to your Highness, and at the same time to desire that I may be admitted to the Honour of paying my respect to His Imperial Majesty, and to Present to him upon His Imperial Throne the letter from my Royal Master.

I also Request your Highness to favour and to forward every Business which during the Course of my Embassy, I shall have the Honour to present to you, and that our Consul, Dragoman,

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<sup>1</sup> M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774 - 1923; A Study in International Relations* (London, 1966), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *The St. James's Chronicle or British Evening Post*, 9 December 1790.

<sup>3</sup> Levant Company to Liston, P. R. O., S. P. 105/121, London, 15 July 1794; cf., Levant Company to Ainslie, S. P. 105/121, London, 15 October 1793 and London, Ph. D., unpublished thesis, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> See, R. J. Said, *George Baldwin and British Interests in Egypt, (1775 to 1798)* London, Ph. D., unpublished thesis, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Ainslie to Leeds, P. R. O., F. O. 78/5, no. 24, 10 November 1784.

<sup>6</sup> Ainslie to Keith, P. R. O., F. O. 78/12A, 19 January 1791.







APPENDIX I

The speech of His Excellency Sir Robert Ainslie  
to His Highness the Grand Vezir

30 November 1776<sup>1</sup>

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I also Request your Highness to favour and to forward every Business which during the Course of my Embassy, I shall have the honour to represent to you; and that our Consul, Dragomen, and Merchants may, in Conformity to the sacred Capitulations, enjoy the greatest Security and Tranquility under your most happy Administration. Thus your Highness will Strengthen more and more the inviolable Peace, and Cement the Amity which, during the Course of so many years has happily subsisted between the Court of Great Britain and the Sublime Porte.

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<sup>1</sup> in P. R. O., S. P. 97/53; see below p. 7.



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myself in order to deliver this most friendly Letter to your  
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to the Honour of paying my respects to His Imperial Majesty, and  
to present to him upon His Imperial Throne the letter from my  
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I also request your Highness to favour and to forward every  
Business which during the Course of my Embassy, I shall have  
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and more the inviolable Peace, and cement the Amity which  
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the Court of Great Britain and the Sublime Porte.



## APPENDIX II

3 January 1777.

### A Statement from Sir Robert Ainslie to the Kapudan Paşa.<sup>1</sup>

L'Exposition que vous m'avez faite des affaires, présente une situation également embarrassante et critique, qui demande les plus grands soins, et l'attention la plus suivie de la Part des ministres, à fin d'éviter des Troubles, et pour détourner les malheurs, dont l'Empire Ottoman est menacé.

D'un Côté la Cour de Russie réclame hautement par son Ministre l'Exécution des articles de la dernière Paix de Chiuseieux Cainargi, signée par le Suprême Vizir Moussun Oglu, ratifiée ensuite par le Grand Signor dans son Divan, Traité par conséquent revêtu de toute la solennité, dont un Engagement sacré est susceptible. - Deux des articles du Traité, surtout, présentent des Difficultés dans l'Exécution; l'un le 3<sup>me</sup> stipule l'Indépendance de tous les Peuples Tartares sans Excéption. Le Ilme accorde aux sujets de l'Impératrice de toutes les Russies la Navigation libre de la Mer Noire pour leurs Vaisseaux Marchands, - ces deux articles contiennent à peu près tous les avantages que cette Nation a obtenu par la dernière Guerre, et l'on ne peut pas se dissimuler, que leur Réclamation est fondée.

De l'autre Côté, les Tartares eux-mêmes, par attachement pour La Porte, ainsi qu'à leurs anciens usages s'opposent à l'Exécution de l'Article 3<sup>me</sup> qui les regarde: Ils appuyent leur Refus sur des motifs tirés de la Religion, et par là" se sont assurés de la Protection des Gens de Loi, et du Peuple, qui forme la plus grande, ainsi que la plus redoutable Partie de la Nation; d'ailleurs l'Argument étant d'une nature des plus délicats, le Ministère ne doit pas passer outre, sans prendre des Précautions suffisantes

<sup>1</sup> in P. R. O., F. O. 78/5; see below p. 29.



pour éviter des Troubles, et peut être des Commotions dans le Centre de l'Empire.

Voilà la Situation qui forme la Crise actuelle - Le Ministère doit se précautionner d'une part contre l'Effet des Cabales des Tartares. De l'autre Ils ont à craindre le Ressentiment de la Cour de Russie, qui, toute fière des Succès de la dernière Guerre, ainsi que de la Protection heureuse, qu'Elle avoit accordée, dans ce même temps au Roi de Pologne, dont le sort lui est subordonné, n'hésitera pas à recourir aux Armes contre La Porte, dans le Cas que Celle-cy refuse d'exécuter les articles de Paix; Elle y sera encouragée par la situation actuelle des Choses. - en Effet, les Royaumes ne sont forts ou faibles, que comparativement, et la Comparaison n'est que trop visiblement en faveur de la Russie. -L'Empire Ottoman dans le moment actuel ressemble à un Homme naturellement des mieux constitués et des plus vigoureux, mais dont les Forces sont diminuées par une longue et dangereuse maladie, dont Il relève à peine; dans cette Situation, un autre Homme, moins fort, peut être, mais jouissant d'une bonne Santé, est en Etat de le vaincre; et Je ne balance point à croire, que La Russie, dont les Troupes victorieuses et bien disciplinés, occupent les Lignes de Perecop, ainsi que les Villes et Forteresses d'Oczakow, Jenecale, Kerche, et Kimbourn, commandées par le Maréchal de Romanzow ne remporteroient des grands avantages, et n'occasionneraient de malheurs dans l'Empire Ottoman, déjà épuisé, et maintenant engagé dans la Guerre de Perse. - Il est aussi probable, que dans une Querelle commencée en conséquence d'une Injustice évidente, La Russie agira avec Ressentiment, et dans un Esprit de vengeance; et que non seulement, une Paix future seroit très difficile à arranger, mais que les malheurs occasionnés par une double Guerre pourroient amener des Troubles affreux dans l'Etat, tant en Asie, qu'en Europe.

Voilà des Motifs pour faire des Réflexions des plus sérieuses; J'en ai fait, sont il résulte, que Je regarde une Guerre avec la Russie dans le moment actuel, comme le plus grand malheur qui peut arriver à l'Empire Ottoman, que le Ministre doit l'éviter par des soins assidus, et j'estime que les Loix de la Justice de la Prudence, et surtout de la Nécessité (qui est le Maître de tous les Hommes, et de tous les Empires) le veulent absolument.

Quant aux Embarras qui existent, ou qui pourroient naître



de la Part des Tartares, ou par leurs Machinations, Je conviens que l'Objet est important, et de nature à donner de l'Inquiétude à La Porte; heureusement le mal est prévu; les Ministres ont le temps et les moyens d'en empêcher les Effets, en prenant des Précautions justes et convenables aux Circonstances. - Les Personnes raisonnables et bien disposées pour la Patrie comprendront facilement, que les malheurs arrivés pendant la dernière Guerre sont la seule Cause de la Situation actuelle; que le Défaut de Médiateurs avoit soumis les Ministres à conclure avec La Russie tel Traité de Paix qu'Elle a voulu accorder, et que les articles de cette Paix doivent avoir leur Exécution, d'autant plus, que La porte n'ayant pas eue encore le temps de réparer les Désordres de cette dernière Guerre malheureuse est hors d'Etat dans sa situation actuelle de soutenir une Rupture.

Pour tranquilizer le Peuple, l'On peut dire, ce qui est également vrai, et ce qui est stipulé dans le 3me Article du Traité, que les Tartares doivent jouir de tous leurs Droits, ainsi que de l'Exercice de leur Religion en entier, sans contrainte quelconque, et que La Porte ne permettra point que l'On fasse la moindre infraction à ces Droits sacrés. - mais comme le Peuple est une Bête Féroce dans tous les Pays, il convient sans - doute de prendre des Précautions, et de les contenir par les Efforts des Officiers braves et intelligents, qui sauront faire respecter les ordres de Leur Maître. - en fin, quand un Danger est prévu, il cesse d'en être un.

Si l'on admet la nécessité d'éviter dans ce moment une Guerre d'animosité avec la Russie, l'on sentira également, que loin de faire naître des obstacles à la bonne Intelligence, il convient au contraire d'applanir toutes les Difficultés.

Si les deux Navires qui sont icy sont des marchands, le Traité de Paix Leur - donne le Droit incontestable de Passage dans la Mer Noire. - Si au contraire, ces Navires sont des Frégates de Guerre, masqués sous - l'Apparence des Marchands, La Cour de Russie les envoie pour renforcer leur Escadre, destiné à forcer La Porte à tenir ses Engagements. - Mais si la Porte est déterminée à exécuter les articles du dernier Traité de Paix, Elle n'a rien à craindre, ni de la Russie, ni de ses Escadres, et toutes les Préparatives de Précaution de cette Cour deviennent en Pure Perte, et seront abandonnées, sitôt que la Paix sera confirmée.







### APPENDIX III

Translation of the Imperial Command directed to the Stambol Efendi, to the Molla of Galata, and to the Chief Customer of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the most distinguished among the Grandees of the Christian Nation, Sir Robert Ainslie British Ambassador residing at this Court (whose end may be attended with happiness) in a Memorial presented to my Sublime Porte, has requested, by the direction of his Court, that, in consideration of the ancient and perpetual connexion of Friendship, and good Intelligence, subsisting between my Sublime Porte, and the Court of England, and in virtue of the sincere dispositions entertained by this last towards my Sublime Court, an Imperial Grant might be given, in order that the British Merchants should enjoy the exemption from the Mastaria Duty, so as not to be subject to any such payment in future, in the like manner as has been granted to the French, Germans, and Russians; We, in conformity with the perfect good Harmony which now subsists, and which, it is obvious, will, more and more, increase between the two Courts, and agreeably to Our Royal determination of paying every regard to the above mentioned Court, have given our Imperial Consent to the said request, conformably to the Hatti Sherif i. e., Imperial Command We have issued for that purpose.

We, therefore have granted this Imperial Command, directing you aforementioned, to employ your utmost attention, that no Merchants (being truly such) on all the Goods they import from their Country to Constantinople, and upon such Merchandise as, not being liable to the Standing Prohibitions, they export from Constantinople, be, henceforward, demanded from the British Mer-



Constantinople into their Country, after paying the other customs prescribed by the sacred Capitulations; which Grant is to take place in virtue of Our Hatti Sherif, and on condition, that it may have no effect with others. You are also to cause this Imperial Edict to be registered in your Cancellarias, and to be entered in the Records of the Custom House; and you are constantly to conform to its tenor, and to the Directions it contains.

We order you, therefore, by this Imperial Command to act in obedience to its purport, and to abstain particularly from doing any thing to the contrary.

Given at Our Imperial Residence of Constantinople, the latter end of the Moon Gemazied Ahir 1198. (i. e.,) about the 19th May 1784.

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<sup>1</sup> in P. R. O., F. O. 78/5; see below p. 29.



## G L O S S A R Y

Bayram	"Festival", the four-day sacrifices ( <i>Kurban Bayramı</i> ) celebrated annually at the time of the Pilgrimage; also the three-day 'feast of Ramazan' to celebrate the end of the month of fasting.
Beglikçi	Head of the government Chancery office, the president of Chancery.
Cebecibaşı	The chief of the Sultan's armourers.
Defterdâr	Head of a finance department, but normally used (e.g., by Ainslie) to signify the <i>Baş Defterdâr</i> , the chief of the whole treasury organization, "minister of finance".
Divan	Imperial Council, the central organ of the Ottoman government meeting under the presidency of the Grand Vizir.
Dragoman	Interpreter. In general a guide for visitors to Islamic countries; more specifically, one of the salaried translators attached to the Ottoman Divan and chancery and to the staffs of foreign embassies.
Fetva'	The legal opinion given by a jurisconsult ( <i>müfti</i> ) in response to a question submitted to him.
Grand Vizir	See, Sadrazam.
Hıl'at	Robe of honour.
Kâ'im-Mâkam	Representative of the Grand Vizir when he was absent from the capital.



Kapudan Paşa

High admiral and minister of marine, the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet.

Kazı-'Asker

The two highest judicial authorities of the empire after the *Şeyh-ul-islâm*, the senior being *Kazı-'asker* 'of Rumeli', the other 'of Anatolia'.

Kiaya, Kaya, Kahya

The agent of the Grand Vizir in military and political matters.

Müşâvere

An extraordinary consultation of Ottoman dignitaries, often convened at the residence of the *Şeyh-ul-islâm*, sometimes at the Porte.

Müfti

See, *Şeyh-ul-islâm*.

Re'is Efendi or  
Re'is-ul-Kuttab

Literally chief of the clerks, was originally head of the Ottoman chancery. In the eighteenth century the official was responsible for foreign affairs.

Sadrazam

The chief executive of the Ottoman Empire, in Ottoman constitutional theory the "deputy plenipotentiary" (*vekil-i mutlak*) of the Sultan.

Seraglio

The Sultan's palace.

Ser'asker

A commander-in-chief, sometimes the Grand Vizir himself, sometimes a vizir appointed to conduct a specific campaigning.

Şeyh-ul-İslâm

In origin title of the chief *müfti* (jurisconsult of Istanbul, who came to be officially recognized as the head of the corporation of the 'ulemâ, the muslim "religious institution".

'Ulemâ

The members of the closely organized "religious institution" of the Ottoman Empire.

Validé Sultan

The mother of the reigning Sultan.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

Add. MSS.	Additional Manuscripts.
Anderson, The Eastern Question.	M.S. Anderson, <i>The Eastern Question, 1774 - 1923; A Study in International Relations</i> (London, 1966).
Anderson, The Discovery.	M. S. Anderson, <i>Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553 - 1815</i> (London, 1958).
B. A.	Başbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul.
B. M.	British Museum, London.
B. T.	Board of Trade, London.
C. P. T.	Ministères des Affaires Etrangères, Paris, Correspondance Politique, Turquie.
D. N. B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
Ewart Papers.	The papers of Joseph Ewart. These are kept in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.
E. I. <sup>2</sup>	Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition.
F. O.	Foreign Office.
H. M. C.	Publications of the Historical Commission.
I. A.	Islam Ansiklopedisi.
Ist., Uni., Ktp.	Istanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi.
Leeds Memoranda.	The Political Memoranda of Francis, Fifth Duke of Leeds, ed. D. Browning (Camden Society; London, 1884).
Madariaga,	Isabel Margaret de Madariaga, Britain, Russia and



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Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

Mu. Cev.

Muallim Cevdet.

P. R. O.

Public Record Office, London.

Sbornik.

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S. E. R.

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S. P.

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## NAME INDEX

- 'Abd-ul-hamid I: Ottoman Sultan, 4, 17, 26, 31, 36, 40, 65, 60
- 'Abd-ul-rezzak Bahir Ef.: re'is-ul-kuttab, 5
- d'Adhémar: French ambassador to London, 14
- Ahmet Azmi Ef.: Ottoman Envoy to Berlin, 16, 50 n. 107, 116, 118, 120
- d'Aiguillon Duc: French Foreign Minister, 1
- 'Ali Paşa see Şahin 'Ali Paşa
- Anderson M.S. Prof., 132
- Atıfzade Ömer Ef.: re'is-ul-kuttab, 6
- Auckland Lord: British ambassador to The Hague, 97, 98, 100
- Belgrave Lord: British M.P., 98, 105
- Bezberodko: Russian foreign minister, 27, 39
- Bulgakow: Russian ambassador to Istanbul, 13, 14, 16, 27, 30, 32, 34, 35, 39, 40, 42, 47, 49 n. 87
- Burnet, Bishop, 49 n. 87
- Carmarthen Lord (Duke of Leeds): British foreign secretary, 23, 24, 29-31, 33, 34, 36, 43, 45, 56-63, 65-67, 70, 71, 83-85, 87, 94-96, 102, 103, 112, 113, 115-117, 135
- Catherine II, 5, 10-13, 24, 25, 32, 34, 35, 38, 43, 44, 59, 61, 66, 73, 87, 103, 104, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 125, 131, 132
- Choiseul-Gouffier Comte de: French ambassador to Istanbul, 32, 34, 36-46, 49 n. 87, 59-61, 65, 67-70, 73, 74, 131, 132
- Constantine: Russian grand-duke, 10
- Crutta, P.: British embassy dragoman, 30, 37
- Diez: Prussian ambassador to Istanbul, 38, 39, 53-58, 62, 64-66, 71-75, 79 n. 85, 83, 91 n. 1
- Dundas, H.: British M.P., 106
- Elgin Lord, 119



Elphinston, J., British naval officer, 109 n. 40  
 Erekle; ruler of Georgia, 26  
 Ewart, J.: British ambassador to Berlin, 56-58, 62, 63, 70-72, 83-85, 87, 88, 94-98, 119, 121, 132, 133  
 Feyzi Ef.: see Süleyman Feyzi  
 Fitzherbert: British ambassador to St. Petersburg, 39  
 Fox, C.J.: British Prime minister, 8, 11-15, 23, 24, 101, 109  
 Frederic II of Prussia, 24  
 Frederic-William of Prussia, 85-88, 90, 93-95, 112, 116, 118, 119, 133  
 George III of England, 1, 12, 24, 94, 117, 118  
 Gerhard D.: German historian, 38  
 Giray Bahadur: Crimean pretendant, 9  
 Giray Devlet: Crimean Khan, 5  
 Giray Şahin: Crimean Khan, 5, 9, 10  
 Gobis Dr.: physician of the Seraglio, 80 n. 98  
 Goetz v.: Prussian officer, 56, 63  
 Grantham Lord: British foreign secretary, 11  
 Grenville Lord: British Foreign secretary 118, 119, 122-124, 126  
 Gustav III of Sweden, 54, 113  
 Halil Hamid Paşa: Grand vizir, 12-14, 16, 17, 25, 26  
 Hasan Paşa: kapudan paşa, 6, 7, 11, 14, 16, 17, 26, 28, 29, 35, 36, 40, 47 n. 34, 59-62, 66, 67, 76 n. 30, 134  
 Harris, J.: British ambassador to St. Petersburg, 8  
 Hayes,: British Consul in Izmir, 2  
 Hertzberg Count: Prussian foreign minister, 53-58, 62, 63, 73, 75, 84-86, 94, 132  
 Hervey Lord: British ambassador to Florence, 84  
 Joseph II of Austria, 10, 11, 24, 55, 61, 73, 77 n. 36, 83, 132  
 Kaunitz Prince: Austrian Chancellor, 45  
 Keith Robert Sir: British ambassador to Vienna, 45, 87, 90, 91, 115-117, 120, 121  
 Knobelsdorff v.: Prussian ambassador to Istanbul, 90, 111, 117, 120, 122-124, 132, 133  
 Koca Yusuf Paşa, see Yusuf Paşa



- Leeds Duke of, see Carmarthen, Lord
- Leopold II of Austria, 83, 85-88, 132, 133,
- Lucchesini: Prussian diplomatist, 115-116
- Mehmet Attaullah Ef.. 17. 32
- Montmorin: French foreign minister, 46
- Murray John: British ambassador to Istanbul, 1, 25
- Hacı Mustafa Ef.: re'is-ul-kuttap, 13, 16
- Pisant, S.: British embassy dragoman, 12-14, 37
- Pitt W.: British prime minister, 23, 26, 33, 38, 45, 56, 94-97, 103, 117-119, 131, 132, 135
- Potekim, Prince: Russian statesman, 10, 12, 25, 32, 39, 87
- Raşid Et.: re'is-ul-kuttap, 40, 41, 60, 64, 68, 69, 73, 89, 90, 111, 112, 117, 124
- Rochford Lord: British foreign secretary, , 2
- Rose, H.: British historian 23
- Rumyantsev, Gal.: Russian army commander, 7, 19 n. 41
- Saint-Priest, French ambassador to Istanbul 5, 9, 14-16, 25
- Saxe-Cobourg, Prince de, 113
- Ségur Comte de: French ambassador to St. Petersburg 32, 39, 41. 50 n. 96
- Selim III: Ottoman Sultan, 68, 69, 112-114, 116, 117. 123, 125, 132
- Stanley Th.: British M.P., 104, 105
- Suffolk Lord: British Northern Secretary, 8
- Süleyman Fevzi (Feyzullah) Ef.: re'is-ul-kuttap, 13, 35, 39, 40, 41, 44, 50 n. 94, n. 103, 60, 61
- Süleyman Paşa: Georgian Ruler, 26, 27
- Sutherland, D.: British traveller, 100, 104
- Şahin 'Ali Paşa: Grand vizir, 26
- Şerif Hasan Paşa: Grand vizir, 113, 114
- Vergennes Marquis de: French foreign minister, 9, 14
- Weymouth Lord, British Foreign secretary, 7, 8
- Whitbread, British M.P.: 108 n. 30
- Yusuf Agah Ef.: Turkish ambassador to London, 126
- Yusuf Paşa: Grand vizir, 26, 29-31, 33-37, 41-44, 51 n. 113, 59-61, 64, 66-70, 116, 124, 134













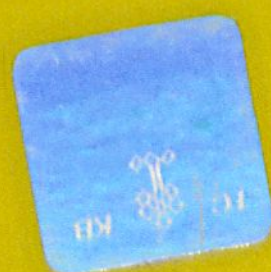






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BRITAIN  
AND THE STRUGGLE  
FOR THE INTEGRITY  
OF THE  
OTTOMAN EMPIRE

*Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy  
to Istanbul  
1776 - 1794*

A.I. Bağış

Associate Professor,  
Ege University Ankara.

With a Preface  
by  
Prof. M. S. Anderson

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