

The Embassy of Lord Ponsonby to Constantinople
1833-1841

ABSTRACT

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Lord Ponsonby was British ambassador to Turkey between 1833 - 1841 during a crucial period in relations between Great Britain and Russia. He arrived in Constantinople just prior to the negotiations of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi and at a time when British influence was weak. After some hesitation, he decided that it was essential to support military reform in Turkey as a means of securing the Sultan against his overmighty subject, Mehemet Ali. Working closely with Lord Palmerston, Ponsonby by degrees undermined Russian influence in Constantinople, and in the course of doing so was involved in the Churchill Affair, the "Vixen" incident, and the much publicized quarrel with David Urquhart. During the Mehemet Ali crisis of 1839, he served Palmerston's interests by preventing direct negotiations between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali. By the time Ponsonby left Constantinople he had secured influence for Great Britain which his successors were able to maintain throughout the century.

THE EMBASSY OF LORD PONSONBY
TO CONSTANTINOPLE, 1833 - 1841

by

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PREFACE

The need of a study of Ponsonby's career at Constantinople during the crucial years of 1833 - 1841 is evident. He was the principal agent of British policy in Turkey between the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi and the Four Power Treaty of July, 1840. His person and influence are discussed in nearly all works dealing with Anglo-Turkish relations in this period, but the interpretations of his conduct are contradictory, and in all of these works Ponsonby appears merely as Lord Palmerston's agent, the man who quarreled with Urquhart or an ambassador among ambassadors.

This thesis is an effort to place Ponsonby in the center of the stage and provide an estimate of his personal influence during these years of crisis. The thesis should be of interest from three points of view: as providing a detailed study of the work of one of the architects of British policy in Turkey, as a study of an aspect of Anglo-Turkish and Anglo-Russian relations, and for the light it throws upon the Turco-Egyptian question and various incidents such as the Urquhart-Ponsonby quarrel, the "Vixen" incident and the Churchill Affair.

The writer would like to express his gratitude to Professor H. Senior under whose guidance this thesis was written, for his patience and valuable suggestions. To Professor R. Vogel, Chairman, Department of History, the author must express his appreciation for the financial aid extended to make possible the completion of the thesis.

The nature of this thesis necessitated a period of research in Great Britain. Material was consulted in the Public Records Office, the British Museum and the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, Quality House, London, Balliol College, Oxford University, and the University of Durham, Durham. The writer owes thanks to the librarians of Balliol College and the University of Durham and the staff of the Historical Manuscripts Commission for their assistance.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my great debt to my wife, without whose help and inspiration this thesis could not have been written.

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GLOSSARY

Berat	A diploma of title; berats were originally concerned with granting fiefs. Brevets issued to Provincial governors were called berats.
Capudan Pasha (Kapûdân Paşa)	Supreme Commander of all Ottoman Fleets; Lord High Admiral. He was admitted by Suleiman the Magnificent to the Divan. His rank was directly below that of the Grand Vizier.
Defterdar	The officer responsible for the Sultan's finances; the Head of the Finance Department. From the earliest times he was a man of importance, distinguished as the only official who had the right to personally present petitions to the Sultan. His office was housed in a building separate from the Sublime Porte.
Divan	More precisely the Divan-ı humâyûn. This term originally was applied to public audiences of the Sultan, in which justice was dispensed and audiences were given to ambassadors. Mehmed II gave the Grand Vizier the duties of judge, and secretly watched the proceedings of the Divan. Suleiman the Magnificent ceased this practice, and subsequently the Divan carried out the day to day policies of the Ottoman Empire. Before Suleiman the Magnificent, the number of ministers in the Divan was small, but it was expanded under Suleiman.
Dragoman	This word is derived from 'tercuman,' meaning 'translator.' In the embassies at Constantinople, the dragoman was employed by ambassadors to conduct relations with the Porte as well as to translate communications.
Firman	An Imperial Rescript. Firmans concerned matters which the Sultans already had ruled upon in Hattisherifs, and therefore came to receive comparatively little respect.
Grand Vizier (Vezir)	The title Vizier was first used by the Ottoman Turks as a military title. Mehmed II gave his highest ranking official the title of Grand Vizier. After Suleiman the Magnificent retired from personal conduct of the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, the Grand Vizier conducted affairs in the name of the Sultan. This office usually was filled by slaves of the Sultan.

Hattisherif
(Hatt-ı Serif)

An Imperial or Noble Rescript. As it was the formulation of the Sultan's will, it was regarded as a particularly solemn document. It treated subjects which were not defined by the Sheri'a, the Holy Law of Islam. Originally, it was granted only by the Sultan, but after the time of Suleiman, was issued by the Grand Vizier in the Sultan's name.

Kiahaya
(Kiahya)

A secretary or assistant of a Turkish official.

Kiahaya Bey
(Kiahya Bey)

He originally was a personal servant of the Grand Vizier and had no administrative functions. With the increase in the volume of the Grand Vizier's work, the Kiahaya Bey gained importance, and served as the Grand Vizier's general deputy, particularly in home and military affairs. He was a member of the Divan.

Pasha
(Paşa)

A title of rank. The rank of the Pasha was signified by the number of horse tails granted with his title. Officials with the title of Pasha governed Pashalics, and the term Pasha was generally used for governor. However, the governors of Pashalics are properly referred to as Viziers, Pashas of three tails, and Beylerbeys, Pashas of two tails.

Pashalic
(Paşalık)

A province of the Turkish Empire. Pashalics were divided into Eyalets, which in turn were divided into Sanjaks.

Reis Effendi
(Re'is Efendi)

Also referred to as the Reis ül-Küttāb, meaning "the chief of the men of the pen." Originally, he was the Principal Secretary of the Chancery of the Divan, who was charged with keeping the records of the communications of the Grand Vizier to the Sultan. He later became Secretary of State or Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Seraskier Pasha
(Serasker)

Commander of the Turkish army. He was a member of the Divan, and was equal in rank with the Capudan Pasha.

Sublime Porte

It was also referred to as the Porte. It was the administrative center of Turkish government, and contained all the departments except the Finance Department. The Porte was used by Westerners to refer to the Turkish government.

Ulema.

A corps of jurist-theologians. The Ulemas interpreted the Sheri'a, the Holy law of Islam.

ABBREVIATIONS

B.P.	The Broadlands Papers; the private papers of Lord Palmerston
G.P.	The private papers of the Second Earl Grey
U.P.	The private papers of David Urquhart
F.O. 7	Foreign Office, Austria
F.O. 27	Foreign Office, France
F.O. 65	Foreign Office, Russia
F.O. 78	Foreign Office, Turkey
F.O. 195	The records of the British embassy in Turkey
F.O. 352	The private papers of Sir Stratford Canning
Ad.	The Admiralty Papers

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A. Lord Ponsonby's Background

The problem of a foreign diplomat at Constantinople was not so much to understand the Turks as to command their respect, and few ambassadors have been more successful in achieving this than Ponsonby. In the reign of Mahmoud II the Turks, who regarded themselves as a conquering people, were inclined to be contemptuous of career diplomats and were most easily impressed by ambassadors who appeared to be drawn from the higher circles of their own societies. In this respect Ponsonby was eminently suited by both background and temperament to play the role of British ambassador to Turkey.

There is some uncertainty about the date and circumstances of Ponsonby's birth, but the Dictionary of National Biography states that he probably was born around 1770, the eldest son of William Brabazon Ponsonby, First Baron Ponsonby.¹ Following the family tradition, he entered the Irish Parliament, but preferred to make his way in high society rather than in politics. In this sphere his personal charm and good looks gave him access to the highest circles, providing a useful preliminary to his diplomatic career. Some indication of his prominence in court circles is suggested by a rumour that his first diplomatic appointment was

¹ John Ponsonby's line ended in the eighteen-thirties, and the estates were inherited by the Talbot family, afterwards the Talbot-Ponsonby family. The present Lord Ponsonby has informed the Historical Manuscript Commission, Quality House, London, that he is not aware of John Ponsonby's existence. For the known details of Ponsonby's background vide The Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XLVI, New York, 1896. p. 86. Sir J. Ponsonby, The Ponsonby Family, London, 1921, pp. 75-80.

the result of the desire of George IV to remove a possible rival for the affections of Lady Conyngham.

His diplomatic career began in 1826 with an appointment to Buenos Aires, and he was subsequently sent to Rio de Janeiro. In December, 1830, Ponsonby received his first European appointment, being sent on a Special Mission to Belgium concerning the candidature of Leopold of Saxe-Coburg for the Belgian throne. This was followed, on June 8, 1832, by an appointment as envoy to the Neapolitan government, and on November 9, 1832, he was appointed ambassador to Turkey. Ponsonby's assignment to this most important post is most easily explained by his Whig family background and the fact that he was Lord Grey's brother-in-law, although considerable weight must be given to the competence which he had demonstrated during his six years of service. Sir Robert Gordon, his predecessor, was Lord Aberdeen's brother, while Stratford Canning had been sent out by his cousin George Canning. This tradition of nepotism among the ambassadors to Turkey seems to have provided able men, and Ponsonby was no exception.

B. The Awakening of British Interest in the Levant

Great Britain, until the latter half of the eighteenth century, took little interest in Turkey, and ambassadors to Turkey, chosen by the Levant Company, were generally men without exceptional ability. These men concentrated more upon Levant Company business than diplomatic affairs, and were judged by the Turks more for their manners and tastes than their energy. William Pitt was the first British statesman to take an active interest in the Turkish question, but his stand during the Oczakov affair in 1790 was prompted by pressure from Prussia, Great Britain's partner in

the Triple Alliance, to force Russia immediately to conclude peace, limiting her acquisition to only one city, Oczakov. However, Pitt's ultimatum was disregarded by Czarina Catherine, and as the cabinet did not consider the Turkish question sufficiently important to warrant a war with Russia, Pitt could not enforce the ultimatum.¹ To Pitt, Turkey was part of the larger question of Eastern Europe, as is indicated by his plans for a territorial settlement in Eastern Europe in 1791, which provided that Prussia should obtain Danzig and Thorn, Austria some Turkish territory, and Poland should obtain access by way of the Bug River to the Black Sea.² While Pitt recognized the significance of Turkey in the balance of power, the British public, knowing little about Turkey, remained indifferent.

This public indifference was ended during the Napoleonic Wars, as the expansion of Great Britain's traditional enemy in the Eastern Mediterranean, commencing with Egypt, aroused fears that France desired to use Egypt as a base for an attack upon India and partition the Ottoman Empire. Great Britain's alliance with Russia in the Third Coalition brought the British into war against the Turks in support of Russia, and for a time after the conclusion of the Tilsit agreement, the British waged war alone against the Sultan.³ In 1812, Stratford Canning played a major role in the negotiations which led to the Treaty of Bucharest between Turkey and Russia. Turkey, largely a mystery to British statesmen during the Oczakov affair, had become a vital part of

¹ D.G. Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806, Stanford University, 1939. p. 228-229, A. Ward and G.O. Gooch, (ed.). The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1815, Vol. 1, Cambridge, 1939. p. 207.

² J.H. Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain, Cambridge, 1950. p. 11.

³ A.C. Wood, The History of the Levant Company, London, 1935. pp. 190-191.

the balance of power in Europe. British ambassadors to the Porte after 1804 dealt exclusively with diplomatic affairs, while consuls-general were appointed to conduct the commercial business of the Levant Company.¹ Moreover, the importance of the embassy was enhanced by the practice of appointing men related to important ministers in the cabinet.

After the Napoleonic Wars, British fears for Turkey's security subsided, and the Greek Revolution aroused public opinion against the Turks. Despite this anti-Turkish feeling in Great Britain, neither Canning nor Wellington lost sight of the fact that the Turkish Empire had to be saved, or if moribund, replaced by a strong Greek Kingdom. Canning recognized that if Greece were not given independence by diplomatic means, military intervention by Russia eventually would be necessary. Hence, Canning entered into negotiations for a treaty securing Greek independence with the Russian ambassador to the Court of St. James, Prince Lieven, without telling any minister but Wellington, who strenuously objected to the projected treaty.² Before he could solve the Greek question by diplomacy, Canning died, succeeded by Lord Goderich in August, 1827, who in turn was succeeded in January, 1828, by Wellington. On October 10, 1827, the Turco-Egyptian fleet was destroyed at Navarino, but the Turks still refused to yield on the Greek question. Wellington, who was reluctant to agree to unconditional Greek independence, could not restrain Russia from intervening in the Greek struggle for independence, and on

¹ Ibid., p. 185.

² C.W. Crawley, The Question of Greek Independence, a Study of British Foreign Policy, 1821-1833, Cambridge, 1930. p. 70.

April 26, 1828, Russia declared war on Turkey. On July 19, the Powers signed a protocol authorising France to send troops to the Morea.¹

Turkey's defeat in her two year struggle with Russia and the unsuccessful revolution in Poland in 1830 generated widespread Russophobe feelings in Great Britain. Publicists like David Urquhart, who had fought with the Greeks during the Greek Revolution but subsequently had come to admire the Turks, fanned the flames, and by 1835 Czar Nicholas I feared that a war could break out with Great Britain.

C. Turkish Internal Affairs

The decline of Turkey is dated from the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, after which little was done to keep pace with the Christian Powers in the improvement of weapons and military tactics. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Sultan Selim III tried to stem the Turkish decline and re-establish the central authority by reforming and introducing Western dress into the army. However, Turkish law was regarded by the Turks as sacred. Reforms, which established new institutions and customs were opposed by groups which thrived on disorder, like the Janissaries, as well as by devout Muslims. The Janissaries revolted, forcing Selim to retire to the Seraglio,² and the chaos which followed continued until Mahmoud II ascended the throne.

Mahmoud, finding himself a puppet of the Janissaries, at first acted cautiously, but in 1826 mustered enough courage to massacre the Janissaries. Ruling unopposed, Mahmoud was unpopular,

¹ Ibid., p.226.

² The Seraglio was the Sultan's Palace, containing his harem and personal favourites, located in the vicinity of Constantinople.

his reforms leading many to regard him as a religious heretic. To allay this disaffection, Mahmoud curtailed his programme of reform, but Turkey's debacle in the war against Russia further embittered the Turks against the Sultan, who was blamed for the defeat because he had destroyed Turkey's traditional military system. After the war, Mahmoud seldom left the heavily guarded Seraglio.

The Porte, or Divan,¹ conducted the day to day business of the Turkish Empire, the ministers being appointed by the Sultan. During the eighteen-thirties ministers seldom retained their positions for long. The Porte was constantly the scene of

¹ The Divan or Diwan, a word of Persian origin, was a council of ministers. Originally, the word meant an anthology, but later was used by the Caliph Omar to refer to a list of officials and soldiers entitled to share the spoils of war. Under Mu'awiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, the Divan Al-Khatam, or chancellery, was created, and subsequently other Divans, or ministries, were created. Around 900, the Divans were united into one body, the Divan ad-Dar. R. Levy, The Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge, 1965, passim. P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, London, 1937, passim. Under the Ottoman Turks, the term Divan was retained. The Divan-i humayun originally was referred to audiences given by the Sultan, in which justice was dispensed and audiences were given to ambassadors. Mehmet II gave the Grand Vizier the duties of judge, and secretly watched the proceedings of the Divan. In the latter part of his reign, Suleiman withdrew from the active conduct of affairs, and placed the conduct of the day to day affairs of the Ottoman Empire in the hands of the Divan. This continued under Suleiman's successors, with the actual control of the affairs of the Empire lying with the Grand Vizier, the President of the Divan. The composition of the Divan was limited before its expansion by Suleiman. The Sublime Porte or Porte, more properly the Bab-i'Ali, originally the official residence presented by Mehmed IV to his Grand Vizier, Dervish Mehmed Pasha, and was inhabited by subsequent Grand Viziers. It was also a public office, where all the Departments of the administration, except the Finance Department, were located. However, Westerners used the terms Porte and Divan interchangeably. In this thesis, the term Porte is used to signify the Turkish Ministry, the Divan, as well as the offices of the ministers, in keeping with Ponsonby's practice. On the Divan-i humayun vide H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, Vol. I, London, 1950, passim. The Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition, London, 1965.

intrigue, and when a minister manoeuvred himself into pre-eminence in the Divan, the Sultan, fearing that the minister had become too strong, deposed him.

The Seraglio had a considerable influence upon Turkish policy. Mahmoud constantly was subjected to the influence of his favourites, and when he made a decision on a weighty matter which had to be carried out with speed, a favourite often would implement the measure, sometimes without informing the Porte. Ahmet Pasha, the Sultan's favourite between 1831 and 1839, played an important role in the negotiations of 1833 to obtain aid from Russia.

The rivalry between the Porte and the Seraglio was so intense that members of the Seraglio at times tried to persuade the Sultan to depose a particular minister at the Porte, while Mahmoud's secretaries in the Seraglio not infrequently withheld or altered reports from the Porte. Only residence in the Seraglio could give a minister at the Porte security, which is demonstrated by the fact that Ahmet Pasha, who resided in the Seraglio while Capudan Pasha,¹ was the only minister who retained his ministry without interruption between 1834 and Mahmoud's death. As Turkey did not have a hereditary aristocracy to fill the important positions of state, many, like Ahmet Pasha, who had been a waiter, and Riza Pasha, the son of a small retail merchant, were raised from obscurity by the Sultan to positions of powers.

This irregular system of government presented difficulties to foreign ambassadors. As communications designated for the Sultan were required to be submitted to the Porte, Ponsonby, who always had opponents there, could not be sure whether his

¹ The Minister of the Marine and Grand Admiral.

communiqués would be sent unaltered to the Seraglio. Nor could Ponsonby be sure that the communications, when received by the Seraglio, would be submitted to the Sultan. Ponsonby was able to re-establish a direct link with the Sultan in the Seraglio, which had been used previously by Stratford Canning, through Vogorides, a Bulgarian Christian who was Prince of Samos. Although this secret channel did permit Ponsonby to present unaltered his ideas to the Sultan, there was no substitute for an audience with Mahmoud. The Porte and Seraglio constantly frustrated Ponsonby's attempts to obtain audiences, and Bouteneff, the Russian ambassador, who received audiences upon request after the conclusion of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, used his influence in limiting them to himself and Baron Stürmer, the Austrian ambassador. As will be seen, Ponsonby's inability to obtain interviews at crucial points limited his effectiveness.

The dragoman system used by the British embassy had been handed down by the Levant Company, which was dissolved in 1826. Dragomans, generally Levantines, conducted the day to day affairs of the embassy, but were suspected of dishonesty by many Europeans. During Ponsonby's term as ambassador, no fewer than three members of the Pisani family served at one time as dragomans. The only non-Pisanis who served under Ponsonby were George Wood, an Englishman who had moved to the Levant, and after his death, his son Richard. Vacant dragoman positions were filled by 'students' attached to the embassy.

When the British embassy at Pera was destroyed by fire in 1831, a temporary residence was established at Therapia, a considerable distance from the Porte. Although continually

promised a permanent residence by Palmerston, Ponsonby spent his whole term in the temporary residence. Because Ponsonby, a man in his sixties, rarely could visit the Porte, Frederick Pisani, the first dragoman, controlled communication with the Divan. As a member of the Pisani family served as a Russian dragoman, Palmerston feared that confidential information could be passed to the Russian legation, and although Ponsonby vouched for the honesty of the Pisanis, Palmerston decided to phase out the dragoman system.¹ No new dragomans were employed, and ~~attachés such as~~ Hay and Alison, were sent to the embassy by the Foreign Office. The dragoman system did not survive Ponsonby's terms as ambassador.

D. Europe after the Peace of Adrianople

The Treaty of Adrianople was liberal considering Turkey's humiliation in the war in 1829, although the treaty was taken by Russophobes in Great Britain as an indication that the Russians were preparing to destroy Turkey. Yet, Russia desired to save the Turkish Empire. As the Ottoman Empire appeared to be on the point of dissolution after the Russian victory at Kulevcha on June 11, 1829, Czar Nicholas appointed a Special Committee to deliberate upon its future. Moved by D.V. Dashkov's argument that the expulsion of the Turks from Europe could lead to a Turkish revival among the Musulman population of Asia and that a partition of European Turkey would strengthen the other Powers more than Russia, the committee concluded that the advantages of maintaining the Empire outweighed the

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, November 4, 1835: B.P.

advantages of destroying it, and that if the Empire collapsed a European congress should be convened to decide the fate of European Turkey.¹ Although General Diebitsch signed the Treaty of Adrianople on September 14 without instructions and incognizant of the recommendations of the Committee, the treaty was in conformity with the sentiments of his government and Russia's commitments to the Powers not to seek territorial aggrandizement in Europe. After the conclusion of peace, Russia pursued a policy designed to make the Turks more dependent upon her.

Russia's decision to end the war rather than march upon Constantinople, which was undefended, permitted Wellington finally to extricate himself from the dilemma which had cost him part of his cabinet. During the Russo-Turkish War, Wellington, fearing that the Turkish Empire was about to collapse, had entertained the idea of establishing a large Greek Kingdom,² but the treaty and the relative quiet in Turkey after the war stilled the Duke's fears, and he decided to support a small Greece. The mood in Europe was against territorial alterations, as was illustrated by Czar Nicholas' rejection of Polignac's plan to revise the map of Europe.

Constantinople was relatively quiet immediately after the conclusion of peace, although Mahmoud sat uneasily upon his throne. The Turks, knowing that they were at the mercy of the Powers, could do little more than try to divide them. Sir Robert Gordon, the British ambassador, was shown marked attention by the Turks, while the Russians were detested and France, who still had troops in the Morea and was known to have designs

¹ R.J. Kerner, "Russia's New Policy in the Near East After the Peace of Adrianople," Cambridge Historical Journal, V, 1937.

² Crawley, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

upon Algiers, was regarded as unreliable and potentially dangerous. In 1830, the Porte learned that the French were encouraging Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, to conquer Algiers. When the Porte would not permit the Pasha to fulfil this ambition, France undertook the conquest herself, while Guillemont, the French ambassador, used every method he could in preventing the Porte from sending Tahir Bey to Algiers to act as mediator between France and the Bey of Algiers.¹ Guillemont further injured French influence in Constantinople when he informed the Porte, after the July Revolution in France, that France was prepared for war with Russia.² Although the French government immediately recalled him, the Turks did not forget his policy and methods, and in the following years the Porte hesitated in trusting France. British influence was paramount in Constantinople.

In 1830, Lord Grey formed a Whig government with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary. A Canningite, Palmerston found conditions favourable to extend British influence in western Europe. The July Revolution brought to the French throne Louis Philippe who, recognized by neither Metternich nor Czar Nicholas, had no choice but to gravitate towards Great Britain. Palmerston desired an entente cordiale with France, with Great Britain as the dominant member of the partnership, but refused to sign any agreement with France which would commit the British government to support France against the other Continental Powers. Palmerston believed that Anglo-French co-operation would check

¹ Gordon to Aberdeen, February 7, 1830; March 2, 1830: F.O. 78/189. Same to same, August 17, 1830: F.O. 78/190.

² Gordon to Palmerston, March 29, 1831: F.O. 78/198. Same to same April 26, May 11, 1831: F.O. 78/199.

the Holy Alliance, and this indeed did happen in Belgium, Portugal and Spain. However, the balance of power was not only the two Powers allied against the Holy Alliance: the Holy Alliance itself was a balance of power, with Austria and Prussia checking Russia, and could be used in countering the extension of French power, as was shown in 1840. Simply stated, Palmerston's concept of the balance of power in Europe was a state in which no Power could expand and Great Britain could re-establish her influence in traditional British spheres of influence in Western Europe.

E. The Revolt of Mehemet Ali

The most immediate pressing matter facing the Sultan during the eighteen-thirties' was posed by ~~his~~ overmighty subject, Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt. Mehemet Ali, who had become Pasha of Egypt through intrigue during the years which followed Napoleon's invasion, recognized that reform could be a weapon in his hands. Egypt for many years had been in a state of virtual anarchy, with the Turkish government unable to control the complex forces in the country. Challenged by the Mamluks, Mehemet Ali massacred them in 1812, and then proceeded to reform the unreliable Turkish army in Egypt, skilfully persuading the unruly elements in the Turkish army, principally Albanian, to leave Egypt. The new army, adopting the French system, was trained by French officers. The rank and file was Egyptian, the officers Turkish and French.

Mehemet Ali did not confine his reforms to the military, but reintroduced cotton production in Egypt. Cotton, a government monopoly like the other produce of the country, supplied a large

proportion of Mehemet Ali's revenue, and the Pasha's exactions drove a substantial number of farmers from the land. Fascinated by western technology, the Pasha squandered an estimated five million Egyptian dollars on factory machinery, which the untrained Egyptian could not operate, and many machines lay abandoned in the desert in the eighteen-thirties'.¹ Wasteful as these economic experiments were, they still counted little when placed next to the military and naval budgets.

After Mehemet Ali conquered Syria, he acquired new wealth, which he poured into his army. More than a quarter of the revenue of Syria went into the military budget.² Mahmoud, compelled to keep pace with the Pasha, tried to find new ways of increasing his revenue, but he moved cautiously with his financial reform programme because it threatened to injure strong vested interests.

While Mehemet Ali displayed the less attractive characteristics of Turkish officialdom in his disregard for the welfare of the Egyptian people, he possessed qualities seldom found among contemporary Ottoman Pashas. Noticeable among these was the patience with which he pursued his objectives and his interest in and knowledge of European public opinion. His experience during the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt had impressed him with the importance of sea power, and the naval supremacy of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. As Egypt was vulnerable to attack by sea, he concluded that the good will of Great Britain offered the best possible guarantee of security, and that the support of France was a useful but a less satisfactory alternative.

¹ Campbell to Bowring, January 18, 1838: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, February 7, 1838: F.O. 78/342 Pt. I.

² Bowring's Report on Syria in 1838: F.O. 78/380.

In 1826, Mehemet Ali proposed to Salt, the British consul-general in Egypt, that he would withdraw his troops from the Morea in return for a free hand in Arabia and credit to purchase warships in Great Britain, but the Pasha carefully avoided alluding to his desire for independence.¹ However, the battle of Navarino dashed this proposal. Three years after Navarino, the persistent Pasha approached Barker, Salt's successor, with a new proposal. Having learned that France was about to attack Algiers, he offered to place himself at the disposal of British policy in return for permission to conquer Algiers.² However, the Pasha's proposal came too late, for the French already had attacked the city.

Unable to establish an empire in North Africa, the restless Pasha turned his attention to Syria, invading it in 1831, ostensibly to punish Abdullah Pasha, Pasha of Acre, for his insults. Mehemet Ali encountered considerable difficulty in capturing Acre, but Mahmoud did not aid Abdullah Pasha in defending the fortress. After Mehemet Ali captured Acre, the Sultan prepared a campaign to reduce the Pasha, rejecting a proposal by Varenne, the French chargé d'affaires, for French mediation. In July, 1832, Hussein Pasha, the commander of the Sultan's army in Syria, suffered a severe defeat near Hamah. Undaunted, Mahmoud hastily raised a new army, which he placed under the command of Reschid Pasha, the Grand Vizier, and again declined a proposal by Varenne for French mediation.³

Stratford Canning, who arrived in Constantinople in the

¹ Memorandum by Salt, September 16, 1826: F.O. 78/147.

² Barker to Aberdeen, June 22, July 6, 1830: F.O. 78/192.

³ Canning to Palmerston, July 22, 1832: F.O. 78/211.

latter half of 1831 on a Special Mission to settle the frontiers of Greece, seems to have sufficiently impressed upon the Sultan that the maintenance of the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was a cardinal principle of British foreign policy. Having done this, he found that the Turks were prepared to make concessions on the Greek frontier in return for a promise of aid by the British government against Mehemet Ali.¹ Although the ambassador tried to prevent the Turks from entertaining the idea that the British government would agree to this,² the Turks did make concessions on the Greek frontier, apparently to win British goodwill. During his final audience with the Sultan, Canning received a portrait of the Sultan set in brilliants, an honour which never before had been bestowed on a foreign ambassador,³ followed a few days later by a secret proposal from the Sultan for a British alliance. Canning, lacking instructions, could say only that Great Britain was sensitive to Turkish interests.⁴ Mahmoud subsequently sent Mavrogeni, the Turkish chargé d'affaires in Vienna, and later Namik Pasha, to London to request British naval aid. When he returned to London, Canning drew up a report urging the British government to give the Sultan naval aid against Mehemet Ali.⁵

The new Turkish army evacuated Koniah and retreated to Ak-Shehr where Reschid Pasha stopped to consolidate his position.

¹ Same to same, April 30, 1832: F.O. 352/25 Pt. I.

² Same to same, May 17, 1832: ibid.

³ Same to same, August 7, 1832: F.O. 78/211.

⁴ Same to same, August 9, 1832: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, December 19, 1832: ibid.

Ibrahim, Mehemet Ali's son and Commander of the Egyptian army, occupied Koniah. At the beginning of December, the Porte ordered Reschid Pasha to advance and attack the Egyptian army. In the ensuing battle, at Koniah, on December 21, the Turkish army was shattered. With the road to Constantinople now undefended and Ibrahim within fifteen days march from the Turkish capital, Mahmoud realized that only the intervention of the Powers could save his life and throne.

However, Mahmoud could find little comfort in Palmerston's final communication on Mavrogeni's mission. On December 8, Palmerston instructed Mandeville, the British chargé d'affaires, to inform the Porte that the Sultan's request for naval aid was a matter "of greater difficulty than at first sight it may appear to the Porte to be." While Palmerston did not unequivocally refuse this aid, he stated that the British government "confidently trusted that the Sultan had ample resources to reduce Mehemet Ali to submission."¹ Mandeville communicated Palmerston's note to the Porte at the beginning of January, 1833, when the Sultan was desperately seeking foreign aid.

On December 22, General Mouravieff arrived at Constantinople on a mission for Czar Nicholas. As Mouravieff's arrival was only five days before the Porte learned about the defeat at Koniah, Nicholas apparently had foreseen the Turkish defeat. The day after his arrival, Mouravieff informed the Reis Effendi that his sovereign had sent him to warn Mehemet Ali that should he not submit immediately to the Sultan, Russia would take measures against him and his supporters. At an audience with the Sultan, Mouravieff presented a personal letter from the Czar. As the audience was

¹ Palmerston to Mandeville, December 5, 1832: F.O. 78/212.

held on December 27, Mahmoud already may have learned about his army's defeat. On December 29, Mouravieff, meeting with the Reis Effendi and the Seraskier Pasha to discuss the grave consequences of the Turkish defeat, offered, in the Czar's name, to place a Russian fleet of five sail of the line and four frigates at the Sultan's disposal.¹

On January 2, 1833 a council was convened at the Seraskier Pasha's house upon the Sultan's orders to discuss the Russian offer. Regarding Russian aid as a last resort, the council resolved instead to send Halil Pasha, accompanied by Reschid Bey, the Amedgi Effendi, to negotiate with Mehemet Ali.² Subsequently, the Reis Effendi informed Varenne of the Porte's decision, requesting him to write the news to Mehemet Ali.³

Considering the Sultan's resolve to commence negotiations with the Pasha as a victory for French diplomacy, Varenne boasted that French influence had eclipsed Russian influence in Constantinople, but he was aware how strong the partisans of Russia were in the Sultan's counsels. These partisans were contending that the Sultan would be dishonoured should Halil Pasha be sent to negotiate with Mehemet Ali, and Mouravieff's presence in Alexandria would be sufficient to persuade the Pasha immediately to submit to the Sultan. In addition, they were trying to convince the Sultan that France, a revolutionary country, threatened legitimacy. Bouteneff's position was further strengthened by the support he received from the Prussian ambassador and Austrian

¹ Mandeville to Palmerston, December 31, 1832: ibid. Same to same, January 8, 1833, No. 5: F.O. 78/221.

² Same to same, January 8, 1833, No. 6: ibid.

³ Varenne to de Broglie, January 12, 1833: G. Douin, La Première Guerre de Syrie, Vol. 2, Paris, 1931. p.8.

Internuncio.¹

Mandeville now had little influence at the Porte, and received little notice from it. Varenne, representing the hitherto junior partner in the Anglo-French Entente, could not restrain himself from boasting that France was leading the Entente in Constantinople, and that he did not inform Mandeville about his measures until they had been implemented.² As he lacked instructions, Mandeville hesitated to act. But it is important to note that Varenne and Roussin, the French ambassador who arrived at the end of February, also lacked comprehensive instructions. Mandeville certainly was handicapped because he did not hold the rank of ambassador, but Varenne held the same rank as Mandeville, and showed more initiative. In addition to lack of initiative, Mandeville did not have a forceful personality. As Turkish policy was dictated more by fear than reason, Varenne and Roussin, with their aggressive personalities, were able to play upon the Turks' fears while Mandeville could not. While the two Frenchmen placed great importance upon increasing French influence in Constantinople, Mandeville rarely discussed British influence in his dispatches to Palmerston. Mandeville was a career diplomat, whose long service in the Levant gave him a comprehensive understanding of the Turkish question, but he lacked the decision and personality to apply this knowledge. Indeed, Mandeville's indecision and reluctance to unreservedly support their policy, gave the two Frenchmen the impression that the British government was not completely honest with the French government.

¹ Same to same, January 13, 1833: ibid., pp. 18-19.

² Ibid.

After the battle of Koniah, Ibrahim gave no evidence that he would march upon Constantinople. However, the Porte, in the third week of January, received a letter from Ibrahim stating that he could not suspend his advance until ordered to do so by his father, and that he must advance to Brousse to obtain adequate provisions for the winter for his army. Immediately upon receiving the letter, Ahmet Pasha, who favoured Russian aid, held a conference with the Caimacan Pasha, Seraskier Pasha and Kiahaya Bey. The Reis Effendi, whom the Russians felt was anti-Russian, was excluded. Although the conference decided to do nothing until Varenne had received a reply from Ibrahim,¹ the Sultan, refusing to wait, apparently upon Ahmet Pasha's advice, sent a secret request for aid to the Russian embassy.²

Upon learning about Mahmoud's measure, Varenne sent his dragoman to complain to the Reis Effendi. The Reis Effendi responded by sending Vogorides, on January 25, to request Ibrahim's letter to the French embassy. Akif Effendi used the French protest and Ibrahim's reply to Varenne, which was similar to the letter that the Porte had received, to call a conference the same day. When Ahmet Pasha was pressed to expatiate upon the Sultan's request to Bouteneff, he admitted that the Sultan had requested thirty thousand troops to come by land and five thousand by ship. The majority of the council felt that as Russian aid would endanger the Empire, some other measure should be taken, but no measures were resolved upon.³

Recognizing that a British protest would harden the Porte's

¹ Same to same, January 27, 1833: ibid., pp. 46-47.

² Same to same, January 28, 1833: ibid., p. 53.

³ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

opposition to Russian aid, Varenne pressed Mandeville to send a protest note to the Reis Effendi. Mandeville readily complied, writing in his note that the Porte should "reflect seriously" upon the consequences of accepting Russian aid. The next day, January 26, the Turkish ministers, at a meeting convened at the Caimacan Pasha's house, resolved to oppose Russian aid.¹

Having decided against Russian aid, the Porte now had to find an alternative to it. As British or French military aid could not be considered, the Porte placed all its hope upon a guarantee by the French embassy that Ibrahim would not advance and Mehemet Ali would accept the Sultan's terms for peace. On January 28, the Reis Effendi warned Varenne that as Ibrahim could be in Constantinople in fifteen days, should the French embassy refuse to make these guarantees, the Porte would have no choice but immediately to request Russia to supply aid. Reluctant to take this responsibility upon himself, Varenne replied that he could do no more than write a second letter to Ibrahim requesting him to halt.²

The Reis Effendi's threat to request Russian aid was no more than a bluff, as Akif Effendi later confided to the British dragoman.³ However, the Sultan did not share the Porte's reluctance, and when he learned, on February 1, that Ibrahim already had reached Ak Shehr, he immediately instructed the Reis Effendi to make a formal request to Bouteneff for aid. When Akif Effendi endeavoured to defer this extreme measure by requesting Varenne to write a third letter to Ibrahim, Mahmoud reiterated his order to

¹ Mandeville to Palmerston, January 28, 1833: F.O. 78/221

² Varenne to de Broglie, January 29, 1833: G. Douin, op.cit., pp. 55-56.

³ Mandeville to Palmerston, January 29, 1833: F.O. 78/221

request Russian aid.¹ At a meeting with Bouteneff on February 2, the Reis Effendi requested that Russia should place at the Sultan's disposal four sail of the line, four frigates, and twenty to twenty-five thousand troops. Bouteneff replied that Russia might not be able to send the force required, because the winter was unusually severe. As Bouteneff asserted that he did not have the means of dispatching the request to Russia, Akif Effendi promised that the Porte would place a Turkish steam vessel at his disposal. After the meeting, Bouteneff informed Mandeville that the request would be sent immediately, and two thousand, two hundred, fifty Russian troops could be expected at Constantinople in a fortnight.²

Although the request had been made for Russian aid, the Reis Effendi still thought that Russian aid could be blocked. Akif Effendi requested that the British and French embassies should request Ibrahim to suspend his advance and the letters should be delivered by men from the two embassies. While Varenne readily accepted the proposal, Mandeville instructed his dragoman to inform the Reis Effendi that the British embassy would do so only on the condition that the Porte deferred its request for Russian aid. To defend his decision, Mandeville argued that without this assurance, the British embassy would appear to acquiesce to the Sultan's request for Russian aid, which his government had not authorized him to support. Obviously upset because the Porte had paid so little attention to the British embassy, Mandeville concluded his instructions by asking why the Porte had "not until

¹ Varenne to de Broglie, February 4, 1833: G. Douin, op.cit., p.71.

² Mandeville to Palmerston, February 3, 1833: F.O. 78/221.

now made this tardy application" to him.¹

This condition was unacceptable to the Reis Effendi, who argued that two messengers already had been sent to Rotchuck to request aid from the Russian Danubian army, and the Porte felt that the eight days required to receive an answer from Ibrahim could prove fatal to the Sultan. Akif Effendi refused to submit Mandeville's proposals to the Sultan unless the British embassy could guarantee that the letter would stop Ibrahim's advance. The Porte, the Reis Effendi warned, in twenty-four hours would make an official request to the British embassy for a letter to Ibrahim, to be conveyed to the Egyptian's headquarters by a member of the embassy. An unfavourable response would force the Porte to tell the Sultan that the British representative did not give the Porte the service he "could have rendered to them."² Trapped by the Reis Effendi and anxious not to fall out of step with Varenne, Mandeville consented, but nevertheless, inserted in his letter a statement that should the Egyptian march be suspended, the Porte still might be able to prevent the arrival of Russian aid. The Reis Effendi objected to this statement.³

The crisis was ended before the letter could be re-drafted and sent to Ibrahim. The Egyptian army had advanced upon Ibrahim's initiative. Mouravieff, who arrived in Alexandria in the third week of January, persuaded Mehemet Ali to instruct his son to stop his advance. The order arrived too late to prevent Ibrahim's advance towards Brousse, but when Ibrahim received the order on the march, he immediately suspended his advance. On February 8,

¹ Same to same, February 4, 1833, No. 24: ibid.

² Same to same, February 4, 1833, No. 25: ibid.

³ Same to same, February 11, 1833: ibid.

a day after being informed about this by Mouravieff, who had returned to Constantinople, the Porte informed Bouteneff that Russian aid no longer was needed, but the Russian legation was not officially requested to countermand the order for aid.¹

Pressed by Mandeville and Varenne officially to countermand the request for Russian aid, the Reis Effendi maintained that soon the Porte would know whether Ibrahim was sincere, and meanwhile the Porte would ask Bouteneff not to dispatch immediately the request to the Russian commander in the Crimea.² However, Bouteneff, informed by the Porte that both Turkish steamers were being repaired and a corvette would take at least five days to equip, dispatched the request with his lugger on February 6.³

On the night of February 19, the Russian fleet was sighted at the Bosphorus. Although Mahmoud could see no alternative to Russian aid, he feared Russia's presence in the Straits. Consequently, Ahmet Pasha was sent to the Russian embassy early the following morning to request Bouteneff that he order the Russian commander not to pass the Bosphorus. But Ahmet Pasha arrived at Buyukdere too late, as the Russian fleet already was anchoring in front of the Russian legation.⁴

The arrival of the Russian fleet immediately transformed the internal crisis in the Turkish Empire into a European crisis.

¹ Varenne to de Broglie, February 12, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.88.

² Mandeville to Palmerston, February 11, 1833: F.O. 78/221.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, February 23, 1833, No. 38: ibid.

Roussin reported to de Broglie that the Russian fleet's arrival was the most shocking experience of his life. Without a second thought, the French ambassador instructed his dragoman to inform the Reis Effendi that Russian intervention ended the independence of the Turkish Empire. The French ambassador threatened to break off relations and leave Constantinople if the Porte did not request the Russians, within twenty-four hours, to depart with the first favourable wind.¹ Although Mandeville consented to make a protest to the Porte, he told Roussin that the British note could not be framed in the same "bold and energetic language" as the French. F. Pisani, the British dragoman, delivered a protest to the Reis Effendi, demanding that the Russians should be requested to withdraw, but the letter did not contain a threat.²

Within three hours, Roussin received an answer to his representation. At 7:00 P.M. Vogorides and Mr. Blacque, the editor of the 'Moniteur Ottoman,' conveyed a formal proposal from the Sultan to the French embassy promising that the Porte, within twenty-four hours, would ask the Russians to leave the Straits with the first favourable wind in return for a guarantee by the French embassy that Mehemet Ali would conclude peace on the terms sent by the Porte to Halil Pasha. Although Roussin was cognizant that the Pasha could demand Damascus and Caramania, which controlled the passes through the Taurus Mountains, in addition to the Pashalics of St. Jean d'Acre, Tripoli, Jerusalem and Naplouse offered by the Sultan, he decided that he had no alternative, as the Russian force could not be permitted to remain in the Straits.³

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, February 24, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.100.

² Mandeville to Palmerston, February 23, 1833, No.38: F.O. 78/221.

³ Roussin to de Broglie, February 24, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp. 100-104.

To overcome Mehemet Ali's reluctance to accept the Porte's terms, Roussin wrote a strongly worded letter to the Pasha, threatening to use the French fleet against him should he reject the terms.¹ Before signing the agreement with the Porte, Roussin informed Mandeville that the French admiral would be instructed to cut communications between Ibrahim and Egypt should Mehemet Ali spurn the terms of the agreement, and requested Mandeville to send similar instructions to the British admiral. But Mandeville, unwilling to take the responsibility of prescribing any course of action to the British admiral, would promise only that the admiral would be informed about Roussin's agreement and would be left to his discretion whether to support the French admiral in employing force against Mehemet Ali.² In his instruction to Barker, the British consul-general in Egypt, Mandeville warned Mehemet Ali that Great Britain unreservedly supported Roussin's convention and that France "would undoubtedly enforce the execution of it," but avoided stating whether Great Britain would aid France in enforcing the convention.³ In keeping with the terms of the convention, the Porte, within twenty-four hours, sent a request to the Russian embassy to withdraw all Russian troops and ships in the Straits with the first favourable wind.⁴

The British embassy played a secondary role in the negotiations to remove the Russians from Constantinople. Determined to give France the leadership in the Anglo-French entente, Roussin

¹ Roussin to Mimaut, February 22, 1833: ibid., pp.112-113.

² Mandeville to Palmerston, February 23, 1833, No.38: F.O. 78/221.

³ Mandeville to Barker, February 23, 1833: enclosure Mandeville to Palmerston, February 23, 1833, No.39: ibid.,

⁴ The Porte to the Russian Legation, N.D., Douin, op.cit., p.114.

continued Varenne's policy of telling Mandeville only after carrying out French policy. France, Roussin argued, had the right "to conserve for herself the principal merit, having undertaken the initiative in this great responsibility."¹ As the French government previously had indicated to Mehemet Ali that it would support his desire for all Syria,² Roussin had indeed undertaken a great responsibility. Mimaut, the French consul-general in Egypt, who was a staunch supporter of Mehemet Ali, and had encouraged the Pasha's expansionist ambitions, now was requested to urge upon Mehemet Ali less than the French government previously had promised to support.

British influence was severely limited, as the Sultan could not forgive the British government for declining him aid in his hour of need. During the second week in February, Mahmoud complained to Vogorides that Great Britain was indifferent to Turkish interests. Vogorides' elaborate arguments in defence of Great Britain failed to make an impression upon the Sultan.³

The first threat to Roussin's convention occurred in the last days of February, when Tahir Bey, the corrupt and unscrupulous governor of Smyrna, was deposed by a revolution in the city, and a partisan of Mehemet Ali was proclaimed the new governor. Immediately upon learning about the revolution, the ambassadors of the Powers ordered their consuls to strike their flags, and this measure was sufficient in inducing the people of Smyrna to restore Tahir Bey.⁴

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, February 24, 1833: ibid., p. 104.

² de Broglie to Varenne, January 15, 1833: ibid., pp. 20-21.

³ Mandeville to Palmerston, February 23, 1833, separate: F.O. 78/221.

⁴ Same to same, March 7, 1833, March 12, 1833: F.O. 78/222.

Meanwhile, the Russians gave no indication that they were preparing to withdraw from the Straits. As the wind was from the north, they were given an excuse to remain. Russian partisans were pressing the Sultan, meanwhile, to renounce his convention with Roussin. The anti-Russian party in the Divan included the Grand Vizier, Raouf Pasha, the Seraskier Pasha, Hosrew Pasha, the Reis Effendi, and the Defterdar. But this party was powerless against the combination of the Sultan, who was dominated by his fears of Mehemet Ali, and Ahmet Pasha, who spoke for the Seraglio.¹ However, Roussin suspected that if the anti-Russian party believed their lives and the Turkish Empire in danger, they would not hesitate to spark a revolution in Constantinople, where the inhabitants, knowing that the Sultan was responsible for requesting aid from the hated Russians, were in an ugly mood. Indeed, Roussin noted to de Broglie that he would not be surprised to see Mahmoud deposed in the near future.²

The pressure applied by Roussin and Mandeville upon the Porte to fulfil its part of Roussin's convention placed the Reis Effendi in a delicate position as he could not explain why the Russians were still at Constantinople. It was obvious to Mandeville, in his discussions with the Reis Effendi, on March 14, that Akif Effendi was visibly embarrassed by the Sultan's reluctance to force the Russians to withdraw their forces from Constantinople. Expecting that Roussin would reject the Porte's request to accept a few days' delay in the Russian withdrawal, Akif Effendi begged Mandeville to use his influence to dissuade the French ambassador from abandoning the convention. Mandeville consented, but declined

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, March 11, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.147-148.

² Same to same, March 15, 1833: ibid., pp.150-151.

a request by the Reis Effendi to write another letter demanding Ibrahim's retreat, because Ibrahim had rejected his previous letter and he could not "expose" himself to another refusal.¹

The following day, Roussin threatened to renounce the convention should the Russians fail to leave within twenty-four hours after the wind had changed to the south, and added that he had been informed by his government that a formidable French fleet would arrive in Turkish waters in the middle of March. A conference convened that night at the Sultan's Palace decided not to waste time making an appeal to Mandeville, but to see Bouteneff immediately.² The next morning, the Reis Effendi represented to Bouteneff and Mouravieff, who commanded the Russian expedition, that as the Sultan felt secure and had ample evidence that Mehemet Ali's revolt had terminated, Russian aid no longer was necessary. When Bouteneff replied that the Russian expedition should delay its departure for a short time, for Ibrahim could make a sudden swoop upon Scutari after the expedition had left, the Reis Effendi answered that the Sultan had ample means to counter any move by Ibrahim. But the Reis Effendi did not go any further in his argument, apparently because he had orders from the Sultan not to protest too strongly. Roussin suspected that Mahmoud had decided to request Russian withdrawal only because he feared that he would carry out his threat. Nothing was resolved at the conference.³

At a meeting, on March 21, the Turkish ministers decided upon asking Roussin not to press the Porte to force Russia's withdrawal before Mehemet Ali had signified whether he accepted the

¹ Mandeville to Palmerston, March 19, 1833: F.O. 78/222.

² Roussin to de Broglie, March 19, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.172.

³ Ibid., pp. 172-174.

terms of the Convention. Roussin consented.¹ On March 23, the Porte received an answer from Mehemet Ali, in which the Pasha rejected the Porte's terms, and threatened to order his army to march upon Scutari and the Dardanelles if the Sultan did not cede, within five days, all the territories which bordered the Taurus Mountains. Ibrahim was given full powers to negotiate.²

As the French government had instructed the French Admiral in the Mediterranean not to employ force without a direct order from Paris, Roussin could not back his threats to coerce the Pasha. The French ambassador's position was further undermined when Reschid Bey, upon his return from Alexandria, declared that Mehemet Ali had told him that Mimaut had supported his demands to the Porte, and had assured him that Roussin was out of step with the French government.³ Recognizing that the Turks now suspected France's sincerity, Roussin begged de Broglie to indicate immediately that France would employ force in inducing the Pasha to accept the terms of the convention. Roussin, noting that Mandeville was not co-operating willingly and Ponsonby's arrival was strangely delayed, questioned whether Great Britain really supported France.⁴ With his policy now limited in scope, Roussin informed the Reis Effendi that as the Porte had refused to force the Russians' withdrawal with the first favourable wind, France no longer considered herself bound by the convention.⁵

¹ Mandeville to Palmerston, March 26, 1833: F.O. 78/222.
Roussin to Mimaut, March 23, 1833: Douin, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

² Roussin to de Broglie, March 25, 1833: *ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

³ Same to same, March 26, 1833: *ibid.*, p. 196.

⁴ Same to same, March 25, 1833: *ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

⁵ Same to same, March 25, 1833: *ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

Roussin counselled the Porte to cede all Syria to Mehemet Ali, representing this cession as a necessary evil, for the alternative would be to hand the Turkish Empire over to the Russians.¹

As he believed that the Russians could not save Constantinople, the Reis Effendi feared that if Ibrahim captured the capital and Mahmoud escaped his clutches, the Russians would intervene to restore the Sultan. After destroying Mehemet Ali, Czar Nicholas would persuade Mahmoud to abdicate in his favour.² With only a few days remaining before Ibrahim would resume his march, the Reis Effendi wasted no time, and although suffering from a virus, saw Mandeville, on March 27, explaining the Porte's dilemma. Mandeville, who shared Akif Effendi's gloomy outlook, advised that should the Porte feel that the Sultan could not resist Ibrahim, Mehemet Ali's demands should be accepted. The Reis Effendi replied that the Porte would be disposed to cede all Syria to Mehemet Ali, but not Adana, and should Great Britain and France support this proposal, Ibrahim could not refuse. Thereupon, Mandeville proposed that he would urge Roussin to send Varenne to Ibrahim with the Porte's proposals, on the understanding that the Porte, within twenty-four hours after peace had been signed, would request the Russians to withdraw. To this the Reis Effendi readily agreed.³

When Mandeville, the following day, detailed this conversation to Roussin, the latter replied that he had expected this proposal, and promised to do all the Porte desired. After Akif Effendi was informed about Roussin's promise, Vogorides and Reschid Bey, on

¹ Same to same, March 26, 1833: ibid., pp.194-195.

² Lapierre to Roussin, March 24, 1833: ibid., pp.189-190.

³ Mandeville to Palmerston, March 31, 1833: F.O. 78/222.

March 29, visited Roussin, and the three men decided that Reschid Bey should accompany Varenne to Ibrahim's headquarters. Roussin consented to inform Ibrahim that France would never support the cession of Adana and Itcheli, with the ports of Selefkeh and Alaya, and to request him to be content with all Syria, including Damascus and Aleppo. The following day, Varenne and Reschid Bey departed for Ibrahim's headquarters, carrying letters written by Mandeville and Roussin. Mandeville's letter stated that Great Britain would be indignant should Ibrahim refuse the proposals.¹

While Mandeville and Roussin were anxiously awaiting news from Varenne, the second division of the Russian Black Sea fleet, three ships of the line, one frigate and one armed steamer, sailed through the Bosphorus,² strengthening the hands of the Russian partisans. Mahmoud, who had given Varenne's mission his blessings, now was reluctant to cede all Syria.³ The Russian arrival soon was followed by an instruction from Czar Nicholas to Bouteneff to inform the Porte that the commander of the Russian expedition had orders not to withdraw until Ibrahim completely had evacuated Asia Minor. This instruction apparently was a reaction to the threat that Roussin had made in the first part of March.⁴ As the Sultan could do nothing to dislodge the Russians before Ibrahim evacuated Asia Minor, Varenne's mission now assumed even more importance.

Money was an effective instrument for Russia's partisans, but probably not as effective as one devastating argument: Great

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, April 6, 1833: ibid.

³ Roussin to de Broglie, April 11, 1833, No.93: Douin, op.cit., p.254.

⁴ Mandeville to Palmerston, April 11, 1833, No.66: F.O. 78/222.

Britain and France were not united. Great Britain, they argued, was too occupied in Ireland to commit herself in the Near East, and without British aid France could not persuade Mehemet Ali to make peace on terms which were honourable to the Sultan. Roussin complained that his resistance against Russian intrigues seriously was limited because Mandeville did not completely support his measures, and the French ambassador continued to suspect that Great Britain was not in harmony with France.¹

Before reports were received from Varenne, Roussin received a pledge from de Broglie that the French government would implement the now discarded convention of February 23. When the Porte learned about the dispatch, it represented to Roussin that the Sultan really never had consented to cede Damascus and Aleppo to Mehemet Ali, and requested that instructions should be sent to Varenne not to cede the two Pashalics. Roussin refused, threatening to withdraw French mediation should the Porte continue this demand.² But Roussin was not prepared to consent to more than all Syria, and he advised de Broglie that a French squadron should be sent to Egypt to demonstrate should Ibrahim refuse to limit his demands to all Syria.³

In his answer, received by the Porte on April 11, Ibrahim demanded Adana and Itcheli, with the ports of Selefkeh and Alaya in addition to all Syria. Considering Ibrahim's demands unreasonable, Roussin, on April 12, consented to Akif Effendi's request that he should write to Ibrahim that France would not agree to

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, April 11, 1833, No.94: Douin, op.cit., pp.255-258.

² Ibid., pp.258-259, Mandeville to Palmerston, April 11, 1833, No.68: F.O. 78/222.

³ Roussin to de Broglie, April 13, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.264.

more than the cession of all Syria. Roussin requested Mandeville to write a similar letter, but Mandeville refused, arguing that he already had written a letter to support Varenne's mission, and "more would be superfluous" on his part. Nor could he guarantee that the British government would support the cession of all Syria, as he had received no instruction to promise this.¹

Soon after, the Reis Effendi applied to Mandeville to write to Ibrahim, urging the Egyptian to continue negotiations and stating that Roussin and the Porte had agreed that Adana should be ceded. Thinking that the Porte was endeavouring to obtain the approval of the British embassy for the cession of Adana, which he always had opposed, Mandeville rejected the proposal. In his reply to Akif Effendi, Mandeville stated that as the Porte already had resolved to cede the Pashalic, he had to decline writing the letter "upon the ground of the uselessness of the measure."²

In his yearly publication of Pashas in April, the Sultan retained Adana for himself. Ibrahim, expecting his father to receive the Pashalic, had commenced his retreat,³ but upon learning about the Sultan's decision suspended his evacuation of Asia Minor.⁴ However, an immediate advance upon Constantinople was impossible, for Ibrahim had to reorganize his army before advancing. Nor were the Straits now easy to cross, as Russian engineers had been engaged for a month in repairing their defences. On April 23, the Third Division of the Russian Black Sea fleet passed the

¹ Mandeville to Palmerston, April 14, 1833: F.O. 78/222.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, April 15, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, April 23, 1833, No.75: ibid.

Bosphorus.¹ Confident that Ibrahim now could not launch an attack upon Constantinople, the Porte remained calm, firmly rejecting Ibrahim's demand for Adana. Reschid Bey and Varenne, who had written to the Porte that Ibrahim would drop his insistence upon acquiring Diarbekir, Orfa and Itcheli should the Porte cede Adana, were informed by the Porte that the concessions to the Pasha would be limited to all Syria. A council, held by the Porte on April 23, decided to propose to Ibrahim that he should send Osman Bey or Baki Bey to Constantinople to discuss the question of Adana.²

By this time Ponsonby, who had been appointed several months before, was sailing towards Constantinople. His presence as a full ambassador and his formidable personality would lend immediate strength to British prestige, but it would be some time before his ability to exercise personal influence would be employed in support of an effective policy.

¹ Same to same, April 23, 1833, No.73: ibid.

² Same to same, April 26, 1833: ibid.

CHAPTER II: THE TREATY OF UNKIAR SKELESSI

A. Lord Ponsonby in Constantinople

On May 1, 1833, Ponsonby arrived in Constantinople. The "Acteon," the ship designated to convey Ponsonby to Constantinople, had been expected to reach Naples in the last week of January,¹ but was unable to sail until the end of April. Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston, on February 4, that the weather was so bad he could not even visit the "Acteon,"² and more than a month later, Ponsonby wrote that the winds were still unfavourable for sailing.³

Ponsonby's correspondence shows that he had come to Constantinople with fixed opinions. On January 10, while awaiting the arrival of the ship he wrote to Palmerston that he suspected that the Russians secretly encouraged Mehemet Ali, and were seeking to create confusion in Turkey. Russia would use this confusion in controlling the Sultan.⁴ Before he left Naples, Ponsonby noted in a subsequent letter that he would not be surprised should the Russians combine with Mehemet Ali to destroy the Sultan, and together with Austria partition the Turkish Empire.⁵ Ponsonby was a Russophobe in 1833, and throughout his career was

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston , January 10, 1833: B.P.

² Same to same, February 4, 1833: ibid.

³ Same to same, March or April, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, January 10, 1833: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, March or April, 1833: ibid.

suspicious of Russia's intentions towards Turkey.

The new ambassador considered, as did Palmerston, that a demonstration of naval power was important in diplomacy, and military preparedness was essential. While he admitted that he lacked information upon what was transpiring in Constantinople, Ponsonby noted to Palmerston that he had "seen enough of the policy of Russia to have an entire conviction" that Great Britain "ought to be Armed in Turkey to meet her designs," for the Russians were "arming to be there in force." Ponsonby did not believe that Russia was in a position to resist Great Britain and France or come to an agreement with Austria, but would "prepare the best foundations for the future."¹

After Ponsonby learned that the Sultan's forces had been defeated at Koniah, he gave Mahmoud little chance to save his life, writing on January 30, that Mouravieff's offers of Russian aid would not be refused, but Mahmoud would be deposed before the mission bore fruit.² By March, Ponsonby's fears had receded, but he continued to believe that the Sultan was pursuing a policy which would lead to his ruin.

Before he arrived in Constantinople, Ponsonby was neither hostile nor favourable to Mehemet Ali. The ambassador thought that Europeans had exaggerated Mehemet Ali's power,³ a belief he continued to entertain until the Syrian campaign in 1840. The Sultan, Ponsonby thought, had gone too far with his reform programme, having paid too little attention to building an

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, January 22, 1833: ibid.

³ Same to same, January 10, 1833: ibid.

efficient army to secure himself,¹ and Mehemet Ali had taken advantage of this. Ponsonby desired that the Sultan should strengthen his army, while permitting his previous reforms to take root in Turkey. The British government, Ponsonby hoped, would "materially aid in directing" the Sultan's attention principally to his army and "assist him in forming an effective Military force."²

While Ponsonby was analyzing the Turkish question, the members of the diplomatic corps in Constantinople were speculating upon the policy that he was likely to pursue. De Broglie wrote to Varenne, on February 8, that Ponsonby, who was vain and jealous, would take offence easily, and would try to control affairs by himself, making his influence predominant at the Porte.³ Roussin and Ponsonby had been engaged in 1831 in negotiations upon the candidature of Leopold of Saxe-Coburg for the Belgian throne, and Roussin soon felt the power of Ponsonby's forceful and aggressive nature.

On April 26, Roussin wrote to de Broglie that Mehemet Ali should be forced to cede Adana, and the French fleet could be employed to this end.⁴ But two days after Ponsonby's arrival, Roussin declared that he would tell the Porte that the Sultan should give his vassal the administration of Adana as a royal favour.⁵ It is evident that Ponsonby was directly responsible for changing Roussin's opinion, as the two ambassadors had

¹ Same to same, March 2, 1833: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ de Broglie to Varenne, February 8, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.80.

⁴ Roussin to de Broglie, April 26, 1833: ibid., p.298.

⁵ Same to same, May 3, 1833: ibid., p.335.

several discussions on the matter in the following two days. In these discussions, Ponsonby told Roussin that peace should be concluded as quickly as possible, for this was the only way of forcing Russia's immediate withdrawal. Although Ponsonby argued that only the cession of Adana could conclude the war, Roussin discovered that the British ambassador did not realize the strategic importance of the Pashalic, and he pointed out the military advantages of the acquisition. Yet this illustration did not alter Ponsonby's opinion that peace took precedence over these considerations. Finally, Roussin agreed with Ponsonby that if Mehemet Ali was intent upon obtaining Adana, they had no means of frustrating his objective. Forceful measures against him only would intensify the crisis, giving the Russians a pretext to remain at Constantinople. Moreover, neither ambassador had powers to use his country's fleet in coercing Mehemet Ali.¹

Before the two ambassadors could make representations, Mahmoud, moved by the misery that the war had brought upon the people of Constantinople, ceded Adana to Mehemet Ali. On May 3, Ibrahim was made Mouhassil for the Pashalic.² A few days later, Mehemet Ali, unaware of the Sultan's decision, promised Colonel Campbell, the British consul-general in Egypt, and Boislecomte,³ that he would abandon his demands if the Sultan still refused to cede Adana.⁴

¹ Ibid., pp.331-335; also Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1833: F.O. 78/233.

² Mandeville to Palmerston, May 4, 1833: F.O. 78/222.

³ Boislecomte was sent on a Special Mission by the French government to persuade Mehemet Ali to moderate his demands.

⁴ Campbell to Palmerston, May 7, 1833: F.O. 78/227.

Clearly, neither Ponsonby nor Roussin influenced the Sultan's decision, but both apparently claimed responsibility. Roussin boasted that the cession of Adana strengthened French influence in Constantinople, and he deprecated Ponsonby's presumption to take the credit. To prove that France deserved the honour, Roussin maintained to de Broglie that while Ponsonby indeed had supported the cession of Adana, only France had negotiated with Ibrahim.¹

This question signalled the beginning of a struggle for ascendancy between Roussin and Ponsonby. However, neither man had extensive influence upon the Sultan. Russia's presence in the Straits and Mahmoud's complete reliance upon her to check a possible advance upon Constantinople by Ibrahim, ensured Bouteneff's pre-eminence. Hence, the contest between Ponsonby and Roussin merely was to see which man would lead the offensive against Russia's influence after her forces had withdrawn.

In the first days of May, Roussin dealt another heavy blow to his own prestige and influence. Believing that the French fleet's presence in full view of the Seraglio would accelerate negotiations with Mehemet Ali and would induce the Turks to force Russia's withdrawal, Roussin requested permission for the fleet to pass the Dardanelles. Unfortunately, the request could not be kept secret from the Russian agents, and Orloff, who had arrived in Constantinople on May 6 on a Special Mission, wasted no time in pressuring the Reis Effendi to refuse the request. Aware of the Turks' dread of a war to decide the future of their Empire, Orloff warned that an attempt by France to pass the

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, May 11, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.137.

Dardanelles would be regarded as a casus belli by Russia.¹

In making his request to the Porte, Roussin had acted without informing Ponsonby, and indeed his own government. Roussin's faux pas served as the first test of Ponsonby's tact and finesse. On one hand, Ponsonby took care not to sanction Roussin's request, on the other, he avoided giving the Turks the impression that he would not support any request made by Roussin. F. Pisani's long experience in dealing with the Porte, and his undeniable diplomatic skill did much to aid the newly-arrived ambassador in extricating Roussin from this awkward position. In fact, Ponsonby left to F. Pisani's discretion the language he would use to persuade Akif Effendi that Great Britain would never "sacrifice" France to Russia.²

Largely through the skill of the British embassy, the crisis terminated as quickly as it had been born. Obviously this crisis did much to hurt the Anglo-French position, as it once again showed Roussin's unpredictability, but it also served as Ponsonby's first step to establish a reputation as an enterprising, yet prudent, diplomat.

In May Ponsonby was gloomy, believing that so long as Mahmoud ruled, the Russians would be in a position to control the Turkish Empire.³ As the Porte now was powerless, Ponsonby confined his contacts with it to "most secret communications" with the Reis Effendi. Ponsonby wrote to Grey that he could easily find anti-Russian Turks, who would support Great Britain, "but what could

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

² Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 21, 1833: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Grey, May 14, 1833: G.P.

they do against the Russian army?"¹ The ambassador made no promises in the name of the British government, merely trying to demonstrate to the Sultan that the policies followed by Great Britain and France showed that the two countries were Turkey's true friends.²

Nevertheless, Ponsonby believed that the Sultan would soon fall, giving Russia an opportunity to seize the Straits. Should Russia succeed, France could not remain inactive, and would go to war with her. Austria would side with Russia, and France would attack Austria in Italy. This would place Great Britain in an intolerable position, for how could she restrain herself from attacking her former ally, France?³ Ponsonby recommended to Grey that the only way to preclude this course of events would be by "a strong exertion" of British force.⁴ The ambassador pointed out that so long as the Czar recognized that Great Britain and France were prepared to fight, he would not risk war, for should he participate in a war, revolts would break out in his Empire. But Ponsonby was not consistent in his ideas; he suggested in another letter that the Russians could attempt to seize the Dardanelles and therefore Great Britain should be prepared to land troops at the bottom of the Gulf of Saros, attacking the Russians on the land side of the Dardanelles.⁵

On one idea however, Ponsonby was adamant: as Russia could maintain her strength only so long as she continued expanding,

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, May 22, 1833: ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, May 14, 1833: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, May 22, 1833: ibid.

it was necessary that she acquire Constantinople. If she possessed the Turkish capital she would "become irresistible mistress of the Mediterranean Sea. Nothing could molest her there in her preparation for Conquest." Russia, by intrigues, already had obtained the submission of Greece, placing at her disposal skilled Greek sailors to man her navy. Mehemet Ali's "ephemeral power" would sink before the Russians, and they would make Asiatic Turkey their property.¹

Austria, Ponsonby believed, was not prepared to partition the Turkish Empire, but she was closer to Russia than Metternich liked to admit. Czar Nicholas was working upon the Austrians, offering them Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Servia, Wallachia, Moldavia and the mouth of the Danube in return for Constantinople. Ponsonby suspected that Orloff was playing the same role in Turkey as Count Stakelburg had played in Poland before that country was destroyed.² In May, Ponsonby did not doubt that Russia would persuade Metternich eventually to partition the Turkish Empire.

Notwithstanding this warlike advice, Ponsonby recognized that so long as the Russians remained in the Bosphorus, the British government would be powerless to save the Turkish Empire. Ponsonby avoided doing anything which would encourage an extension of Russia's stay. Orloff would dictate to the Sultan when the Russian forces should withdraw, but without provocation, they could not remain indefinitely.

However, Ponsonby could not say when this withdrawal would

¹ Same to same, June 9, 1833: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

take place. He questioned Orloff's protestations that Russia intended to withdraw her forces after Ibrahim had evacuated Asia Minor, noting that although Ibrahim had unofficially accepted the Sultan's terms, Orloff was urging that Russian troops be stationed in the castles of the Dardanelles. The Russians used the pretext that Ibrahim had not accepted officially the cession of Adana.¹ Desiring to call Russia's bluff, Ponsonby instructed Kennedy, who represented Great Britain in the negotiations with Ibrahim, to request the immediate conclusion of peace. Russia, Ponsonby felt, would have no pretext for remaining after peace had been concluded, and would be forced to withdraw by public opinion in Europe.² At the end of May Ibrahim formally accepted the Sultan's peace terms. This subsequently was known as the Peace of Kutaya.

So long as the Russians remained in the Bosphorus, Ponsonby would do nothing which Orloff might interpret as a threat by Great Britain, and urged that Roussin pursue the same cautious policy. On May 23, Ponsonby wrote to Sir Putney Malcolm, the Commander of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, that if instructed by the British government to request passage through the Dardanelles, he should not implement the orders for the present. The fleet should take up position in "the immediate neighbourhood," perhaps at the Asiatic mouth of the Dardanelles, and should carefully avoid showing attention to the Gulf of Saros.³ In the event that the Porte had learned about Campbell's negotiations, F. Pisani was instructed, on May 27, to tell the Reis

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1833: ibid.

² Same to same, May 24, 1833: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Malcolm, May 23, 1833L: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 1, 1833, No.11: ibid.

Effendi that Campbell's efforts in persuading Mehemet Ali to renounce Adana showed that Great Britain would help the Sultan against the Pasha in the future. The Sultan, therefore, could dispense with Russian aid. Ponsonby cautioned that the Porte should not reopen the question of Adana, because the Russians would have a pretext for remaining in the Straits, and Europe would receive the impression that the Sultan had been forced to cede the Pashalic. As Mehemet Ali could be a valuable ally for the Sultan, the Pasha should be won over by favours.¹

In his reply, the Reis Effendi noted that Ponsonby's counsels were wise and prudent and the question of Adana would not be raised. Akif Effendi admitted that Mehemet Ali would not relinquish the Pashalic unless force were used. The Porte, however, always would regard Mehemet Ali as a serpent. The Reis Effendi concluded by asking whether the Sultan could depend upon British aid in a future war with Russia, asserting that Great Britain's failure to aid Turkey in her last war with Russia gave the Sultan reason to doubt British intentions.²

Desiring to avoid committing his government, Ponsonby evaded answering the Reis Effendi's question, and instead lectured Akif Effendi on the reasons why the Sultan could expect Mehemet Ali to be a faithful vassal. Mehemet Ali, expecting an attempt by the Sultan to destroy him, had reacted to defend his position. Having proved his superiority, the Pasha now had no fear that the Sultan could crush him. A new war would make inevitable foreign interference, in the form of a blockade of Alexandria by the

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 27, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 11, 1833, No.12: ibid.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, May 29, 1833: enclosure ibid.

Powers, and so the Pasha would be satisfied with his accomplishments for a considerable time. But time was Mehemet Ali's enemy. Ibrahim was "nothing", as he could not succeed his father; but if the Sultan provoked Mehemet Ali, Ibrahim's army could drive Mahmoud from his throne.¹

The meetings were inconclusive. Akif Effendi obviously was endeavouring to obtain a commitment from Ponsonby, but as Palmerston had sent no instructions revealing British policy, Ponsonby would make no promises in his government's name. Indeed, not until the second week in June did Ponsonby receive comprehensive instructions dated May 21. In these instructions Palmerston condoned Ponsonby's policy, which the impulsive Roussin called "non-action", and stated that the British government was anxious that no suspicion be shown of Russia's intentions.²

In the first days of June, Vogorides visited Ponsonby to discuss a revolt in Candia against Mehemet Ali. Suspecting that the Sultan meditated on an expedition to Candia to aid the rebels and embarrass the Pasha, Ponsonby argued that such a policy should be avoided at all cost, for a new quarrel, which could result in the renewal of war, could be born with Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby also took the opportunity to dispell any misconception at the Porte that Great Britain desired an engagement aiding the Sultan. As his instructions limited him to state that his government would "prevent the partition or dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire,"³ Ponsonby would promise no more to the Reis Effendi. The Sultan wisely refrained from interfering in Candia.

During the first week in June, Ponsonby learned that the

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 30, 1833: enclosure ibid.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, May 21, 1833: B.P.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 3, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

British Admiral had received instructions to sail to Turkey after the conclusion of peace. Strangely, the information was not supplied by the British government, but by Roussin, as the Foreign Office informed the French government, but neglected its ambassador in Constantinople. The admiral, who possessed powers to pass the Dardanelles if requested by Ponsonby, was ordered to discuss the current situation with him.¹ Believing that the Porte would be menaced by the Russians should the British embassy request passage, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that he would discreetly enquire whether the Porte would give the permission to the British admiral, but refused to ask for it. Ponsonby convinced Roussin that as the presence of the British fleet in the "neighbourhood" was enough to keep the Russians honest, and would have a strong moral effect on the Porte, the two embassies should wait upon events and do nothing for the present.²

On June 10, Roussin and Ponsonby discussed their governments' instructions to send a joint note to the Porte requesting Russia's withdrawal from the Straits when Ibrahim had completed his evacuation of Asia Minor. Ponsonby, who thought that this measure was imprudent, found Roussin strongly in favour of it. To dissuade the French ambassador from implementing the instruction, Ponsonby argued that the Russians were bound by a promise to evacuate their forces after Ibrahim retreated, and the Anglo-French demand could give Orloff an excuse for delaying the Russian departure because of menaces by Great Britain and France. Upon examination, Roussin accepted Ponsonby's arguments. The two ambassadors agreed that by the time Ibrahim had completed his

¹ Same to same, June 7, 1833: ibid.

² Ibid.

evacuation, the British and French fleets would be united off Smyrna, and the apparent unity between the two fleets would be palpable evidence that Great Britain and France opposed Russia's continued stay.¹

The decision by Ponsonby not to implement the instructions was condoned by Palmerston. Like Ponsonby, he was convinced that the Russians soon would be forced to withdraw, for the Czar was "too deeply pledged to Europe" to continue the occupation. However, Palmerston suspected that the Czar, "having familiarized the Turks with the presence of a Russian army even in Asia Minor," would urge an arrangement upon the Turks which would make the Sultan more dependent upon Russia and permit her to take advantage of her previous occupation. If the Sultan became the "Slave of Russia," he would not be the ruler Great Britain wished "to see at Constantinople, & Mehemet Ali may then be a better support for the balance of power in the East." Nevertheless, Palmerston now regarded the Pasha as little more than an adventurer, whose Empire would die with him, but he was still anxious to be on good terms with Mehemet Ali. The Foreign Secretary felt that Great Britain should do "nothing for the future," keeping "her hands free to act according to circumstances" to prevent a renewal of the war between the Sultan and the Pasha. Meanwhile, the British government would show the Sultan that he best could secure his independence by strengthening his Empire. This rounded policy would give Great Britain the balance between Russia and France, should either encroach upon the Levant.²

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, June 10, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.426-427.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 1, 1833: B.P.

Ponsonby, at the beginning of June, began to consider Mehemet Ali as the possible saviour of Turkey. The ambassador calculated that with British aid, the Pasha could force the Russians to give up their hold upon Turkey for he had the support of the Turkish population, with "almost every man great & small in Constantinople & in all other great cities, more or less belonging to his party." Mehemet Ali could "if any man can may [sic] introduce some force into the body of the Turkish Empire, at any rate he will secure it against Russia whilst he lives, & time may do more."¹ Nevertheless, Ponsonby was still reluctant to see Mahmoud sacrificed.

By June 15, Ponsonby no longer questioned Orloff's statements that Russia would withdraw from the Bosphorus, but he feared that this withdrawal would create new dangers, and the Sultan, exposed to intrigues by Mehemet Ali and powerful men in Constantinople, could be deposed. Because Great Britain largely would be responsible for the Russian withdrawal, she would be "bound to endeavour" to protect Mahmoud's "person if this can be done without risk to the independence of Turkey." Although Ponsonby believed that Mehemet Ali would be better for Turkey, he felt honour bound to help keep Mahmoud on his throne.²

The ambassador pondered means which would secure Mahmoud's rule. He suggested to Grey that the Powers should show the Turks that Mahmoud need not be sacrificed in securing them against Russia. The best proof would be by concluding a treaty among Turkey, Austria, Great Britain, France and Russia. The

¹ Ponsonby to Grey, June 9, 1833: G.P.

² Same to same, June 15, 1833: ibid.

Sultan would be required to maintain a large portion of his fleet near Sizipoli, in the Bay of Bourgas. Each of the Powers would agree to station a squadron, consisting of a frigate and a gunboat, for a specified time in the Sea of Marmora in order to protect Mahmoud, and if necessary, give him refuge. The forts of the Bosphorus would be occupied by Great Britain on one side, and France on the other, thus preventing Russia from sending a force through the Bosphorus, and permitting no one Power to gain complete control. Austria and Russia would garrison the forts of the Dardanelles in the same way and thereby ensure that neither Great Britain nor France could send a fleet to Constantinople. Each Power would leave a warship attached to her garrison.

A treaty of this nature, Ponsonby speculated, would ensure that Mehemet Ali would never contemplate disturbing the peace in order to obtain Constantinople. Nor could powerful men in the capital attempt to depose Mahmoud. The Turkish people would not be hostile to the treaty, for Turkey would be protected against Russia. Undoubtedly, Russia would not like the treaty, but should Great Britain, France and Austria show their willingness in signing, "it would be impossible for Russia to resist them." As the Pasha was aware that the Russians were preparing to attack him in Syria, perhaps he could be convinced that the treaty would forward his interests also.¹

Grey dismissed Ponsonby's proposed treaty, saying that the plan would lead to "inconveniences." Great Britain, Grey added, should not bind herself by treaties, but should retain her freedom

¹ Ibid.

to act as circumstances required.¹ This statement was echoed by Palmerston, who was shown Ponsonby's private communications. The Foreign Secretary added that if an explosion in Constantinople followed the Russian withdrawal, the British government should not interfere, leaving the decision as to who should sit on the throne to the Musulmans.²

B. Reactions to the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi

In May, Orloff opened negotiations with the Sultan for a Russo-Turkish treaty. As Mahmoud desired a guarantee of Russian protection, he may have requested an alliance with Russia. The Russian government framed a treaty which the Sultan accepted without reservations.

Roussin learned about the proposed treaty at least a week before the end of May. On May 23, he warned the Reis Effendi that France would regard a Russo-Turkish treaty as the death knell of Turkish independence.³ It is difficult to say when Ponsonby learned about the matter. The British ambassador made no representation to the Reis Effendi until June 6, when he cautioned Akif Effendi to prevent Turkey from being bound by treaty to Russia, for a Russo-British war could result.⁴ It is strange that Ponsonby made his warning two weeks later than Roussin; perhaps Roussin never informed Ponsonby that he had learned about the negotiations.

¹ Grey to Ponsonby, July 6, 1833: ibid.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 8, 1833: B.P.

³ Roussin to de Broglie, May 23, 1833: Douin, op.cit., p.389.

⁴ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, June 6, 1833: B.P.

When the Reis Effendi, in the third week of June, imparted to Roussin that the Sultan was about to conclude a treaty, Roussin repeated his warning that this treaty would end Turkey's independence and would force Great Britain and France to alter their policies. Akif Effendi immediately jumped to the Divan's defence, maintaining that the Divan had objected to such a treaty, but that the Sultan had disregarded the objections.¹

Obviously, Roussin was little interested in who had been responsible for negotiating the treaty. The impulsive Frenchman pressed Ponsonby to co-operate with him in taking measures to block the treaty. Again Ponsonby was forced to demonstrate his ability in combining the right argument with a persuasive presentation to dissuade Roussin from doing something foolish. So long as the Russians were in the Straits, Ponsonby argued, Great Britain and France were not in a position to eliminate the treaty. However, after Russia had withdrawn, France, Great Britain and Austria could sign with Turkey separate offensive and defensive treaties which would contain the same terms as the Russo-Turkish treaty. These treaties, binding the Sultan to all the Powers, would terminate Russia's exclusive influence over the Ottoman Empire. This solution was feasible because Austria had given evidence that she would seek a treaty with the Sultan after the Russians had withdrawn. The Divan was in favour of these alliances and the Sultan would not fail to see that it was within his interests to multiply the number of Powers who guaranteed his rule. Meanwhile, the British and French embassies should do nothing which would show "openly a resentment" against

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, June 21, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.435-436.

Russia.¹

Ponsonby succeeded in persuading Roussin to remain passive for the moment, but the Frenchman did not abandon his intention of acting whenever he possessed the means. As the British fleet had yet to unite with the French fleet of Smyrna, a joint Anglo-French demonstration was impossible.²

On June 25, Ponsonby learned that the British fleet had arrived at Tenedos Bay.³ Roussin wasted no time in exhorting Ponsonby to consent to a joint naval demonstration. Although he admitted that the Russians could continue their stay in the Straits if France and Great Britain tried to force the Sultan not to formalize the treaty, Roussin maintained that the treaty had to be blocked, no matter the consequences. Ponsonby countered with an elaborate argument designed to prove that a menace to Russia would change a "doubtful" result into a "certain" result. So long as the Russians remained in the Straits, the Sultan and his party were "everything" and the Divan and the nation "nothing". But the Russians could not remain indefinitely unless the Anglo-French fleet tried to force the Dardanelles, thus forcing the Russians to defend the Strait. Ponsonby warned Roussin that Orloff would summon reserves from Odessa at the first sign of opposition. An aggressive course of action would leave the Russo-Turkish treaty in force and permit the Russians to extend their stay. Patience was the most effective weapon, for after the Russians had departed their influence would decrease,

¹ Ibid., pp.437-438. Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 22, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

² Roussin to de Broglie, June 21, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.338-340.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 25, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

permitting the Divan to regain its voice in foreign policy and help the British and French embassies to neutralize the treaty.¹

The French ambassador bowed to Ponsonby's arguments, but wrote to de Broglie that he did not feel as secure as Ponsonby in this policy of non-action. However, the French government had signified that he should co-operate with Ponsonby to demonstrate that France and Great Britain were united, and co-operation now was possible only upon Ponsonby's terms. Moreover, the French Chambers were ending their sessions, and a policy of non-action would permit adjournment without incident.²

Not only did Ponsonby oppose an Anglo-French naval demonstration, but he also desired the removal of the British fleet from the vicinity of the Dardanelles. So soon as Ponsonby had learned that the fleet had arrived at Tenedos Bay, he wrote to Malcolm that as Orloff was sincere in his statement that Russia would withdraw from the Straits after Ibrahim had evacuated Asia Minor, nothing should be done, directly or indirectly, which would hurt Russian vanity. Consequently, the British fleet should be withdrawn from Tenedos Bay. Ponsonby suggested that before joining the French fleet off Smyrna, the British fleet should visit Adana or Samos until July 6, when Orloff was scheduled to leave Constantinople. The ambassador requested Malcolm to make some excuse for leaving Tenedos Bay which could be communicated to Roussin.³ The British fleet left the Bay on July 1 for a twelve day cruise to Samos,⁴ but Ponsonby

¹ Roussin to de Broglie, July 6, 1833: Douin, op.cit., pp.460-462.

² Ibid., p.462.

³ Ponsonby to Malcolm, June 25, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 7, 1833: F.O. 78/223.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 7, 1833: ibid.

did not inform Roussin until July 6, after he had dissuaded the French ambassador from staging an Anglo-French naval demonstration. Roussin reluctantly accepted Ponsonby's explanation.¹

Ponsonby encountered considerable difficulty in restraining Roussin's penchant for active measures. Trying to prevent an incident with the Russians, Ponsonby had instructed Malcolm to make sure that the Russians had completely evacuated the Straits before returning to Tenedos Bay.² This argument, however, had little effect on Roussin. Pointing out that France considered that the Russo-Turkish treaty could be a question of peace and war,³ he objected to the extension of the cruise of the British fleet beyond July 12, in the event that the Russians delayed their departure.⁴ However, the Russians honoured their promise. On July 8 the Russo-Turkish treaty was signed, the Reis Effendi and Ahmet Pasha signing for Turkey and Orloff and Bouteneff for Russia, and on the following day the Russians commenced their withdrawal.

As soon as the Russians had begun their withdrawal, Ponsonby and Roussin pressured the Reis Effendi to divulge the contents of the treaty, the two embassies competing for the honour of obtaining this information first. When F. Pisani, on July 10, raised the subject, Akif Effendi replied that he would be a lost man if he revealed the treaty. But the Reis Effendi soon changed his mind, consenting to communicate the particulars if Ponsonby

¹ Roussin to Ponsonby, July 6, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 10, 1833: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Malcolm, July 3, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 7, 1833: ibid.

³ Roussin to Ponsonby, N.D.: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 10, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, July 6, 1833: enclosure ibid.

promised not to reveal what he had done. Assured by Pisani that only Palmerston would be informed, Akif Effendi sent the treaty to the British embassy, but deleted the secret article.¹ However, Ponsonby eventually obtained a copy of the secret article from Vogorides.

After the Russian departure, the anti-Russian party began intriguing to overthrow Ahmet Pasha. The faction believed that the removal of this man would give them the Sultan's ear and permit Mahmoud to save Turkey from Russia. Hosrew Pasha was the most active and influential man in the party, and Ponsonby felt that he had a good chance of succeeding because he outwardly concurred in the Sultan's pro-Russian policy. However, Ponsonby was certain that Ahmet Pasha's fall would do little to alter Mahmoud's policy, for the Sultan feared Mehemet Ali and regarded the Russians as his only protectors. Completely despotic since he had massacred the Janissaries, Mahmoud listened to no one. Only the alteration of the status quo would change Mahmoud's policy, but this could not be done, because Mehemet Ali was faced with ruin if he did not maintain his position. Ponsonby did not inform the Sultan about the conspiracy against Ahmet Pasha, believing that if Mahmoud took measures against the anti-Russian faction, ministers in the faction could be driven to desperate measures, risking "everything in search of security."²

Only Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby calculated, could strengthen the Turkish Empire against the Russians. The Pasha boasted that he could seize Constantinople, and Ponsonby did not question his

¹ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, July 10, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 12, 1833: F.O. 78/224.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 27, 1833: ibid.

ability. Ponsonby thought that he would launch a sea attack in late autumn, probably from Candia. Great Britain could do nothing to frustrate him. So long as Mehemet Ali was determined upon seizing Constantinople, threats would never deter him, for he merely would deny that he contemplated an attack. As the British government would not be able to find a suitable pretext, the fleet could not blockade Alexandria.¹ Mehemet Ali, striking quickly, would meet little resistance and, after seizing Constantinople, probably would depose Mahmoud and rule through one of Mahmoud's sons.²

Nevertheless, an attack by Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby thought, would endanger European peace. Czar Nicholas, Ponsonby pointed out to Grey, would be "free to reoccupy his position" in the Straits, and had "prepared all the most essential means for so doing." Should Mahmoud escape when Constantinople fell, he would seek refuge with Russia, who then would try to restore him, thereby producing a general European War.³ Ponsonby was in a quandry. He believed that the Sultan would not maintain his Empire against the Russians, because he lacked the capacity of quickly placing the Empire in a state of defence against Russia. As a treaty among the Powers and Turkey would be useful only if the Empire could be quickly reorganized,⁴ Ponsonby abandoned his previous ideas upon a treaty. While Ponsonby desired to see Mehemet Ali in Constantinople, he feared that

¹ Ibid.

² Ponsonby to Grey, July 24, 1833: G.P.

³ Same to same, August 26, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, July 24, 1833: ibid.

the Russians would intervene.

However, Ponsonby thought that only a demonstration by Great Britain of her willingness to defend the Turkish Empire would prevent a general European War, as the Russians would leave Mehemet Ali in possession of Constantinople rather than risk a war with Great Britain.¹ Only support of "a material palpable nature" could instill in the Turks the courage to resist Russia.² Ponsonby exhorted Grey to demonstrate the government's readiness to fight. The British government, indeed, did bolster the number of its warships in the Mediterranean and Ponsonby found a strong supporter for military preparedness in King William IV. The King would not count upon France for aid against Russia, for he was as much a Francophobe as a Russophobe.³ Even the usually pacific Grey supported the increase in strength of the Mediterranean fleet.⁴ The reinforced fleet was instructed to anchor in Turkish waters.

Meanwhile, Ponsonby continued pursuing a policy of non-action. He urged Campbell, on July 15, to act with prudence because there was reason to believe that Russia was encouraging the Sultan to attack Mehemet Ali. Russia, now prepared on the Asiatic side of Turkey, could return to Constantinople as the Sultan's ally. Suspecting that Mahmoud was sending the Defterdar to Alexandria to provoke a quarrel with Mehemet Ali concerning the Pasha's tribute, Ponsonby instructed that Campbell should employ

¹ Same to same, August 26, 1833: ibid.

² Same to same, July 24, 1833: ibid.

³ William IV to Palmerston, September 28, 1833: B.P.

⁴ Grey to Palmerston, September 29, 1833: ibid.

his influence in persuading Mehemet Ali to evade, rather than refuse, the Defterdar's demands. Moreover, the Pasha should not complain that the Russo-Turkish treaty was directed against Egypt, for this would play into Russia's hands.¹

As has been seen, Palmerston expected that the Russians would pressure the Sultan to conclude an agreement. The Foreign Secretary regarded the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi as "a master piece of Russian intrigue & Turkish folly." Suspecting that Metternich long had known about the agreement and had played into Russia's hands because he needed her aid against revolutions in Europe, Palmerston discounted the idea of requesting Austria to protest with France and Great Britain against the treaty.² While Palmerston and Grey apparently favoured joint protests in Constantinople and St. Petersburg, King William IV persuaded them to register separate protests, though simultaneously with France.³

In his instructions, Palmerston requested Ponsonby to obtain from the Porte an explanation of the treaty. The ambassador also was ordered to protest that the treaty placed the Russians in a position to control Turkey's internal and external policies. Roussin received similar instructions. Ponsonby concentrated upon forcing the Porte to explain clearly the meaning of the secret article, although not specifically instructed to do so by the British government. As the Straits, Ponsonby reasoned, had been closed to foreign warships by the Treaty of 1809, why would a new treaty be necessary to exclude foreign

¹ Ponsonby to Campbell, July 15, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 15, 1833: F.O. 78/224.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, August 7, 1833: B.P.

³ William IV to Palmerston, August 6, 1833: ibid. Palmerston to William IV, September 29, 1833: ibid.

warships from the area? Hence, Ponsonby concluded that the new treaty granted Russia rights which infringed upon the Treaty of 1809, and he was particularly anxious to have the Porte explain the significance of the words "au besoin" in the secret article.¹

Akif Effendi hedged when F. Pisani pressed him to explain the significance of the words "au besoin". When the Reis Effendi said that the treaty was directed against Mehemet Ali, Pisani replied that "étrangers" could not refer to Mehemet Ali. Embarrassed, Akif Effendi sent Pisani to the Kiahaya Bey to obtain further clarification, but the latter was no more enlightening.² Pertev Pasha noted that the secret article never would affect a warship bringing a British ambassador to Constantinople, but would say no more, and requested Pisani not to press the matter any further, because the Sultan desired to terminate discussion. Ponsonby complied.³ The ambassador's aggressive representations won some respect for him at the Porte, but Ponsonby was no closer to the meaning of the secret article.

In September, Ponsonby worried that Russia, anticipating Mehemet Ali's attack, could arrive at Constantinople before the Pasha. Ponsonby expressed his fears to Grey in a letter written on September 19, in which he pointed out that "a very bold step" was "necessary to prevent the excitement in Europe of a war of Principle." He suggested that the British fleet should be sent through the Dardanelles to obtain control of the Bosphorus. Once Great Britain controlled the Bosphorus, she would "have time

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 12, 1833: F.O. 78/224.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, September 15, 1833: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 15, 1833: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 15, 1833: ibid.

and the means of settling, more or less well, the affairs of this Country, so as to deprive Russia of her prey for years to come." Not a shot would be fired at the British fleet as it passed the Dardanelles; the Reis Effendi had assured him of this.

To justify his bold recommendations, Ponsonby argued that as Russia had attempted, in the Treaty of Unklar Skelessi, to close the Straits to Great Britain, Great Britain would be justified if she closed them to Russia. Austria, fearing for Italy, would not aid Russia, and the latter could not act alone against the British move. As the Turkish army and navy could be organized to secure the Bosphorus against Russia, the British force need not stay long. In this manner, the Turkish question could be decided without war.¹

Grey discussed Ponsonby's suggestions with Palmerston, who had received similar but less comprehensive letters from the ambassador. While he was sensitive to the Russian danger to Constantinople, Grey considered that Ponsonby's recommendations could produce a war with Russia.² Both Grey and Palmerston believed that Great Britain had no right to attack Russia except to force her retirement within the Asiatic boundaries specified in the Treaty of Adrianople.³ Anxious to avoid complications with Russia, Palmerston, on December 6, noted to Ponsonby in a private letter, that there was no "definite object to be accomplished by the presence" of the British fleet "in the

¹ Ponsonby to Grey, September 19, 1833: G.P.

² Grey to Palmerston, October 14, 1833: B.P.

³ Same to same, N.D.: ibid.

Bosphorus, which could justify so violent and hazardous a measure, as a forcible entrance thro' the Dardanelles."

Palmerston instructed Ponsonby that even if the Sultan requested British aid, he should wait for orders from the British government before requesting the fleet's presence at Constantinople. For the present, Great Britain should try "to keep things quiet," because "To gain time is to gain much, possibly every thing." Meanwhile, she should concentrate upon persuading the Porte to reorganize its finances, army and navy.¹

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 6, 1833: ibid.

CHAPTER III: THE FIRST ASSAULT ON RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

A. Ponsonby Reaches the Sultan

Although Mehemet Ali continued his boasts, he made no move to seize Constantinople by a naval coup de main. By November, Ponsonby was convinced that Mehemet Ali would not attack, and, noticing the decline in the Pasha's influence in Constantinople, concluded that the Sultan was securely on his throne, and that it would be necessary to acquire personal influence with Mahmoud. This induced the ambassador to embark on a long contest with Bouteneff for influence, believing that the maintenance of the Turkish Empire was at stake.

The Reis Effendi, who desired to minimize Russian influence in Constantinople, potentially was a valuable ally against Bouteneff. Encouraged by Ponsonby's protests against the Russo-Turkish treaty, Akif Effendi in the middle of September, sent an agent to Ponsonby requesting him to offer something that could be given to the Sultan as a commitment of British protection against Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby, believing that the Sultan would not long retain his throne, simply replied that he had no instructions to make a commitment.¹ Despite this, Akif Effendi continued his efforts to reduce Russian influence. On October 1, Ponsonby reported that the Reis Effendi had created a "sensation" when he urged, at a meeting of the Divan, that Turkey should turn to Great Britain for support.² Moreover, Campbell's success in inducing Mehemet Ali to refrain from establishing a naval arsenal

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 19, 1833: B.P.

² Same to same, October 1, 1833: F.O. 78/224.

on Candia made an impression on the Porte, resulting in an invitation from Hosrew Pasha to attend a review of Turkish artillery.¹

While the Porte increasingly looked towards Ponsonby, the Sultan took little notice of the British ambassador, reserving his attention for Bouteneff. Stürmer, who supported the Russian ambassador, stood next in the Sultan's favour.² Ponsonby suspected that Bouteneff was endeavouring to magnify Mahmoud's hatred of Mehemet Ali, using the question of the Pasha's tribute to create a rupture between the Sultan and his vassal. So hostile was Mahmoud towards Mehemet Ali that no minister dared showing him Mimaut's report on Mehemet Ali's pledge to maintain peace and fulfil his obligations.³ Ponsonby believed that Bouteneff's policy was calculated to create an opportunity for the return of Russian forces to Constantinople, and the Czar kept an army and navy "in a state of perfect readiness" for this purpose.⁴

In November, Ponsonby began formulating his strategy to reach the Sultan, analyzing the Sultan's weaknesses. Ponsonby concluded that Bouteneff controlled Mahmoud because the Sultan feared Russia while looking to her for support. Fear and hope were mingled in the Sultan's mind.⁵ Hence, Ponsonby calculated that only a demonstration of naval power would turn Mahmoud's attention to the British embassy. Once the Sultan feared Great Britain, he would respect her, and could turn to her for support

¹ Same to same, October 2, 1833: ibid.

² Same to same, October 1, 1833: ibid.

³ Same to same, November 8, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

instead of Russia.

In planning his approach to the Sultan, Ponsonby found certain conditions in his favour. After Ahmet Pasha was sent to St. Petersburg in October to delimit the Russo-Turkish Asiatic frontier, the anti-Russian party began eroding his power. Three supporters of Ahmet Pasha in the Seraglio lost their positions. Meanwhile, Hosrew Pasha pressed the Sultan to rely upon France and Great Britain rather than Russia.¹ The Russian fleet, on manoeuvres in the Black Sea, was forced by bad weather to sail into port in Sebastopol.² Ponsonby seized his opportunity, concentrating the whole British fleet, which had received reinforcements in the previous month, in Vourla Bay.³

On November 28, the Reis Effendi complained that twenty British warships were stationed in the Bay, and that the Porte had heard rumours that further reinforcements were expected. F. Pisani was instructed to reply to the Reis Effendi that Great Britain had the right of maintaining a fleet at Vourla Bay to observe the movement of the Russian fleet. Ponsonby purposely gave this answer to create an "uneasy sensation in the Sultan's mind," leaving Mahmoud to wonder whether Great Britain would provoke Russia.⁴ But Ponsonby's tactics presented no risks. Roussin, a few months earlier, had made a demand for passage through the Dardanelles, which the Porte could not have concealed from Orloff. However, Ponsonby made no demand, and the Sultan could conceal Ponsonby's reply from Bouteneff. In fact, secrecy

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, October 22, 1833: ibid.

³ Same to same, December 19, 1833: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, November 28, 1833: ibid.

was essential, because the Sultan wished to preclude a diplomatic clash between the two ambassadors.

Shortly after the Reis Effendi made his complaint, the Sultan sent Vogorides to the British embassy, ostensibly to discuss the revolt in Samos. The Sultan, Vogorides told Ponsonby, required an explanation of the concentration of the fleet in Vourla Bay; Mahmoud feared an Anglo-Russian clash, knowing that the Turkish Empire would be the first casualty in the war. Vogorides continued that Turkey had turned to Russia because the Sultan could not obtain British aid to secure his life and throne. Mahmoud still doubted whether Great Britain would aid Turkey, but the government could show its goodwill by persuading Mehemet Ali to pay his tribute and to cede Candia. Although Mehemet Ali had made many promises to pay this tribute, he had not done so. The Sultan desperately needed money to redeem Silestria from Russia. Candia's cession was also important to the Sultan, although he recognized that Greece might embarrass him should Mehemet Ali cede the island. The Sultan would then give Candia any constitution Great Britain requested.

Ponsonby replied that should the Sultan place his future in Russia's hands, Great Britain and France could be expected to side with Mehemet Ali in a crisis. However, should the Sultan look to Great Britain and France instead, the Anglo-French fleet could block any aggressive move by the Pasha. If the Sultan relied upon Russia, he would be either a puppet or the victim of Russia's enemies. Great Britain and France did not want to control Turkey's internal affairs, and neither Power would permit the other to gain superiority in Constantinople. Russia could not attempt to swallow up Turkey for the Turkish people

could form a guerilla army and, supported by the two Powers, expel Russia from Turkey. Revolts would break out in Poland and Circassia, which the Russians were now oppressing, and the Russian Empire would crumble.¹

After Vogorides presented Ponsonby's observations to the Sultan, he was instructed to continue the conversations to solicit the aid of the British government in obtaining Candia from Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby explained to Vogorides that as Great Britain and France differed on the question of Candia, Great Britain could not raise this question without irritating France. Nevertheless, Ponsonby promised that he would request his government to do all in its power to help the Sultan in this affair, thus showing Mahmoud that he could rely upon Great Britain. In return, he requested that this affair be kept secret from the French ambassador, preventing a misunderstanding between the two governments. When Ponsonby asked what Great Britain would obtain in return, Vogorides replied that the Russo-Turkish treaty would be "mere paper." If Russia returned to Constantinople, she would be acting against the Sultan's will, and the British government would be given adequate foreknowledge to counteract this action.²

The British ambassador requested Vogorides to inform the Sultan that the British fleet had been withdrawn from Vourla Bay, thus avoiding a possible incident with Russia, but could be quickly called up from Naupla or Malta when needed. British steamers would have no trouble passing the Dardanelles, because they could easily resist the current, and the warships would

¹ Same to same, December 19, 1833: ibid.

² Ibid.

pass in the steamers' wake. However, Ponsonby really did not believe that the British fleet could be brought up in time from Naupla or Malta. He had lied with the hope of persuading the Sultan that he could rely upon British naval assistance against Russia should the latter suddenly try to seize the Straits. Naupla and Malta were useless as bases for the British fleet; they were too distant from the Straits, and bad weather in the Mediterranean could seriously delay the fleet's arrival in Turkish waters. Ponsonby was convinced that the fleet should return to Vourla Bay, and requested Palmerston to send him extensive powers for use as he thought necessary in an emergency.

The conferences with Vogorides had broken the ice. Ponsonby promised British support for the Sultan's interests, and Mahmoud tested Great Britain's sincerity. Ponsonby required no more for the moment. He was under no illusion that the Sultan immediately would commit himself to Great Britain. He could not spurn Russia without encountering dangers, but the Sultan had an alternative, and most likely Mahmoud would try to obtain what he could from both sides by discreetly playing them off against each other. Russia no longer could hope to keep exclusive influence over the Sultan.

Mahmoud showed considerable courage in secretly communicating with the British embassy, and apparently desired to keep the channel open. A regular secret network of communication was established between the Sultan and the British legation. Doctor MacGuffog, the embassy's doctor, who also was in the Sultan's service, communicated Ponsonby's messages to Abdey Bey, the court jester. He passed them on to Vogorides, one of the few

men that Mahmoud trusted, or to Pertev Pasha, the Kiahaya Bey.¹

After reaching the Sultan, Ponsonby's attitude towards Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali suddenly changed. Ponsonby now felt that Mahmoud could regenerate his Empire, writing to Grey that "out of the caprice and weakness of Sultan Mahmoud will spring the most beneficial results for his country; in fact it will be regenerated in consequence of his follies."² Mehemet Ali, formerly a possible saviour of Turkey, now was the viper in the bosom of the Empire, the chief source of her weakness. So long as Mahmoud feared Mehemet Ali, the Sultan could not improve his army and navy to protect Turkey against Russia. Ponsonby now urged Palmerston to apply Great Britain's power against the Pasha.³

However, Ponsonby, at the beginning of 1834, thought a peaceful settlement of the Turkish question possible. Conditions had altered for the better. Mahmoud appeared to be securely on his throne, and Mehemet Ali's support in Constantinople was rapidly declining. Metternich had indicated that Austria would "draw back" from Russia.⁴ Consequently, Ponsonby recommended that the time was right for the conclusion of a treaty among the Powers protecting Turkey. The treaty which he proposed would exclude all warships from the Straits, except for the small number permitted by the Sultan, and guarantee that the forts of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles would be properly garrisoned, with representatives of the Powers having the right to examine the

¹ Ibid.

² Ponsonby to Grey, January 10, 1834: G.P.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 17, 1834: B.P.

⁴ Same to same, January 11, 1834: ibid.

forts periodically. Russia would surrender the rights she had acquired in her former treaties with the Ottoman Empire to protect the Greek Orthodox religion in the Sultan's dominions. Turkey would be given a loan for the payment of her war debt; this would compel Russia to evacuate the territory she now occupied.¹ The treaty would give Turkey time to prepare her defences against Russia, whose ability of interfering in Turkish internal affairs severely would be curtailed by a renunciation of the right to protect the Greek Orthodox religion in the Ottoman Empire.²

However, Ponsonby's ideas upon a solution to the Turkish question really were not as consistent as is indicated in his letters to Palmerston. The ambassador seems to have been torn between a military blow against Russia and a solution short of war. In a long letter to Grey, dated January 10, Ponsonby recommended contradictory solutions. On the one hand, Ponsonby argued that no treaty indefinitely could "secure Turkey against the practices of Russia," and therefore, Great Britain "must go to war with Russia to prevent a war of opinions arising in Europe." On the other hand, he noted to Grey: "the increased force you are preparing for action is assuredly the best security against your being forced to act in arms."³ This conflict in solutions was not resolved until Ponsonby decided, at the end of 1834, that he could save Turkey from Russia by persuading the Sultan to emancipate himself from Russian influence and to improve the Turkish Empire's defences against Russia.

¹ Draft of a treaty, N.D.: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 11, 1834: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Grey, January 10, 1834: G.P.

Having offered Mahmoud an alternative to Russian support, Ponsonby was reluctant to do anything which could jeopardize his relationship with the Sultan. On December 6, Palmerston instructed Ponsonby to seek clarification from the Porte of the secret article in the Russo-Turkish treaty, an explanation why it had permitted Ricard's squadron to pass through the Straits into the Black Sea, and a statement whether it would permit the passage of Russian warships through the Straits should Russia be at war with another Power.¹ As he feared that the Sultan could misunderstand the views expressed in the instruction, become alarmed and rely more upon the Russians, Ponsonby refused to present it for the moment. The ambassador argued that currently, the Russian fleet was at Sebastopol ready to move at a moment's notice, but the British and French fleets soon were leaving Vourla Bay, and this would induce the Russians to lay up their fleet for the winter. The instruction then could be submitted to the Porte.²

As the Sultan soon was aware of these and similar instructions sent to Roussin, Ponsonby could not delay submitting them to the Porte. However, Ponsonby calculated that if the Russians saw a note embodying these instructions, they would suspect that Great Britain was endeavouring to control the Sultan's mind. Russia could control Turkey only through the Sultan, and the note could serve as a pretext for Russia to request that her fleet return to Constantinople. Consequently, Ponsonby suggested to Roussin that he should merely send instructions to his dragoman. He requested that these instructions should emphasize that Great Britain and France were united, so as to counter Russian and

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 6, 1833: F.O. 78/220.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 10, 1834: F.O. 78/235.

claims that the two countries were divided. Roussin consented to Ponsonby's recommendations. Apparently desiring Roussin to break the way for him, Ponsonby withheld for a few days from submitting his communication to the Porte.¹

Again, when Ponsonby received Palmerston's instructions, dated December 6, to recommend that reforms should be made in the Turkish army, he declined implementing them.² The instructions, Ponsonby contended, would give the Russians reason to believe that the British government was trying to break their exclusive influence upon the Sultan. Nor could these reforms be implemented without a show of "a physical force," upon which British "moral power may rest." The Turks would lose their fear of Russia "by a small exertion" of the British "Marine in aid of the land defences of the Bosphorus which may always be maintained till" Great Britain came "to succour the Turk."³

However, it soon became obvious to Ponsonby that he could use Palmerston's instructions upon reforms to advantage in his secret communications. On January 28, Vogorides informed the ambassador that Mahmoud was satisfied with Palmerston's recommendations. Thinking that Mahmoud could be using Great Britain only to obtain Candia and really desired maintaining the status quo, Ponsonby requested Vogorides to inform the Sultan that he could not be saved unless he were on the side of Great Britain and France, for if the two Powers were successful in a war with Russia, Turkey would be destroyed; should Russia triumph, Czar Nicholas would be his master. Vogorides was given extracts

¹ Same to same, January 19, 1834: ibid.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 6, 1834: F.O. 78/220.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 17, 1834: B.P.

from Campbell's letters, illustrating that Great Britain pursued the Sultan's interests in Alexandria. In his report to the Sultan, Vogorides cleverly added that Great Britain could flood Turkey with arms, a comment which the Sultan could construe either as an attempt to strengthen the country against Russia, or to arm the people against him should he betray them to Russia.¹

Ponsonby did not know whether the Sultan was sincere, but noted to Palmerston that Mahmoud would be against Russia and would support Great Britain "if he had a reasonable hope of success."² As the Turks, Ponsonby wrote to Grey, had been "more than once the victims of their trust in the European Courts," Mahmoud would "think twice" before he confided in any Power. Although Ponsonby had "expectations of detaching him from Russia," he felt that it was imperative that Great Britain show the Sultan that she would protect him. He noted:

Under this feeling of distrust Turkey will expect acts, not words. You must be here, not promise to come. You must fight the Russians if necessary and if you do, the whole nation will fight with you as well as it known how.

As he expected that the Sultan would engage to permit British warships to "pass without opposition under certain circumstances" through the Dardanelles, Ponsonby asked whether the British government intended sending a large fleet for the protection of Constantinople. The ambassador assured the Prime Minister that no danger would face the British fleet, because Russia could not send troops by sea.³

¹ N.A., February 13, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 17, 1834: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 12, 1834: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Grey, February 3, 1834: G.P.

Although Ponsonby knew that the Sultan questioned whether Great Britain would support Turkey against Russia, he believed Mahmoud confided entirely in Great Britain's "will and power" to protect him against Mehemet Ali.¹ Ponsonby was wrong: Mahmoud suspected that Great Britain favoured Mehemet Ali. The ambassador could make no promises to the Sultan. He told Vogorides that he could not talk about Candia, and Vogorides does not seem to have raised this question in his interviews with the Sultan, although Mahmoud more than once mentioned to Vogorides that he was anxious to recover the island. As Grey had instructed him to maintain peace between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, listing a number of reasons why Great Britain could not make any promises to Mahmoud,² Ponsonby took pains not to give the Sultan the impression that Great Britain would give him material help. He merely endeavoured ~~to show~~ the Sultan that Great Britain desired Turkish independence, and never would permit Russia to possess Turkey.³

Vogorides presented Ponsonby's arguments to the Sultan and supplemented them with his own. Great Britain, Vogorides argued to the Sultan, was determined to resist Russia until " 'she has obliged Russia to agree to and coincide in her views relating to this country.' " The British would soon have thirty warships in the Archipelago and were preparing the same number of ships for the Baltic Sea; and France also was readying an expedition of twenty-five thousand men which could be landed at the Dardanelles. Sceptical, Mahmoud asked Vogorides why Canning had not helped him

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, December 3, 1833: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 12, 1834: B.P.

in the Morea. The Sultan, who was more concerned with Mehemet Ali than with Russia, noted to Vogorides that so long as Great Britain and France continued " 'to support Mehemet Ali against Russia,' " it gave him " 'cause for reflection and uneasiness.' " Immediately, Vogorides turned to Great Britain's defence, assuring the Sultan that the British and French would bring the Pasha in a frigate to Constantinople " 'to kiss' " his feet. This failed to convince the Sultan, who noted that Candia would serve as the test. " 'We have always been deceived in former wars and we can only declare against Russia when we hear the cannon roaring at St. Petersburg.' " ¹

The memory of Great Britain's refusal to aid him against Russia in 1828 made a deep impression on Mahmoud's mind. When Mavrogeni reported from Vienna that the British ambassador had informed him that everything appeared to be arranged, Mahmoud requested Vogorides to explain the meaning of the comment. Vogorides' explanation that the Powers would arrange the Turkish question by concluding treaties irritated Mahmoud, who retorted that this was similar to Gordon's expression when the Russians were in Adrianople: " 'Get them out the best way you can just now and we will secure you against them in time to come.' " ²

Despite this reaction by the Sultan, neither Ponsonby nor Vogorides despaired that Mahmoud would object to seeing the Turkish question settled by treaties among the Powers. On March 1, Vogorides explained to Mahmoud that Ponsonby considered treaties among the Powers as the best way to prevent Turkey from being the site of a war among the Powers. The treaties would

¹ N.A., February 13, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 17, 1834: ibid.

² N.A., February 16, 1834: enclosure ibid.

give the Porte a chance to build up Turkey's defences against Russia, until Turkey could receive aid from Great Britain and France. Vogorides recommended to the Sultan that Sizipoli and the forts at the entrance of the Bosphorus should be fortified and Silestria should be redeemed by paying the war debt to Russia. The Sultan apparently made no comment. When Vogorides reported his conversation with Mahmoud, Ponsonby requested Vogorides to frame a treaty "intended to cut up by the roots the Russian influence."¹

Mahmoud would do nothing until he had learned whether Great Britain had persuaded Mehemet Ali to cede Candia. Pertev Pasha, who suspected that Great Britain would never help Turkey against Russia or Mehemet Ali, pressed the Sultan not to commit himself until Great Britain had proved her sincerity.² Considering that he would be insecure so long as he did not possess the island, Mahmoud was "in childish impatience about Candia."³

Ponsonby's hopes of detaching the Sultan from Russia dissipated when Great Britain failed to obtain the cession of Candia from Mehemet Ali. As Campbell feared that strong representations would weaken his influence with the Pasha, he merely requested him to cede Candia, thereby demonstrating his high regard for Great Britain. Mehemet Ali politely turned down Campbell's request, and the consul-general discontinued his representations.⁴

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 10, 1834: ibid.

² N.A., February 7, 1834: B.P.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834: ibid.

⁴ Campbell to Palmerston, May 22, 1834: F.O. 78/245.

After Mehemet Ali's refusal reached Constantinople, the secret discussions with the Sultan were suspended. Ponsonby now waited upon events before resuming his attack upon Russian influence.

Fortunately, the Russians also hurt their position in Constantinople. In February 1834, Ahmet Pasha signed a treaty in St. Petersburg delimiting the Russo-Turkish frontier in Asia, in which Turkey ceded extensive areas in return for a reduction of two million ducats in the Turkish war indemnity. The Turks were required to pay four million ducats in eight years, redeeming Silestria upon the liquidation of the debt.¹ Ponsonby claimed that the territorial concessions would give Russia command of the Khorassan frontier, giving "a free passage" for Russian troops to Baghdad via the Tigris-Euphrates water system, thus cutting Britain's "road to Persia".² Although Ponsonby certainly was exaggerating, the Sultan did not take the concessions lightly. Moreover, the Sultan wished immediately to redeem Silestria. Believing that the Russians had tricked Ahmet Pasha, Mahmoud began to suspect that she had not abandoned her designs upon Turkey. Ponsonby reported that Mahmoud was in an ugly mood.³

While Ponsonby and Mahmoud were engaged in their secret discussions, the Porte gave Ponsonby officially the secret article in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. However, as the Turkish version of the secret article differed from the Russian version, Ponsonby was instructed to request the Porte to reveal the meaning of the

¹ Same to same, March 1, 1834, No. 24: F.O. 78/235.

² Same to same, March 1, 1834, No. 27: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 8, 1834: B.P.

article and to account for the discrepancies between the two texts.¹ The Porte evaded giving an unequivocal answer.² At the beginning of May, Ponsonby, still engaged in his conversations with the Sultan, wrote to Palmerston that he desired to suspend representations so as not to embarrass the Porte.³ At the beginning of June, Ponsonby decided to write an official note to the Porte, but decided against engaging in a hot debate with the Turks. When the Porte again equivocated, Ponsonby pointed out to Palmerston that the Russian version was the correct one, and "all the smart things" in the Turkish reply were written by the Russians.⁴ Ponsonby decided to terminate his discussions with the Porte upon the issue.

By March, Ponsonby had lost his faith in Metternich. Stürmer appeared to be acting in collusion with Bouteneff, telling the Porte that Great Britain and France were divided.⁵ Austria, Ponsonby was convinced, would co-operate with Russia in trying to frustrate the Sultan's new measure to raise a militia; nor would "other and stronger measures", besides intrigue, "be spared by the two Powers." European Turkey had ample means to establish an adequate force for defence, Ponsonby asserted, but he felt "certain that it would be crushed before it can have time to rise to strength."⁶ Czar Nicholas, Ponsonby argued to both Palmerston

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834: F.O. 78/234.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 14, 1834: F.O. 78/235.

³ Same to same, May 2, 1834: F.O. 78/236.

⁴ Same to same, June 8, 1834: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, April 29, 1834: B.P.

⁶ Same to same, May 14, 1834: F.O. 78/236.

and Grey, did not "prefer having a Viceroy here in the form of Mahmoud," and was intriguing with Austria to seize Turkey.¹ Therefore, a treaty among the Powers for the protection of Turkey was unrealistic.

Meanwhile, Palmerston also had come to the conclusion that Austria was amenable to Russian enticements, believing that Metternich would dismember Turkey and obtain Bosnia and Albania, rather than resist Russia. In the exchange of notes with Metternich on the Eastern Question, the Austrian had argued that Russia could be trusted. From this, Palmerston concluded that no treaty among the powers on the Turkish question was possible, and therefore resolved not to fetter Great Britain's hands by treaties but to maintain her force undiminished in the Mediterranean.²

Palmerston believed that Austria now would act as Russia's mouthpiece. When the British government received a complaint from Metternich, in June, that the British fleet in the Mediterranean had made menacing gestures, Palmerston rejoiced that Russia finally had recognized Great Britain's resolve and ability to resist her. While he desired avoiding a war with the Russians, Palmerston felt that their policy "of systematic and universal encroachment" and insolence made it "difficult to keep one's hands off them."³

During the spring of 1834, Mahmoud's restlessness was Ponsonby's principal cause for concern. As Ponsonby received reports from Egypt which showed that he had underestimated the Pasha's

¹ Same to same, May 2, 1834: B.P.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 24, 1834: ibid.

power, especially his "moral power,"¹ he more than ever was convinced that the Sultan's defeat was inevitable if he attacked Mehemet Ali. No attack could be expected by the Pasha, who did not desire a confrontation with Russia, but he would respond if attacked.² Believing that a war between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali would give the Russians an opportunity of returning to Constantinople, Ponsonby urged Mahmoud not to attack, arguing that he could not defeat the Pasha without involving the Russians, who then would become masters of the Turkish Empire.³

However, Ponsonby's influence in Constantinople was not extensive. The ambassador manifested his frustration when he wrote to David Urquhart: "What an opportunity the present hour offers for striking a fatal blow against Russian power, if there could anywhere be found the vigour and energy of an angry mouse."⁴ Until events took a more favourable turn, Ponsonby could do no more than try to convince Turks in important positions that Great Britain would defend Turkey against Russia. When Urquhart arrived in Constantinople on his trip through Eastern Europe, Ponsonby persuaded him to remain in the capital. Urquhart had met Ahmet Pasha and other influential Turks during a previous visit and Ponsonby hoped to exploit these connections to win over Ahmet Pasha. The ambassador instructed Urquhart to try to influence Ahmet Pasha through Namic Pasha, who was suspected of being Ahmet Pasha's confidant.⁵ Ultimately, Urquhart persuaded Ahmet

¹ Ponsonby to Urquhart, June 9, 1834: U.P.

² Ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 8, 1834: B.P.

⁴ Ponsonby to Urquhart, June 15, 1834: U.P.

⁵ Same to same, June 9, 1834: ibid.

Pasha to send young Turkish officers to be trained in Great Britain. Ponsonby also engaged an unidentified garrulous Englishman, who had many acquaintances in Turkey, to "chatter" about the ambassador's opinions, and make known to the Turks that Ponsonby thought "the extrication of this country from its difficulties not only feasible but easy by energy."¹

Feeling that his influence still was too weak to take energetic steps to weaken Russian influence, Ponsonby cautioned Urquhart:

Prudence is essentially necessary on your part for fear of the effect a too rapid or too decided action might have on your influence. We must not seem to make occasions - we ought to wait for them - and when they are present avail ourselves of them.... We have abundance of time before us, and need not precipitate our advance.²

Although Palmerston had informed him in March that the British Commander in the Mediterranean had been sent instructions to sail to Constantinople if requested by the embassy there,³ Ponsonby did not consider this sufficient in coping with the Turkish question. In his private letters to Palmerston, Ponsonby did not hide his disaffection with the policy of his government, writing that the government had "no idea of taking any steps for the secure settlement of this country."⁴

As Ponsonby's efforts were frustrated, his solutions became more extreme, and he became more susceptible to the influence of Urquhart. On July 20, Ponsonby argued to Palmerston that Great

¹ Same to same, dated Sunday night: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834: F.O. 78/234.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 20, 1834: B.P.

Britain must dispossess Russia of the Crimea to prevent the Czar from seizing Constantinople.¹ After he learned from Yeames, the British consul in Odessa, that the Russian Black Sea fleet had only four serviceable line of battle ships,² he increased his pressure upon the Foreign Secretary to strike "the death blow against Russia."³

Ponsonby could find little sympathy for his recommendations from Palmerston, who was determined to resist Russia's encroachments in the Near East, but did "not mean to break with her, by taking the offensive." He explained to the ambassador that it would be imprudent to ask for permission for passage through the Dardanelles, because should the Sultan refuse, Great Britain would be forced either to retreat with "a slap in the face," or make war upon the Turks. Should the Sultan permit passage, the British fleet, on anchoring before Constantinople, would find no Russian danger to counter. With the fleet before the Turkish capital, the British government probably would limit its policy to demanding that the Sultan renounce the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi or sign a similar one with Great Britain. As the Sultan would evade the first and the second might be accomplished without this demonstration of strength, the presence of the fleet in the Straits was a useless and dangerous measure. The best course Great Britain could pursue would be to maintain a large fleet in the Mediterranean.⁴

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, July 24, 1834: F.O. 78/237.

³ Same to same, September 16, 1834: B.P.

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, August 22, 1834: ibid.

However, Palmerston confided to Ponsonby that he still was at a loss for a long range policy, as he feared that Russia would bide her time before making a descent upon Constantinople and the Straits. The Foreign Secretary believed that only the possession of the Straits could give Russia the permanent security she desired. Russia's economy and navy would improve in succeeding years. Meanwhile, Great Britain would be burdened by the cost of maintaining a large Mediterranean fleet. Little had been done by the Sultan to improve his finances, and little more could be expected before he settled his differences with Mehemet Ali. But Palmerston hesitated from taking the first step towards a reconciliation because he feared that Great Britain would find herself fettered by engagements with one or more Powers, and in future would be drawn into all the quarrels between the Sultan and various Pashas. As he valued Ponsonby's on the spot experience, Palmerston encouraged the ambassador to expatiate upon his ideas.¹

By autumn, the Foreign Secretary had decided upon maintaining indefinitely a fleet of at least six sail of the line in the Mediterranean, but he had progressed little further in his search for a long range Turkish policy. In his discussions with Namic Pasha, the Turkish ambassador to London, Palmerston maintained only that Great Britain would protect Turkey against Russian encroachments, and noted that the Sultan himself would be responsible should the Russians succeed in further undermining the strength of the Empire. But when Namic Pasha turned the subject to Mehemet Ali, Palmerston had little to say. Indeed,

¹ Ibid.

the Turk's argument that a state, like an animal, could not have two heads, stuck in Palmerston's mind, and influenced his attitude during the succeeding year.¹

After Urquhart departed for London, Ponsonby discarded his extreme solutions to the Turkish question. In a display of forgetfulness, Ponsonby argued in a private letter to Palmerston, written on October 12, that he had never recommended that Great Britain should strike first against Russia, rather he had suggested that the British government should be prepared for any move by the Czar.² Liberated from Urquhart's pernicious influence, Ponsonby now concentrated upon destroying Russian influence in Constantinople, persuading the Sultan to improve his army and rely upon Great Britain for protection against Russia. Ponsonby was convinced that his efforts, aided by a demonstration of British naval power in the Mediterranean, could frustrate for an indefinite period an attempt by Russia to seize the Straits; this Ponsonby believed Bouteneff was preparing by his "sap and mine" diplomacy.

Before meeting Urquhart, Ponsonby knew little about Circassia, and referred to the region as Georgia. Urquhart believed that Circassia was the key to Turkey, for should that country fall, Turkey soon would share her fate. The ambassador adopted Urquhart's reasoning,³ but, unlike the latter, was primarily concerned with the danger of a naval descent upon Constantinople, and failed to perceive that the possibility of

¹ Same to same, October 28, 1834: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 12, 1834: ibid.

³ Same to same, September 1, 1834: B.P.

launching such an assault would not be much affected by the fate of Circassia. An attack by Russia upon Constantinople through Asia Minor was virtually impossible, and not even Ponsonby who, until his last days as ambassador, had a poor conception of the geography of Turkey, would speculate that the Russians would attack Turkey through Asia Minor. Persia, not Circassia, was the key to India. But Circassia's importance dominated Ponsonby's ideas until after the "Vixen" incident.

During the summer of 1834, Urquhart requested Ponsonby to permit him to visit Circassia and survey the resources there. Ponsonby consented but warned Urquhart not to make promises in the name of the British government to the inhabitants. After Urquhart returned from his journey, Ponsonby requested Palmerston secretly to send rockets, lead and gunpowder to Circassia.¹

B. The Threat of a Clash between Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali

In the latter half of July, the Sultan learning that a revolt had broken out in Syria against Mehemet Ali, resolved upon ordering Reschid Pasha and the Pashas of Erzeroum and Trebizond to aid the rebels, and also considered sending his fleet to the Syrian coast.² Immediately upon learning the Sultan's intentions, Ponsonby dispatched F. Pisani to reason with the Porte. The argument adopted by Ponsonby was his often used claim that as Mehemet Ali was an old man, and his empire would die with him, the Sultan would be risking his crown foolishly in order to hasten the Pasha's end. But the ambassador complemented

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, July 24, 1834: F.O. 78/237.

this with other arguments. He maintained that should Ibrahim be defeated, he then would seek refuge in Acre, and the Sultan did not possess the means to reduce that fortress. Russia, who desired confusion in Turkey and Persia, could support Mehemet Ali.¹

Ponsonby ordered the Commander of the British Mediterranean fleet, Vice-Admiral Rowley, to bring the squadron to Vourla Bay and await instructions from his government. Rowley was advised by Ponsonby that in the event of a war between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, the squadron should pursue "entire neutrality" until instructions were received from London.²

The ambassadors, without exception, strenuously tried to restrain the Sultan. Bouteneff warned the Porte that Great Britain and France would intervene in a war, and Russia then could not look on indifferently. As the British soon would have forty ships in Turkish waters and the French fleet would arrive from Toulon,³ the Russian fleet in the Black Sea would be kept in perfect readiness. This warning had a decided effect upon the Sultan's policy.³

Aware that Great Britain could intervent if he attacked Mehemet Ali, Mahmoud endeavoured to obtain her permission to reduce the Pasha. The Reis Effendi sent an agent to Ponsonby proposing that the ambassador utilize the Sultan's projected attack upon Mehemet Ali to obtain a written engagement from

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, July 24, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 25, 1834: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 16, 1834: ibid.

³ Same to same, July 26, 1834: B.P.

Mahmoud that he would implement reforms in Syria. In return, Great Britain and France would pledge that they would not aid Mehemet Ali should he be so weakened that his defeat were inevitable.¹ Ponsonby replied verbally through F. Pisani that although Great Britain was not a guarantor of the peace of Kutaya, she had "incurred a virtual obligation", and had employed her influence in preventing Mehemet Ali from increasing his forces. Moreover the Porte required accurate knowledge of affairs in Syria "before the measures proposed could be justified on the more lax principles of politicks."

However, Ponsonby left the matter open, and signified that he would meet with any Turkish minister.² In doing this the ambassador hoped that an opportunity would arise enabling him to obtain a written agreement from the Sultan pledging that reforms would be made in Syria, without committing Great Britain to any "sort of agreement." But Ponsonby did not consider the proposal "clearly wrong," because it was "in fact nothing but to agree to accept the fact when accomplished," and the British government could not "do otherwise than accept it."³

Meanwhile, the Porte received exaggerated reports about Ibrahim's defeats by the insurgents. Thinking that Ibrahim had been killed,⁴ the Sultan ordered his fleet to sail to the ~~Mediterranean~~, and Ponsonby thought that war was "almost certain."⁵ When

¹ Same to same, July 25, 1834: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, August 5, 1834: F.O. 78/237.

⁵ Same to same, September 16, 1834: B.P.

the Reis Effendi told Ponsonby that as Ibrahim was dead, the Porte would like to name a new Pasha for Adana, Ponsonby cautioned that the Porte should be prudent, and should not place itself in a position which would necessitate a call for foreign aid.¹

The Reis Effendi tried to obtain a commitment upon Great Britain's policy should a war break out, but Ponsonby was evasive, saying only that should Russia become involved, the British fleet would be ready to protect the Sultan's sovereignty, as Russia might employ the crisis to seize Constantinople. However, Ponsonby pointed out that he had no instructions from his government, and spoke only for himself. When the Reis Effendi suggested that the British fleet should accompany the Turkish fleet and send instructors to train the crews on the Turkish ships, Ponsonby replied that if the fleets sailed together, this would be a breach of neutrality, and could start a general war. In his discussions with the Reis Effendi, Ponsonby stressed that he admitted "the right of the Porte to act as it may deem proper," and asked the Porte only to act prudently.² Ponsonby spared no pains in convincing the Turks that Great Britain was "not attached to the interests of Mehemet Ali, but to the interests of the Ottoman Empire if true to itself," and promised that Great Britain would aid the Sultan should Russia support Mehemet Ali.³

At the end of August, the Sultan decided not to send the Turkish fleet through the Strait, apparently believing that the

¹ Same to same, August 16, 1834: F.O. 78/237.

² Ibid.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, July 29, 1834: enclosure ibid.

fleet could not defeat Mehemet Ali's navy. But as Reschid Pasha's army in Asia Minor was reinforced, Ponsonby thought the Sultan still was preparing for war.¹ On September 13, Vogorides, on the Sultan's orders, saw Ponsonby. Vogorides told Ponsonby that the Sultan desired war, for the Russians were trying to maintain Mehemet Ali's strength undiminished, so as to exploit the division in the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan expected that in a war between Mehemet Ali and himself, Great Britain would intervene in his favour, and force Mehemet Ali's withdrawal from Syria. With British aid, the Sultan subsequently would liberate Turkey from Russia's influence.²

Stunned by the Sultan's expectations, Ponsonby endeavoured to awaken Mahmoud from his day dream. The ambassador pointed out that as Great Britain would require a reason to attack Mehemet Ali, the Pasha must first insult the Sultan. Thereupon, Vogorides stated that the Sultan would offer Mehemet Ali Acre as well as Egypt, and hoped for the help of Great Britain and France in persuading the Pasha to accept the offer. Ponsonby replied that he had no instructions and could not comment upon this point.

Having concluded his official communication, Vogorides continued with off the record comments. The Sultan, he confided, had ordered Reschid Pasha to occupy Orfa. If Reschid Pasha saw that Aleppo and Damascus strongly favoured the Sultan, he would advance upon the two cities. Great Britain and France, the Sultan expected, would then intervene to prevent bloodshed

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 26, 1834: ibid.

² Same to same, September 15, 1834: F.O. 78/238.

and force Mehemet Ali to accept Egypt and Acre. Ponsonby warned Vogorides that should Mehemet Ali resist on Orfa, he would be the aggressor, but should the Pasha surrender the Pashalic and Reschid Pasha attack Damascus and Aleppo, the Sultan would be the aggressor. Vogorides noted that the Sultan was confident that he could defeat Mehemet Ali, but as Ponsonby did not share this opinion, he suggested that the Sultan, if defeated, should call upon Great Britain, France and Russia collectively for aid. With the British and French fleets at Constantinople, the Sultan had nothing to fear; the Russian Black Sea fleet had only four serviceable ships, and could easily be defeated. Austria would side with the stronger side, and Russia would not fight because she could be crippled for a century. While the fleets were anchored in the Straits, a treaty would be signed among the Powers, securing Turkish independence. Although the Sultan were the aggressor, the Powers would force Mehemet Ali to accept Egypt and Acre, to preserve European Peace. Ponsonby told Vogorides that he could use these comments "as he liked," but discreetly and properly.¹

The comments made by Ponsonby, certainly less than prudent, could have encouraged the Sultan to resolve upon war. However, as Ponsonby was speaking only for himself, the Sultan could not know whether the British government shared his ideas. Moreover, Ponsonby made the comments in confidence and Vogorides may not have communicated them to the Sultan.

Mahmoud's eagerness to attack Mehemet Ali slowly subsided,

¹ Ibid.

principally because the Russians did not relax their pressures against war. But the Pasha, in reaction to the Sultan's warlike army concentration on his Syrian frontier, refused to surrender Orfa or pay his tribute. Prevented by the Powers from attacking Mehemet Ali, the Sultan could do no more than send Blacque to Roussin and Ponsonby with a request that the two ambassadors forward a letter to Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby hesitated, but was convinced by Roussin to agree. However, when Ponsonby received a report from Egypt that Mehemet Ali was stubbornly resisting, the two ambassadors changed their minds.¹

It would appear that the Porte never sent the Sultan's letter to the two embassies, thus saving Ponsonby and Roussin the embarrassment of a refusal. Nevertheless, the British and French consuls-general in Egypt were instructed to obtain Mehemet Ali's consent to the Sultan's requests. In his letter, Roussin threatened that France would use force if necessary in ending a war and that the British government would do likewise, but Ponsonby told Roussin that he had no instructions, and could not support his threat.²

While Roussin doubted that war would break out, Ponsonby believed that the Sultan was resolved to attack Mehemet Ali should the Pasha not evacuate Orfa and pay his tribute. Blacque had promised that Reschid Pasha would not make a move towards Orfa for forty days, but gave no guarantee that peace would be maintained after this period.³ As he believed that the Sultan

¹ Same to same, October 6, 1834: F.O. 78/239.

² Same to same, October 12, 1834: ibid.

³ Blacque to Ponsonby, September 22, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 4, 1834: ibid.

would probably be beaten in a war, and would seek aid,¹ Ponsonby urged Palmerston to place the British fleet in a state of readiness. In a Turkish defeat, Ponsonby pointed out to his Foreign Secretary, Great Britain would find the opportunity and the means to resolve the Turkish question, ending Russia's career of encroachments upon the Empire. So long as the Russians were tied down in Circassia and had their rear exposed, they could not move against Turkey. The irregular state of Russia's finances and the famine which was rampant in her southern provinces, precluded the Czar from contemplating a war against Great Britain and France. With no expectation of Russian belligerency, the British government, Ponsonby asserted, could implement the plan that he had outlined to Vogorides. Mehemet Ali would be the aggressor if he did not evacuate Orfa and pay his tribute.²

Not only did Mehemet Ali not make these concessions, but he vowed to Campbell that Ibrahim would defend Orfa should Reschid Pasha attack it.³ Campbell was convinced that if attacked in Orfa, Mehemet Ali would declare his independence.⁴ At the beginning of October, Mimaud received instructions to persuade Mehemet Ali to evacuate Orfa and pay his tribute. As Campbell had not yet received instructions, Mimaud acted alone. Mimaud's argument that Orfa should be surrendered because Reschid Pasha

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 12, 1834: ibid.

² Same to same, October 22, 1834: ibid.

³ Campbell to Palmerston, October 1, 1834: F.O. 78/247.

⁴ Same to same, October 3, 1834: ibid.

desired revenge for his defeat in the last war¹ only made Mehemet Ali more intransigent. Mehemet Ali vowed that if the Powers were against him, he would die an honourable death rather than be humiliated by the Sultan.² The Pasha claimed that Orfa formed part of Syria, and argued that so long as he were the Sultan's vassal, the Sultan always would seek his destruction and would create disturbances in Syria to bring on a crisis.³

As the Pasha believed that France was biased against him, Mimaut alone could not shake his resolution to retain Orfa. At the end of October, Campbell received instructions to co-operate with Mimaut. However, as Mehemet Ali had left Alexandria for Cairo, Campbell could make representations only to Boghoz Bey, Mehemet Ali's chief minister, who forwarded these to Cairo.⁴ Knowing that Mehemet Ali would attempt to stall, Campbell travelled to Cairo. Meanwhile, Mehemet Ali anxiously was awaiting a reply from Metternich upon a proposal to declare his independence, which the Austrian immediately communicated to the Porte.⁵ When Campbell and Mimaut saw Mehemet Ali on November 23, he already had learned that Metternich had rejected his bid for independence. Mehemet Ali gave way, ordering Ibrahim to evacuate Orfa, and sending to Constantinople seven months'

¹ Same to same, October 8, 1834: ibid.

² Same to same, October 6, 1834: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 12, 1834: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, November 10, 1834: ibid.

⁵ Campbell to Ponsonby, November 12, 1834: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, November 26, 1834: F.O. 78/247.

tribute for Egypt and Candia and nine months' for Syria.¹

Although now resolved, the crisis had considerable influence upon the future. Incensed that Great Britain had pressed for the evacuation of Orfa, Mehemet Ali retaliated by endeavouring to frustrate the Euphrates Expedition. Before the crisis, the Sultan thought that he could use the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi as a means of obtaining aid to crush Mehemet Ali. But as Bouteneff had restrained him from attacking the Pasha, Mahmoud concluded that it was Russia's policy to preserve Mehemet Ali's power in order to create confusion in the Ottoman Empire and impair its ability of resisting foreign enemies. Recognizing that Mahmoud wanted to free himself from Russia's grip, Ponsonby used every opportunity that he could in outmanoeuvring the Russians. However, Ponsonby realized that nothing less than a firm promise of British support of the Sultan's efforts to destroy the Egyptian Pasha could secure British influence in Constantinople. Consequently, the ambassador maintained constant pressure upon Palmerston to participate in an expedition against Mehemet Ali.

¹ Campbell to Palmerston, December 12, 1834: ibid.

CHAPTER IV: THE SECOND ASSAULT ON RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

A. Interpretation of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi

The growing disenchantment of the Sultan with his ally, Russia, gave Ponsonby an opportunity to commence attacks upon Russian influence. Hitherto, Ponsonby had directed his efforts to secret communications with Mahmoud, but had failed in giving the Sultan sufficient security to terminate his dependence upon Russia. Ponsonby, in the latter half of 1834, opened a contest for influence with Bouteneff at the Porte, demonstrating that the British government was determined to counter Russia's "sap and mine" diplomacy. To this end, Ponsonby utilized three issues: the interpretation of the secret article in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, the Euphrates Expedition Firman, and the Churchill Affair.

Palmerston wrote to Ponsonby, on September 25, that as the British government did not consider the Reis Effendi's comments upon the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi explicit enough, a new representation should be made. Ponsonby was instructed to obtain from the Porte an explanation of the secret article and a statement as to whether the Straits would be closed to a Power at war with Russia, but open to Russia.¹ On November 11, Ponsonby sent two notes to the Porte, containing Palmerston's questions.² After three weeks of silence, the Porte, on December 4, sent a vague reply, which Ponsonby considered unsatisfactory. The following day, Ponsonby sent a strongly worded note to the Reis

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, September 25, 1834: F.O. 78/234.

² Ponsonby to F. Pisani, November 11, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 17, 1834: F.O. 78/240.

Effendi that the British government expected unequivocal answers to the two letters; ambiguous answers would be interpreted by the British government as an indication that a change had occurred in Turkish policy which would hurt British interests.¹

The Reis Effendi confided to F. Pisani that he found Ponsonby's representations embarrassing, confessing that the Russians had written the previous answer by the Porte. Akif Effendi noted that as the Porte was obliged to accept Russian dictation in this matter, the Porte could not send an official reply to the British embassy until it had shown Ponsonby's note to Bouteneff. For the present, the Reis Effendi would say only that if Russia requested passage into the Mediterranean for the purpose of attacking the British fleet, the Porte would refuse to open the Straits, because this would constitute an offensive act by Russia, and the treaty was defensive. Dissatisfied, Pisani asked whether the Porte would open the Straits should the Russians claim that their move against the British was defensive, but the Reis Effendi was silent.²

After reading Ponsonby's note, the Sultan directed Akif Effendi to answer "as prudence directs," thus placing upon the Porte the responsibility for extricating him from this delicate question. Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that the Reis Effendi and Kiahaya Bey were "in alarm and difficulty." When he learned that Bouteneff had urged the Porte to say that Ponsonby had no instructions to question the previous reply by the Porte, and the British government would accept it, Ponsonby tried turning the tables on the Russian ambassador. Ponsonby knew that Akif

¹ Same to same, December 4, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 6, 1834: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 6, 1834: ibid.

Effendi and Pertev Pasha were worried by his statement that the British government would consider evasive answers from the Porte as an indication that the treaty had altered Turkey's policy. Consequently, he represented that the Porte could solve its dilemma by extorting from Bouteneff Russia's interpretation of the treaty.¹ But the Porte was too timid.

When Akif Effendi begged Ponsonby not to make an official statement on the Porte's reply to his note of December 4,² Ponsonby refused, saying that the correspondence must be placed before Parliament.³ The Porte's note was ambiguous, stating that the principle that the Straits would be strictly closed would remain inviolable so long as the precautions established by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi did not exist.⁴ Ponsonby replied to the Reis Effendi that this answer obviously did not indicate Russia's desire for the Porte to close the Straits when Turkey was at war, but referred to the defence of Russian possessions, for Russia had no possessions south of the Bosphorus. Upon learning about Bouteneff's pressure upon the Porte to reply that if Great Britain and Russia were at war, the Straits would be closed to both nations,⁵ Ponsonby concluded that further representations would produce no tangible results, and broke off communications upon the treaty.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 14, 1834: ibid.

² Same to same, December 17, 1834: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, December 15, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 17, 1834: ibid.

⁴ Official note by the Porte to Ponsonby, December 22, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Wellington, January 12, 1835: F.O. 78/252.

⁵ Ponsonby to the Reis Effendi, December 29, 1834: enclosure ibid.

While Ponsonby failed to obtain the meaning of the secret article, he demonstrated that he would energetically stand up to the Russian ambassador. The Divan was moved by Ponsonby's efforts to release Turkey from Russian domination. Selim Bey, a member of the Divan, wrote to Ponsonby that the Divan was elated, and noted that should the Divan emancipate itself from Russian control and reassert its power, it would recognize the crucial role which had been played by the British embassy and would look to Great Britain. The Divan showed courage in requesting British officers to train the Turkish navy.¹

Although the timid Turks no doubt were moved for the moment, Ponsonby had scored no more than a minor tactical victory, if a victory at all. However, Ponsonby magnified his accomplishments, writing pompously to Urquhart: "I confess I am pleased to have defeated the boasted Cabinet of St. Petersburg, and that too on the very seat of its power and influence, and to have done it myself single-handed."² Convinced that the Russians now regarded him too formidable an opponent, Ponsonby was certain that the Russians had demanded his recall from Constantinople after his victory. This, he wrote to Urquhart, was "a high compliment."³ But Ponsonby expected Wellington to recall him because of his connections with the Whigs even if the Russians did not make the request. Indeed, as Wellington had revoked his discretionary power to move the fleet, Ponsonby contemplated submitting his resignation,⁴ and probably would have done so had the Whigs not

¹ Selim Bey to Ponsonby, January 9, 1835: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Urquhart, January 19, 1835: U.P.

³ Same to same, January 15, 1835: ibid.

⁴ Vide same to same, March 5, 1835: ibid.

quickly returned to power.

B. The Euphrates Expedition Firman Affair and Its Consequences

Recognizing that the Turks would do little to emancipate themselves, Ponsonby knew that he could not relent in his struggle against Russian influence. The ambassador was optimistic about his chances for success, writing to Urquhart: "I hold Russian diplomacy sufficiently cheap after what I have seen of it. It is their bayonets, not their understanding, that gives them weight here."¹

The British government resolved to establish a route to India via the Mediterranean, Orontes and Euphrates Rivers and the Indian Ocean. This route placed the British in the heart of the Asiatic part of the Turkish Empire, and therefore could not fail to generate suspicions among the Turks and the Russians. In the early autumn of 1834, while Ponsonby was pressing the Porte to explain the meaning of the secret article in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, he received instructions to obtain a firman for the launching of steam vessels. Consequently, he had the means quickly to follow up his previous success.

The initial reaction of the Porte upon the request for a firman was favourable, as Akif Effendi promised to grant it if the Porte were not held responsible for the unruly Arabs and Turkmen in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. Ponsonby accepted the Porte's condition, on the understanding that it would do its utmost to protect the expedition.² However, as the Porte began

¹ Same to same, January 15, 1835: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 12, 1834: F.O. 78/239.

vacillating, Ponsonby found it necessary "day after day" to maintain constant pressure upon the Ministers. While the Porte argued that it was still consulting the Pasha of Bagdad and could not grant the firman until the Pasha had agreed to its implementation, Ponsonby suspected that the Russians were attempting to frustrate the expedition and doubted whether the firman would be granted.¹ On November 11, Ponsonby sent a strongly worded official note to the Porte in which he threatened to negotiate passage through Egypt with Mehemet Ali if the Porte refused permission for the establishment of a route through the Euphrates River. The Reis Effendi replied that he would permit three or four boats on the Euphrates River,² but almost immediately withdrew his promise. Thereupon, Ponsonby again made a strongly worded protest.³ Although the Russians continued their pressure on the Porte,⁴ the Reis Effendi sent an official note to Ponsonby on December 17, granting permission for British steam vessels to be launched on the Euphrates River.⁵

Boghoz Bey had promised Campbell that Mehemet Ali would co-operate with the Euphrates Expedition, but the Pasha changed his mind after Campbell combined with Mimaut to force him to pay his tribute and evacuate Orfa. On November 25, two days

¹ Same to same, November 17, 1834: F.O. 78/240.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, December 8, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 13, 1834: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, December 13, 1834: enclosure ibid.

⁴ Bouteneff received instructions to block the firman, and showed energy in carrying out the instructions. Vide Bouteneff to Duhamel, June 1, 1835: R. Cattaul, Le regne de Mohamed Aly d'apres les archives russes en Egypte, Vol. 2, Pt. I, p. 324.

⁵ Official note by the Reis Effendi to Ponsonby, December 17, 1834: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 17, 1834: F. O. 78/240.

after Mehemet Ali had given orders for the evacuation of Orfa, the Pasha informed Campbell that because he was only a Pasha, he could not aid the expedition until he had received orders from the Porte.¹ While Mehemet Ali's decision was influenced by the British pressure to evacuate Orfa, other considerations also influenced him. Determined to construct a railroad between Suez and Cairo, Mehemet Ali had requested T. Galloway to buy iron rails in Great Britain,² and sought to manoeuvre the British into using the Suez route. Moreover, Mehemet Ali did not want to see British power established in Mesopotamia, on his frontier.

The Reis Effendi declined to send a special firman to Mehemet Ali, saying that the Porte would grant any other one but was suspicious of Mehemet Ali.³ Although Ponsonby continued pressing the Porte, it remained intransigent, arguing that the firmans which had been granted had been addressed to all the Pashas.⁴ Seeing no alternative, Ponsonby decided to make duplicates which he sent to Mehemet Ali,⁵ but the Pasha continued his demands.

At first Ponsonby believed that the Pashas at the Porte were responsible for the Porte's opposition in this matter,⁶ but soon the ambassador began to suspect that Mehemet Ali was intriguing at the Porte. There was reason for this suspicion,

¹ Campbell to Palmerston, December 8, 1834: F.O. 78/247.

² Same to same, September 15, 1834: F.O. 78/246.

³ Ponsonby to Wellington, February 25, 1835: F.O. 78/252.

⁴ Same to same, March 24, 1835: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, March 31, 1835: ibid.

⁶ Same to same, April 5, 1835: ibid.

for Mehemet Ali apparently sent a letter urging the Porte not to grant the desired firman, contending that Turkey would share India's fate.¹ Ponsonby was convinced that Bouteneff had requested the Pasha to defeat the expedition.²

Stepping up his pressure upon the Porte, Ponsonby informed the Reis Effendi that unless the Porte immediately granted the firman, he would draw up an official note to the Sultan.³ The Porte again refused. Thereupon, Ponsonby warned the Reis Effendi that if his request were not granted within a week, he would seek an audience with the Sultan, which could not be refused.⁴ In order to remove Pertev Pasha's opposition to the firman, Ponsonby cautioned the Turk that he would be responsible for a rupture of relations between Great Britain and Turkey.⁵

As Pertev Pasha continued his opposition, Ponsonby warned Hosrew Pasha that Mehemet Ali would not encounter any opposition to a declaration of independence if Great Britain did not oppose it. In addition, Ponsonby again hinted that he would request an audience with the Sultan, and if this request were not granted, he immediately would leave Constantinople.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 30, 1835: F. O. 78/253.

² Ponsonby to F. Pisani, April 30, 1835: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 30, 1835: ibid. There is no evidence of direct co-operation between Russia and Mehemet Ali to frustrate the Euphrates Expedition. Duhamel, the Russian consul-general in Alexandria, did not receive instructions from either his government or Bouteneff on the expedition, and confined his activities to describing Mehemet Ali's attitude. Vide Duhamel to Nesselrode, March 10, May 7, 1835: Cattani, op. cit., pp. 236-237, 292-293.

³ Same to same, April 30, 1835: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 30, 1835: F. O. 78/253.

⁴ Same to same, May 10, 1835: enclosure ibid.

⁵ Same to same, May 13, 1835: enclosure ibid.

Mingling these threats with a hope that the Sultan could obtain British support against Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby pointed out that if the Porte showed that Russia and Mehemet Ali were blocking the firman, the British government would be able to take "active and decided" steps against the Pasha.¹

Ponsonby continued his representations to Pertev Pasha that Mehemet Ali was using him, asking the Kiahaya Bey why Mehemet Ali desired the establishment of a Cairo to Suez railroad.² When Ponsonby realized that Pertev Pasha's opposition could not be shaken, F. Pisani was instructed to turn his attention towards Akif Effendi, a much weaker man. On May 19, Ponsonby warned the Reis Effendi that if the Porte did not grant the firman, the British government could decide that the partition of the Turkish Empire was within its interests.³ Several days later, the ambassador threatened to send, within a week, an official note requesting an audience with the Sultan.⁴ As Akif Effendi still suspected British intentions in Mesopotamia, Ponsonby, on May 27, denied that Great Britain desired to seize territory in Turkey, and illustrated how the Euphrates Expedition would increase Turkey's wealth. Ponsonby added that if the Reis Effendi could show Mehemet Ali's responsibility for blocking the firman, Great Britain would look upon the Pasha as an enemy.⁵

Unable to withstand this unrelenting pressure, Akif Effendi

¹ Same to same, May 11, 1835: enclosure ibid.

² Same to same, May 15, 1835: enclosure ibid.

³ Same to same, May 19, 1835: enclosure ibid.

⁴ Same to same, May 26, 1835: enclosure ibid.

⁵ Same to same, May 27, 1835: enclosure ibid.

requested that Ponsonby should desist from his intention of seeking an interview with the Sultan, and suggested that the ambassador personally should meet with Pertev Pasha and himself. Ponsonby declined this proposal and threatened to break off relations if the Sultan refused to grant the firman.¹ However, on June 6, Ponsonby altered his approach to the Reis Effendi. Aware of Akif Effendi's fear that he would obtain an audience with the Sultan to ruin him, Ponsonby now was conciliatory. He assured the Reis Effendi that he would show the Sultan how his conduct had helped, although he would not mention him by name.² Relieved, the Reis Effendi admitted that Mehemet Ali had been pressing the Porte not to grant the firman, and Pertev Pasha had believed the arguments that the Euphrates Expedition was solely an investment by private interests.³

On June 9, Ponsonby suggested a compromise to the Reis Effendi, pledging that he would discontinue his pressure upon the Porte if it did not send Mehemet Ali the orders he sought, which would be unfavourable to British interests.⁴ Akif Effendi agreed not to send any answer to Mehemet Ali until the British government had replied to Ponsonby's dispatches on the Euphrates Expedition firman.⁵

As he could not find another pretext to frustrate the expedition, Mehemet Ali ordered that Ibrahim extend his full

¹ Same to same, May 30, 1835: enclosure ibid.

² Same to same, June 6, 1835: enclosure ibid.

³ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, June 9, 1835: enclosure ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, June 9, 1835: enclosure ibid.

⁵ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 30, 1835: F.O. 78/253.

co-operation in making the expedition a success. While Ibrahim's support was beyond reproach, it could not obscure the fact that Mehemet Ali had intrigued to frustrate the expedition. Previous to the affair, Ponsonby had thought that the Pasha would be too wise to co-operate with Russia, but now he was certain of his collusion with Russia,¹ a mistaken belief² he never abandoned. More importantly, it is obvious from the Broadlands Papers that this affair turned Palmerston against Mehemet Ali. On July 16, Palmerston wrote to Ponsonby of his conviction that the Russians were in league with the Pasha in trying to frustrate the Euphrates Expedition firman.³ On November 14, the Foreign Secretary noted that he "should most exceedingly rejoice to see" the Sultan crush Mehemet Ali, but as "the fulness of time" had yet to come, the British government must "have patience."⁴

Russia's policy on the payment of the Turkish war debt aided in the decline of Russian influence. At the beginning of March 1835, Bouteneff applied to the Porte for payment of the war debt for that year.⁵ Although the Porte had received Mehemet Ali's tribute, the Reis Effendi claimed that he could pay only five million piastres on account of the sixteen million piastres due May 1.⁶ But suddenly, the Reis Effendi suggested to

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 11, 1835: F. O. 78/254.

² The Russian documents published by R. Cattauli show that neither Duhamel nor his successor, Medem, established intimate relations with Mehemet Ali. Vide Cattauli, op. cit., Vols 2 and 3, passim.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 16, 1835: B. P.

⁴ Same to same, November 14, 1835: ibid.

⁵ Ponsonby to Wellington, March 4, 1835: F. O. 78/252.

⁶ Same to same, March 17, 1835: ibid.

Bouteneff that the Porte would pay fifty million piastres in one sum to terminate the debt.¹

Taken by surprise, Bouteneff stalled. When the Sultan again proposed to pay one sum to conclude the war debt, Bouteneff replied that the Czar was in Moscow and could not send instructions.² Finally, Bouteneff informed the Reis Effendi that Russia would not accept less than 165,150,000 piastres. When the Reis Effendi raised the Porte's offer by ten million piastres, Bouteneff answered that he would write for instructions. Akif Effendi complained to Ponsonby that the Russians did not desire the liquidation of the debt because they would be obliged to surrender Silestria.³

The Russian government instructed Bouteneff not to compromise. As the Turkish treasury was empty and the Sultan's military and personal expenses were high, the Porte could not raise the sum demanded by the Russians without a loan. However, deficit spending was not regarded as a sound principle by the Turks. Both Ponsonby and Roussin urged the Porte to borrow money,⁴ but Pertev Pasha answered that should the Porte pay the debt and recover Silestria, Russia could still use Mehemet Ali. Pertev Pasha asserted that the Sultan's power should be directed towards destroying Mehemet Ali; after the Sultan had recovered Mehemet Ali's provinces, he would have ample revenues to pay the war debt.⁵ As Ponsonby was reluctant to force the Turks "to act in

¹ Same to same, March 4, 1835: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 30, 1835: F.O. 78/253.

³ Same to same, July 14, 1835: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, September 26, 1835: F.O. 78/255.

⁵ Same to same, October 11, 1835: ibid.

contradiction to the convictions of their own judgments," he decided against urging the payment of the war debt upon the Porte.¹ These fruitless negotiations reinforced the Sultan's belief that Czar Nicholas desired to keep the Ottoman Empire weak and dependent upon him.

After his diplomatic success, Ponsonby, on his government's instructions succeeded in obtaining from the Porte a firman ordering Mehemet Ali to abolish his newly established monopoly on the trade of silk in Syria. The reluctance of the Porte to force its will on Mehemet Ali, which characterized the period before the Euphrates Expedition firman affair, gave way to an aggressive and even arrogant attitude. Bouteneff accused Ponsonby of trying to increase his influence by inciting the Porte against Mehemet Ali.²

During the summer of 1835, Mahmoud again contemplated striking a blow against Mehemet Ali. By the middle of 1835, Ponsonby had reached the conclusion that the Sultan must destroy Mehemet Ali, or the Turkish Empire would crumble. Since the Pasha paralyzed progress in Turkey and the Sultan thought only about crushing him, Ponsonby believed that a Turkish defeat would not "be so mischievous to the Porte as the continued existence of Mehemet Ali in the position and power he now occupies." "A war with him would be a fever which Turkey might easily recover from."³ Bouteneff, Ponsonby thought, would endeavour to prevent the Sultan from attacking the Pasha, because the status quo kept the Empire weak.⁴

¹ Ibid.

² Bouteneff to Duhamel, November 6, 1836: Cattauli, op. cit., Vol. 2, Pt. II, p. 167.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 11, 1835: F. O. 78/255.

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Reluctant to do anything which could hurt his influence, Ponsonby, during the latter half of 1835, took liberties with Palmerston's more delicate communications to the Porte, avoiding "the employment of means which would have been unsuccessful and mischievous."¹ The ambassador boldly asserted to the Foreign Secretary that if a war between Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali appeared inevitable, he would not make "any attempts to coerce" the Sultan. Before he could make any remonstrance, he would require a correct knowledge and a well considered plan, or he would succeed only in injuring British interests.²

As he feared that Mahmoud could suddenly attack the Pasha, Palmerston, on November 4, instructed Ponsonby to represent to the Porte that the peace of Kutaya bound the Sultan as well as Mehemet Ali.³ On December 29, Ponsonby replied that he did not communicate the instruction to the Porte because it "would have been clearly understood to prescribe a line of conduct in itself entirely adverse to the policy and passion and to the interests of the Sultan, and present as necessary to the Sultan the actual abandonment of his Sovereignty over nearly half his Empire, and submission for an indefinite period of time to all those acts which Mehemet Ali might do for the consolidation of his power and the attainment of his avowed end - Independence." Because the Sultan would have thought that Great Britain had sacrificed Turkey's interests, British influence would have been destroyed, and Mahmoud immediately would have attacked Mehemet

¹ Same to same, December 29, 1835: F.O. 78/256.

² Same to same, September 27, 1835: F.O. 78/255.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, November 4, 1835: F.O. 78/251.

Ali, or thrown himself into the hands of Russia, the only Power who could protect him against Mehemet Ali's intrigues. Ponsonby assured Palmerston that war would not break out before spring.

To illustrate that the Peace of Kutaya did not indefinitely bind the Sultan, Ponsonby argued that as Mehemet Ali was only a Pasha, Mahmoud was not obliged to reappoint him to his governments, but did so only from prudence until he had the means of forcing his will upon the Pasha.¹ As the notation in his journal shows, Palmerston strongly disagreed with Ponsonby's contention,² but did not chide his ambassador. Ponsonby finally did submit to Pertev Pasha, in the early part of April, 1836, the substance of Palmerston's instructions. However, he altered them in a way to avoid giving offence to the Sultan. Instead of stating that the Peace of Kutaya bound the Sultan as well as the Pasha, Ponsonby maintained that the agreement at Kutaya did not place Mehemet Ali in the same category as an ordinary Pasha.³

Pertev Pasha, who had shown so much opposition to the Euphrates Expedition, was encouraged by Ponsonby's forceful and hitherto successful struggle against Bouteneff to gravitate towards the British ambassador. On November 3, Ponsonby noted to Palmerston that the Kiahaya Bey "almost believes" that he could be "friendly to his country." By the end of 1835, Pertev Pasha was co-operating with Ponsonby in undermining Russian influence. As Akif Effendi had been bought by Russian gold, Pertev Pasha's

¹ Same to same, December 29, 1835: F.O. 78/256.

² Vide Palmerston's notation in the margin of Ponsonby's dispatch of December 29, 1835 in his Letter Book: Add MSS. 48485.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 8, 1836: F.O. 78/274.

rapprochement was opportune. The most influential man in the Divan, Pertev Pasha could aid Ponsonby far more than Akif Effendi in his struggle against Bouteneff. The Kiahaya Bey, in addition to possessing the Sultan's ear, was incorruptable,¹ an indispensable quality because Ponsonby could not compete with Bouteneff in purchasing supporters.

Encouraged by Ponsonby's activity against Russian influence, Mahmoud, at the beginning of 1836, sent Blacque on a secret mission to London to negotiate an offensive alliance against Mehemet Ali. In accordance with the Porte's request, Ponsonby consented not to inform Roussin of the mission although he intended telling Roussin at a convenient time "to avoid all jealousies."² Blacque was instructed to see the French government only after he had seen the British government.³ To conceal the mission from Russia, Blacque left Constantinople on the excuse of bad health.

Only the Sultan, Pertev Pasha, Vogorides and Dr. MacGaffog knew of the mission. The Reis Effendi and the Sultan's favourites were "carefully" excluded.⁴ Ponsonby's comments to the Porte may have led Mahmoud to believe that Great Britain would co-operate in crushing Mehemet Ali, but the ambassador was out of step with his government.

In return for British aid against Mehemet Ali, Mahmoud apparently was prepared to offer Great Britain extensive concessions including the privilege of sending her warships into the Black Sea. This provision particularly was attractive to Ponsonby,

¹ Same to same, November 3, 1835: B.P.

² Same to same, February 8, 1836: ibid.

³ Same to same, April 8, 1836: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

who regarded it as a means to check Russia's career of encroachments upon Turkey. He pointed out to Palmerston that if the Sultan were protected by the British fleet in the Black Sea, Russia would have to choose between an attack upon Turkey or the abandonment of her expansionist designs. As Czar Nicholas did not want a war, he would pursue the latter course.¹ While Great Britain, Ponsonby maintained, would be committed to helping the Sultan destroy Mehemet Ali, she would concede little, because she did not have the means to restrain the Sultan from attacking the Pasha. Any attempt to restrain him would be "folly," because the British government would lose favour with the Sultan and perhaps cause a general European war. Great Britain could overthrow Mehemet Ali "by a word", and the Pasha's insults to the Sultan were sufficient reason to aid the latter.²

Blacque never reached London, dying at Malta in May. His death, mourned by Ponsonby and anti-Russian Europeans in Constantinople, was a blessing in disguise for the ambassador, because the British government would not have accepted Mahmoud's treaty.

British public opinion became increasingly anti-Russian after the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. Ponsonby encouraged Urquhart to publish articles which would make the people aware of Russia's designs in Turkey. While Urquhart was in Constantinople in 1834, Ponsonby proof-read articles prepared for publication.³ When Urquhart returned to London, he founded the "Portfolio", which published secret Russian documents captured

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, February 6, 1836: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Urquhart, September 20, 1834: U.P.

during the Polish Revolution. These documents, intended to demonstrate Russia's aggressive designs against Turkey, created a sensation. The "Portfolio" was so notorious that even Metternich obtained copies.

The extent of anti-Russian feeling in Great Britain worried the Russian government so much that Lord Durham, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, reported at the beginning of 1836 that the Czar feared a British attack upon his Baltic fleet.¹ To avoid war, Nicholas adopted measures showing Europe that Russia had no designs upon Turkey. Bouteneff was instructed to conciliate the Turks, and negotiations were resumed upon the Turkish war debt. The Sultan offered fifty million piastres, the Russians asked one hundred million.² A compromise was reached, Turkey paying eighty million piastres in five months, and obtaining Silestria upon the completion of payment.³

While Ponsonby congratulated the Porte, he took pains to convince the Turks that Russia had decided upon liquidating the debt only because she feared the reaction in Great Britain and France to her attempts to enfeeble and then destroy the Turkish Empire. Russia, too weak to engage in war with Great Britain and France hoped "to throw Dust in the eyes of the Governments of Europe," disarming the suspicions of the Powers before resuming her encroachments. Turkey had recovered Silestria because Great Britain had resisted Russia's ambitions.⁴

¹ Durham to Palmerston, February 6, March 20, 1836: F.O. 65/223.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 8, 1836: B.P.

³ Same to same, March 23, 1836: F.O. 78/273.

⁴ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, March 24, 1836: Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 2, 1836: ibid.

This Russian concession helped to lessen tension, and Durham did much for the improvement of relations between Great Britain and Russia. The Sultan, less suspicious of Russian intentions, accepted a Russian proposal for the employment of Prussian officers in improving Turkish defences.

C. The Churchill Affair

The third issue that Ponsonby seized upon to use in his struggle against Russian influence was the Churchill Affair. Unlike the two previous issues, this question was fought in the open and, therefore, there could be no middle course between victory and defeat.

At the beginning of May, 1836, Churchill, a British merchant and journalist, was maltreated by the Turks after accidentally injuring a boy while hunting at Kadi Koy, near Scutari. Churchill immediately was seized by the police and given fifty strokes of the bastinado. He was arraigned before the Kiahaya of Ahmet Pasha,¹ who was about to send him to the Bagnio, when A. Pisani appeared at the Porte, demanding that Akif Effendi immediately release the Englishman into the custody of the British ambassador, in keeping with the capitulations. When the Reis Effendi refused, Ponsonby sent F. Pisani to repeat the demand. F. Pisani apparently used abusive language; and Akif Effendi again refused, ordering Churchill's confinement in the Bagnio.²

While in prison, Churchill was put in irons and Ahmet Pasha refused permission for English doctors to examine him. This

¹ Ahmet Pasha was Pasha of Scutari

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 15, 1836: F.O. 78/274.

infuriated Ponsonby. F. Pisani had violent scenes with the Reis Effendi, prompting the ambassador to break off communications with Akif Effendi. After taking this step, Ponsonby sent an official note to the Porte to obtain Churchill's release, and F. Pisani pressured Pertev Pasha and Hosrew Pasha. Hosrew Pasha, within a few days, was able to obtain the release.¹

Outraged by the incident, Ponsonby desired to show the Turks that they could not maltreat with impunity a British subject. The ambassador previously had not shown much zeal in protecting the rights of English citizens, and the Foreign Office had received complaints from British merchants.² But Churchill's maltreatment gave Ponsonby an opportunity to assert Great Britain's rights. The ambassador undoubtedly recalled an incident at the beginning of 1835, when, after the arrest of a Russian Colonel in Constantinople, Bouteneff had obtained an audience with the Sultan, and received a promise from Mahmoud that a Russian ~~would~~ never be molested.³

The incident served a yet more important purpose: to continue the assault upon Russian influence. At first, Ponsonby was determined to demand only Akif Effendi's dismissal, but soon he resolved upon that of Ahmet Pasha as well. Ponsonby recognized that once he had made these demands he could not retreat, for Bouteneff immediately would spring to the defence of his two creatures, and if they escaped punishment, this would be attributed to Russian influence.⁴ But Ponsonby calculated that

¹ Ibid.

² Backhouse to Palmerston, July 5, 1836: B.P.

³ Ponsonby to Urquhart, February 2, 1835: ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 15, 1836: F.O. 78/274.

he was strong enough to risk an open contest with Bouteneff. If the two Turks fell, the British government would "be thereby placed in a preeminent position" in Turkey, "where it is necessary" for it to "be feared" for its "firmness and power in punishing aggressors, as well as prized" for its "ability and will to favour and support Turkish prosperity and independence." While he recognized that the Sultan's dignity would be hurt, he believed that Mahmoud would receive "strong compensation for his pain" by a manifestation of Russian weakness compared with British power.¹

Ponsonby endeavoured to prevent the question from becoming one between the Porte and the British government, trying to depose the two ministers without the aid of his government. His tactics and arguments were similar to those employed during the Euphrates Expedition Affair. On May 12, Ponsonby instructed F. Pisani to inform Pertev Pasha that the Porte must strive towards retaining the British people's good will; as Great Britain alone prevented the Powers from partitioning the Turkish Empire, the Porte should not by a violent act drive the British government into plans for partition. To save Mahmoud's dignity, Ponsonby suggested that the question be kept between the Porte and the British embassy, thus avoiding the Sultan's involvement.² Pertev Pasha, anxious to prevent the incident from becoming more complicated, begged Ponsonby relent in his demands.³

On May 18, the Porte, defending the two ministers, sent

¹ Same to same, June 10, 1836: F.O. 78/275.

² Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 12, 1836: enclosure ibid.

³ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, May 14, 1836: enclosure ibid.

Ponsonby a distorted version of the Churchill Affair. Ponsonby immediately warned Pertev Pasha that the dispute was between Akif Effendi and Ahmet Pasha and the British embassy, but if the Porte desired to identify itself with the two ministers, it would be responsible for the consequences. The ambassador asserted that he would demand an audience with the Sultan before the Porte drove him to break off relations. At the audience, he would present all the facts and show the Porte's note of May 18 to the Sultan, who then would decide "upon the fate of Turkey and of England." To save the Porte's dignity and show his "veneration" for the Sultan, Ponsonby averred that he did not demand but "recommended" the deposition of the two Ministers. However, Ponsonby threatened that if the Sultan did not depose the men, he would make "a formal demand" in the name of the British government, thus bringing his government into the question. Ponsonby gave the Porte twenty-four hours to reply.¹

Surprised and alarmed, Pertev Pasha exhorted Ponsonby not to pursue his demands, for should the Sultan bow to them his amour propre would be hurt.² But Ponsonby maintained his pressure, contending that should the Sultan spontaneously announce the depositions, he would not appear to have bowed to pressure. As the Porte prevented him from obtaining an audience with the Sultan, Ponsonby requested Pertev Pasha to select a day when he could place the true facts and an official note in his hands.³ Pertev Pasha agreed, and laid Ponsonby's version before the Sultan.

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 22, 1836: enclosure ibid.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, May 25, 1836: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, May 25, 1836: enclosure ibid.

Unfortunately, the translation of Ponsonby's official note was faulty, giving the Sultan the impression that Ponsonby demanded rather than recommended the depositions of Akif Effendi and Ahmet Pasha. Angered by Ponsonby's apparent presumption, Mahmoud informed the ambassador that he would rebuke the two ministers, but could not depose them.¹ Ponsonby objected; he was so emotional that the Sultan did not know how to approach him. Finally, Ponsonby agreed to meet Vassaf Effendi, the Sultan's chief private secretary. As Vassaf Effendi firmly maintained that the Sultan could not depose the two ministers before the British government had reviewed the affair and given its opinion, Ponsonby had no choice but to send a communiqué to his government requesting instructions.² In his dispatch, he urged Palmerston to support him, arguing that should the government compromise or yield "the British name will incur disgrace in the estimation of all this part of the world, and British influence fall to nothing until some future great exertion of national energy restore it to its rightful preponderance."³

Before Stürmer learned about Ponsonby's demands that the two ministers be toppled, he endeavoured to help Ponsonby obtain retribution for Churchill's maltreatment. As the Porte had promised, after Ahmet Pasha recently had maltreated two Austrian subjects, that in future all foreign subjects would be sent to the Porte before punishment were inflicted, Stürmer was prepared to overlook the fact that Churchill had hunted out of season.

¹ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, June 1, 1836: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 10, 1836: ibid.

³ Ibid.

On Roussin's request, Stürmer persuaded Bouteneff to co-operate in sending a collective note to the Porte protesting the behaviour towards the Englishman.¹ However, when Stürmer was informed that Ponsonby had demanded Akif Effendi's dismissal, he tried to reason with the British ambassador, but the latter was uncompromising, remarking that the affair gave him "fever".² Roussin, thinking that Ponsonby's demands were unreasonable, also unsuccessfully urged him to moderate them.

Stürmer was unwilling to see the Sultan compromise his dignity and desired to prevent Great Britain from troubling the peace of the Levant. With Bouteneff, the Austrian ambassador suggested that the Porte should send to Palmerston, through the Turkish ambassador in London, Nouri Effendi, a note demonstrating that it desired to make reasonable reparations. On May 30, Stürmer represented to the Porte that Ponsonby's measures would hurt Mahmoud's dignity, and later repeated this argument to a confidential agent of the Sultan.³

As Palmerston and Metternich were discussing a site for a conference to discuss the Turkish question, the latter was in a sensitive position. Metternich denied that he had instructed Stürmer to persuade the Porte not to accede to Ponsonby's demands to request that the Porte send a note to Palmerston. The Austrian asserted that his country did not seek involvement in the Churchill affair, and disavowed Stürmer's conduct.⁴

¹ Stürmer to Metternich, May 13, 1836: enclosure Palmerston to Ponsonby, August 23, 1836: F.O. 195/130.

² Same to same, May 25, 1836: enclosure ibid.

³ Same to same, June 2, 1836: enclosure ibid.

⁴ Metternich to Hummelauer, June 8, 1836: enclosure ibid.

Roussin's conduct in this affair, however, had been unexpected, and Ponsonby wrote bitterly to Palmerston about the lack of support from the French ambassador. When Palmerston requested an explanation of Roussin's conduct, Thiers claimed that when he had heard about Churchill's maltreatment, he had instructed Roussin to facilitate an amicable agreement between Ponsonby and the Porte short of Akif Effendi's dismissal. However, he had warned Roussin to avoid showing that any differences existed between Great Britain and France. While the French Prime Minister allowed that Roussin had been incautious, he noted that Ponsonby had used immoderate language and had refused to compromise.¹ Because neither Thiers nor Palmerston desired the continuance of discussions, correspondence on the issue terminated.

Meanwhile, the British government debated whether to support Ponsonby's demands, but for two months could come to no decision and left the ambassador to his own resources.

On June 6, Akif Effendi was removed from office on the grounds of ill health. Although Ponsonby attributed this fall solely to his influence, Pertev Pasha did much to influence the Sultan's decision. Engaged for more than a year in a contest with Akif Effendi for power within the Porte, the Kiahaya Bey took advantage of Ponsonby's assault to ruin his opponent.

Ponsonby pressed Palmerston to insist also upon the removal of Ahmet Pasha, charging that the latter was more guilty than Akif Effendi.² The Turks, Ponsonby claimed, desired this second deposition, and Russia probably would not oppose a demand by the

¹ Aston to Palmerston, July 22, 1836: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 17, 1836: B.P.

British government. If Russia opposed the British demand, she would show her "seignory" over the Sultan. The Turks had seen a contest between the British and Russian ambassadors, and should the Russian government "remain passive hereafter, everybody will perceive that it is the fear of England that governs the conduct of that Court. The laboriously formed spell by which Russia has deceived the eye of the Turks into a belief of Russian omnipotence will be broken, confidence in England will grow up with rapidity, and the danger of war will be prevented by the vast diminution of the force of Russia in these parts." Meanwhile, Ponsonby requested Rowley to move the fleet closer to the Dardanelles, thereby demonstrating that Great Britain was prepared to act.¹

Fortunately for Ponsonby, Bouteneff and Stürmer failed in enlisting Roussin's support in this critical period. When he learned that the two ambassadors had stated that he would communicate his unity with them to the Porte, Roussin denied that he supported their position, and advised the Porte that Ponsonby's demands should be accepted.² Consequently, the Sultan resolved to wait for an answer from the British government before making his decision on the fate of Ahmet Pasha. Ponsonby believed that Mahmoud would bow to the first request by the British government,³ and he may have been correct.

While Ponsonby was struggling to maintain his position in Constantinople, his government was debating whether it should support his demands. From the beginning of the crisis, Melbourne

¹ Same to same, June 28, 1836: F.O. 78/275.

² Same to same, July 22, 1836: F.O. 78/276.

³ Same to same, July 15, 1836: ibid.

did not believe that the government would be justified in demanding the dismissals of Ahmet Pasha and Akif Effendi because this was an extreme measure and would establish a precedent for the other Powers. Moreover, the Prime Minister feared that if the Russians successfully employed their influence in persuading Mahmoud to refuse the request, the British government would have no choice but to suspend relations with Turkey.¹

After deliberation, the cabinet suggested to King William IV that various indirect measures should be taken to aid Ponsonby: the government should withhold instructions to Ponsonby for the negotiation of a commercial convention, it should not send Captain Du Plat to instruct the Turkish army, and should not present a ring to the Sultan. The King objected, arguing that the proposed policy would deprive Ponsonby of the power that he needed, and would play into Russia's hands. William IV recommended that no instructions should be sent to Ponsonby until the ambassador had sent further communications to the Foreign Office.² The cabinet consented.

The King had thought that Ponsonby could accomplish his objectives without support from the British government, but soon Ponsonby's dispatches illustrated that he was waiting for support from his government. Although he could not condone Ponsonby's methods of achieving his objectives, especially the ambassador's threat that the British government would consent to the partition of the Turkish Empire, the King thought that Ponsonby's cause was just and that success would further British interests.³

¹ Melbourne to Palmerston, July 5, 1836: B.P.

² William IV to Palmerston, June 22, 1836: ibid.

³ Same to same, July 4, 1836: ibid.

Consequently, William IV pressed the cabinet to demand satisfaction, and received the support of Palmerston.

While Melbourne ultimately succeeded in convincing the King and Palmerston that the cabinet could not support Ponsonby's demands,¹ the two men requested that measures should be taken to permit the ambassador to save face. Palmerston wrote to Melbourne that Ponsonby had done the British government "a valuable and important service," and had "acted with courage, firmness and ability." Ponsonby had scored "a signal triumph of British Influence, and the good effect will not end with the particular out of which the matter arose." However, if the government appeared to acquiesce in rather than to approve Ponsonby's conduct, "tacit sanction" would be given to all the abuse heaped upon him in Constantinople. To show that it approved his conduct, the cabinet should elevate Ponsonby to the next stage in the peerage.²

By the latter half of August, Russian and Austrian partisans in Constantinople were circulating reports that the British government would permit the Churchill Affair to die quietly. As Ponsonby had received no instructions, he became uneasy, and was further disquieted when he learned that Ahmet Pasha had been given new honours by the Sultan.³ Fearing that the British government had abandoned him, Ponsonby requested Hosrew Pasha to persuade the Sultan to remove Ahmet Pasha from the Seraglio and give him another position. The ambassador promised that he would accept this move without requesting that the reason

¹ Same to same, July 7, 1836: ibid.

² Palmerston to Melbourne, July 17, 1836: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 6, 1836: F.O. 78/277.

for Ahmet Pasha's dismissal be publicly stated.¹ Although Hosrew Pasha did not refuse, he apparently did nothing. In the latter half of September, Bouteneff, in a note to the Sultan, accused Pertev Pasha of being responsible for the fall of Akif Effendi.² Ponsonby expected that Pertev Pasha would not survive this attack, but the shrewd Kiahaya Bey made his peace with Bouteneff, and combined with Ahmet Pasha to try to depose Hosrew Pasha. This episode prompted Ponsonby to lament that he had been defeated.³ Utterly dejected by the lack of support from his government, Ponsonby wrote to Urquhart, on October 11, that he was at a loss for a policy.⁴

Not until November 5 did Palmerston send Ponsonby an instruction upon the Churchill Affair. The British government, Palmerston stated in the dispatch, had been pleased to learn that Akif Effendi, the principal offender, had been removed from office, but Ahmet Pasha was not mentioned. Palmerston requested Ponsonby to obtain financial compensation for Churchill,⁵ which the Porte readily granted.

In a private dispatch to Ponsonby, dated November 11, Palmerston tried to console the ambassador by noting that he did score a triumph in deposing Akif Effendi. Although he could not excuse the cabinet's refusal to support Ponsonby, Palmerston noted that the dismissal of Ahmet Pasha would have been only a "momentary triumph" over Russia; it would not have given any

¹ Same to same, September 7, 1836: ibid.

² Same to same, September 25, 1836: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 21, 1836: ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to Urquhart, October 11, 1836: U.P.

⁵ Palmerston to Ponsonby, November 5, 1836: F.O.78/272.

"real & permanent" advantage because Russian influence was "founded upon some more solid basis," and Ahmet Pasha was "the effect & not the cause; & the removal of the symptom would not cure the disease, but perhaps only occasion it to break out in a more malignant shape in some other part."¹

There was much truth in this comment of Palmerston, who viewing the crisis from London, had the advantage of not being personally involved. With his reason unclouded by passion, Palmerston could better evaluate the crisis. Yet Ponsonby cannot be accused of trying to score a diplomatic victory merely to remove Russia's agents. Ponsonby desired to follow up his victory with the presentation of the commercial convention framed by Urquhart, thus establishing a firm basis for Great Britain's influence in Turkey. However, as a result of his defeat, Ponsonby altered his plans, and in so doing opened the door to a dispute with David Urquhart.

It is obvious that Ponsonby did not fully weigh the dangers inherent in altering the balance between the factions at the Porte. Until the Churchill Affair, this balance made it difficult to effect a radical change of personnel at the Porte, but Akif Effendi's fall undermined the stability of the Divan. In the course of the intrigues which followed, Pertev Pasha, with the aid of Ahmet Pasha, ousted Hosrew Pasha, and made himself supreme at the Porte. Having done this, the Kiahaya Bey could then be accused by his enemies of seeking to usurp his sovereign's authority. His enemies took full advantage of this, and their accusations ultimately influenced the Sultan, who deposed Pertev

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, November 11, 1836: B.P.

Pasha and subsequently had him poisoned. Although an intriguer, Pertev Pasha was perhaps the only man of ability at the Porte, and his presence was sorely missed in 1837, as the Porte was mismanaged and ministers rose and fell.

CHAPTER V: A PERIOD OF FRUSTRATION

A. The Ponsonby-Urquhart Quarrel

Ponsonby was confused and depressed by the Churchill Affair and by the middle of October had abandoned hope that the British government would support his demands. He decided that a passive policy was best for the moment, gave up efforts to conduct important business with the Porte,¹ and requested leave of absence to arrange his personal affairs in Great Britain. The leave was granted and would have been accepted had not his difficulties over the Churchill Affair been compounded by the return to Constantinople of Urquhart who was anxious to present a commercial convention to the Porte.

The tariff between Turkey and Great Britain expired in 1834. In October 1834, the Reis Effendi suggested to Ponsonby that the tariff should be raised from three to five percent,² and at the end of March 1835, Ponsonby was requested to appoint a commissioner for the negotiation of a new tariff.³ Ponsonby sent the requests to the Foreign Office. But the Turks decided upon conducting the negotiations in England, and at the end of April, 1835, Nouri Effendi arrived in London.

When Nouri Effendi proposed to Palmerston that the Porte would permit the exportation of all Turkish products if the British government consented to increase the three percent duty on exports,⁴ Palmerston, who desired the abolition of

¹ Ponsonby to Urquhart, October 11, 1836: U.P.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 30, 1834: F.O. 78/239.

³ Ponsonby to Wellington, March 31, 1835: F.O. 78/252.

⁴ Nouri Effendi to Palmerston, May 26, 1835: F.O. 78/268.

monopolies, responded favourably.¹ However, Nouri Effendi, on October 23, qualified his original proposal, writing to Palmerston that the Porte would consent to remove the prohibition upon the export of "some" articles,² which indicates that the Porte had altered its intention to abolish the monopoly system. As Nouri Effendi's comprehension of his task was limited and his deficiencies could not be supplemented by his interpreter, an incompetant son of Vogorides, the negotiations lagged. At the end of 1835, Palmerston, in disgust, suspended negotiations and requested Urquhart to draft a commercial convention which could be submitted to Nouri Effendi.

Without authority from the Foreign Office, Urquhart had meddled in the negotiations so soon as they had begun. In July, Nouri Effendi complained to the Foreign Office that Urquhart was hounding the Turkish embassy. Urquhart would come with a plan, would bring another the next day, and demand to know the details of the Porte's proposals. Nouri Effendi thought that Urquhart could use his influence at the Porte to ruin him, but was assured that Urquhart did not speak for the Foreign Office.³ Urquhart, indeed, fancied himself as the "representative" of the Porte in London to propose a treaty of commerce to the British government.⁴ He claimed that he had convinced the Porte, during his stay in Constantinople in 1834, to consent

¹ Palmerston to Nouri Effendi, June 13, 1835: ibid.

² Nouri Effendi to Palmerston, October 23, 1835: F.O. 78/268.

³ Salamé to Backhouse, July 15, 1835: ibid.

⁴ N.A. The Reminiscences of William IV, London, 1891, p.17.

to abolish monopolies, and Nouri Effendi had "for his only instructions to be guided" by his "advice."¹ Fearing that the Porte could go back on its promises, Urquhart pressed for a speedy conclusion to the treaty of commerce.

Upon Palmerston's request, Urquhart submitted his commercial convention to Poulett Thomson, the Secretary of the Board of Trade. Urquhart's proposals included the abolition of monopolies, an unspecified increase in duties upon Turkish exports and a reduction in duty in Great Britain on some Turkish products. Poulett Thomson at first accepted Urquhart's proposals, but altered his opinion after reading an article in the "Portfolio" describing how to arrest Russian ambitions by commercial arrangements with Turkey. He told Urquhart that every shipment of hemp from Russia was an additional guarantee for peace in Europe.² After Urquhart failed to persuade Nouri Effendi to accept his commercial convention, he accused Palmerston of denouncing it as a Russian treaty.³ At the beginning of 1836, Nouri Effendi was informed by the Porte that negotiations would be shifted to Constantinople, and negotiations terminated in London.

Palmerston had appointed Urquhart Secretary of Embassy before the Whig Government had fallen at the end of 1834. Urquhart had delayed his departure to negotiate a commercial convention in London, but now he prepared to take up his post and negotiate a commercial convention directly with the Porte.

¹ Ibid., p.23.

² Urquhart to Backhouse, May 16, 1836: U.P.

³ Narrative of events in 1836 and 1837 by Urquhart, October 2, 1842: ibid.

However, Ponsonby was not prepared to commence negotiations. On September 22, 1835, he wrote to Palmerston that so long as the Russians retained the commercial privileges granted by the Treaty of Adrianople, no treaty could be negotiated, for the privileges the Russians held would be "likely to render a regulation of a Tariff illusory." Ponsonby did not want to open negotiations in Constantinople before he had weakened Russian influence and forced Russia to relinquish her commercial privileges.¹

Although Ponsonby begged Palmerston not to send Urquhart to Constantinople, Palmerston would not listen. In March 1836, when he learned that Urquhart intended leaving for Constantinople, Ponsonby wrote to him that the tariff could not be properly settled "whilst Russia commands here". Before negotiations could be started, Great Britain must win the Sultan's confidence, and then the tariff settlement would be "facile work."² Ponsonby urged Urquhart to remain in London and continue to expose Russia's ambitions to the British public, but Urquhart refused.

Before he left London, Urquhart sent de G'hies to Constantinople, instructing him to seek employment at the Porte. As de G'hies supported his economic proposals, Urquhart desired that he represent his ideas to the Turks.³ When de G'hies sought employment at the Porte, Ponsonby denounced him as a Russian agent.⁴

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 22, 1835: F.O. 78/255.

² Ponsonby to Urquhart, March 15, 1836: U.P.

³ Urquhart to Backhouse, September - , 1836: ibid.

⁴ Urquhart to Strangways, December 7, 1836: ibid.

However, there is no evidence to show that this was done to frustrate Urquhart; de G'hies had been accused of stealing secrets from the consulate in Tripoli,¹ and had failed to prove the charges false. Despite Ponsonby's efforts, de G'hies did obtain employment at the Porte.

When Urquhart arrived in Constantinople, Ponsonby took measures to restrict his activities. Knowing that Urquhart desired to use the records of the embassy and consulate in Constantinople to add details to his convention, Ponsonby closed these to him.² Moreover, Urquhart was ordered not to have communication with any Turkish official, and not to see de G'hies.³ Urquhart obeyed, and for six weeks did nothing at the embassy, living in a small house on the embassy grounds. He was unwell, suffering from recurring boils on his neck and a nervous condition. Unable to wear a starched collar, Urquhart rarely dined with the Ponsonbys⁴ and the ambassador interpreted this as a want of respect.

When his health improved, Urquhart requested Ponsonby to allow him to visit his old acquaintances, including Ahmet Pasha and Akif Effendi. In a fit of passion, Ponsonby told Urquhart that he considered unimportant any visit that he made.⁵ Urquhart visited the two Turks, whereupon Ponsonby promptly evicted him

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 6, 1837: F.O. 78/301.

² Urquhart to Backhouse, February 15, 1837: F.O. 97/409.

³ Urquhart to Palmerston, September 20, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Urquhart to his Mother, September 7, 1836: U.P.

⁵ Urquhart to McNeil, October 9, 1836: ibid.

from the embassy.¹

Subsequently, Urquhart resided in a small village on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, where he worked upon his commercial convention. In September, the embassy received a commercial convention, which was based upon Urquhart's proposals. When Urquhart requested Ponsonby to state whether he could make any modifications in the commercial convention, Ponsonby replied in the negative, and added that if the convention were submitted, the Russians would use their influence to force the Porte to reject it.² However, on October 11, Ponsonby informed Urquhart that he would submit immediately the convention, noting that it probably would be presented before Urquhart received the letter.³ The convention was submitted before Urquhart could see it.

Having presented the convention, Ponsonby took no measures to support it, as he did not wish to expose himself to another defeat after being abandoned during the Churchill Affair.⁴ Urquhart had desired not to submit the convention formally until the Porte unofficially had accepted the crucial points in it. Before submitting the convention unofficially, he had intended to make modifications in the version sent by the British government. Nor did Urquhart approve of the means Ponsonby employed to present the convention. Urquhart had no trust in the dragomans,

¹ Urquhart to Taylor, October 24, 1836: ibid. Urquhart to Backhouse, February 15, 1837: F.O. 97/409.

² Ponsonby to Urquhart, dated Sunday night: U.P.

³ Same to same, October 11, 1836: ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 28, 1836: F.O. 78/278.

whom, he believed, would work with Russia to frustrate the convention. Not only did Urquhart not want the dragomans to present the convention, but he also wanted to keep it secret from them.¹

Urquhart believed that Ponsonby deliberately had tried to frustrate his negotiations with the Porte upon the convention. The nature of submission and Ponsonby's reluctance to support it at the Porte convinced Urquhart that the convention had been "sacrificed."² In a letter written on October 24, Urquhart haughtily upbraided Ponsonby for his attitude towards the convention.³

At the beginning of November, Ponsonby and Urquhart were briefly reconciled. Urquhart moved to Karoun Chesmé, on the European side of the Bosphorus, but the reconciliation did not last long. Urquhart's hatred for Ponsonby smouldered and came to the surface when Ponsonby requested him to serve as a commissioner to negotiate the convention. The sensitive Urquhart was insulted, for he thought that Ponsonby was "in the habit of laughing at the treaty and of saying he never read it."⁴ Urquhart impatiently looked forward to Ponsonby's leave of absence, thinking that he could successfully negotiate the convention "according to the views of the government" while Ponsonby was in Great Britain.⁵

¹ Urquhart to Palmerston, September 20, 1837: F.O. 97/409

² Ibid. Urquhart to Strangways, January 5, 1837: ibid.

³ Urquhart to Ponsonby, October 24, 1836: quoted in Urquhart to Palmerston, September 20, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Urquhart to Strangway, January 5, 1837: U.P..

⁵ Ibid.

In Karoun Chesmé, Urquhart completed the final details on the sailing of the "Vixen" to Circassia. While in London, Urquhart had met James Bell, whose brother was engaged in the salt trade in Wallachia. George Bell wished to expand this trade and Urquhart persuaded the Bell brothers to send a ship to Circassia.¹ Urquhart intended to test the Russian blockade of the country, opening it to British trade and permitting aid to be sent to the Circassians in their war with Russia.

Before the Bell brothers consented to undertake the enterprise, J. Bell asked Palmerston whether Great Britain recognized the Russian blockade of Circassia. Palmerston gave a vague reply, which J. Bell and Urquhart interpreted as a negative response,² and subsequently Urquhart was assured by J. Bell that his brother would send a ship to Circassia. When Urquhart arrived in Constantinople, he found G. Bell reluctant to undertake the enterprise.³ The Bell and Anderson Company in Wallachia had declared bankruptcy, and the Wallachian government, claiming that the bankruptcy was fraudulent, had seized the company's assets. Fortunately for Urquhart, J. Bell arrived in Constantinople from London, and Urquhart sent him to see his brother in Bucharest. G. Bell agreed to undertake the enterprise only if Urquhart and J. Bell could raise enough money to equip the "Vixen". Urquhart agreed.⁴

¹ Letter by G. Bell, dated February 2, : "The Morning Chronicle," February 3, 1837, p.2.

² Urquhart to Palmerston, September 20, 1837: F.O. 97/409.

³ Urquhart to Strangways, December 7, 1836: U.P.

⁴ Ibid.

The "Vixen" was readied at Constantinople. A Russian ship watched her, and the "Vixen's" destination was an open secret. There is no indication in the Urquhart Papers that Ponsonby and Urquhart discussed the sailing of the "Vixen". J. Bell did see Ponsonby once, on October 27, to ask the ambassador whether the embassy had received further information than had been published in the "Gazette." When Ponsonby replied that no further information had been received, Bell asked him the nature of the communication on the blockade which Bouteneff had made to the embassy in September, 1835. Ponsonby answered that the communiqué had stated that the Russian government would implement a blockade of Circassia, and added that he had requested consul-general Cartwright to inform the British merchants in Constantinople about the communication, but had recommended that it should not be published. Bell then informed Ponsonby that he intended to test the Russian blockade. While Ponsonby noted that he was free to do this, he warned that the Captain of the "Vixen" should do nothing which could give the Russians the impression that he was trying to run the blockade.¹

Bolsover maintains that Ponsonby endeavoured ~~to use~~ the sailing of the "Vixen" to "embroil" Great Britain with Russia, but cites no evidence to prove his contention.² Since Urquhart's visit to Circassia in 1834, Ponsonby had written many letters to Palmerston on the struggle in Circassia. The letters had one theme: Great Britain should supply weapons to the Circassians. In his most recent letter upon the question, dated

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 28, 1836: F.O. 78/277.

² G. H. Bolsover, "Lord Ponsonby and the Eastern Question, 1833-1839," Slavonic Review, XIII, 1934, pp. 110-111.

September 23, 1836, Ponsonby argued that should Russia conquer the Caucasus, not only would forty or fifty thousand Russian troops engaged in Circassia be liberated for service elsewhere, but the Circassians could supply Russia with excellent troops. If Russia were no longer tied down in the Caucasus, she could attempt to seize Constantinople.¹ The evidence indicates that Ponsonby merely desired to test the blockade, calculating that if the blockade were proved to be illegal, British ships could carry arms to Circassia, and British influence could be extended into the area.

The "Vixen" sailed at the end of November for Circassia. Meanwhile, Urquhart's hatred for Ponsonby increased. At the beginning of 1837, attacks against Ponsonby began to appear in the "Times". The author, who used the pen-name, "O", undoubtedly was the "Times'" correspondent in Constantinople, Milligen. Although Urquhart denied that he had persuaded Milligen to write the articles, the Foreign Office assumed that Urquhart had dictated them.² Ponsonby also was convinced of Urquhart's culpability, and counter-attacked, using Captain Du Plat, who had visited Constantinople, to express his views in a London newspaper. Incensed by these articles, Urquhart, when he returned to London, sued Ponsonby for libel.

Ponsonby requested Palmerston to recall Urquhart, sending reports to the Foreign Office illustrating that Houloosi Pasha, who had replaced Akif Effendi as Reis Effendi, had told F. Pisani that Urquhart was a fool, and was trying to take Ponsonby's

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 23, 1836: F.O. 78/277.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, June 12, 1837: B.P.

place as ambassador.¹ Aware that the Pisanis were Urquhart's enemies, Palmerston suspected their evidence. Ponsonby also sent to Palmerston a letter written by the Marquis d'Eyrague, who replaced Roussin while he was on leave of absence, stating that Houloosi Pasha had asked his dragoman who was the British ambassador.² Palmerston castigated Ponsonby for bringing a Frenchman into a squabble in the British embassy,³ and questioned whether Ponsonby had a strong case against Urquhart.⁴

Thinking that the Foreign Office supported his attempt to test the Russian blockade of Circassia, Urquhart detailed his part in the "Vixen" enterprise to Backhouse and Strangways. When Palmerston learned that Urquhart, an employee of the Crown, had encouraged the enterprise, he was furious, and immediately recalled him.⁵ Ponsonby declined to take leave of absence because Urquhart, after receiving Palmerston's order to return to Great Britain, had told the Turks that Ponsonby would return with him to London. In London, Urquhart boasted, Palmerston would decide in his favour, and he would return to Constantinople as ambassador. Ponsonby knew that should he leave at the same time as Urquhart, the Turks would believe Urquhart's story.⁶ Urquhart left Constantinople, but Ponsonby remained.

In his treatment of the quarrel between Urquhart and

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 31, 1837: F.O. 78/301.

² d'Eyragues to Ponsonby, January 16, 1837: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 5, 1837: F.O. 78/302.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1837: B.P.

⁴ Same to same, April 10, 1837: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, April 11, 1837: ibid.

⁶ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 12, 1837: B.P.

Ponsonby, C.K. Webster is too severe towards Urquhart and too lenient towards Ponsonby. Webster does not note that Ponsonby closed the embassy's archives to Urquhart and forbade him to visit his Turkish friends. He mentions the commercial convention, but does not recognize that Ponsonby's desire not to negotiate a convention had originated before Urquhart's arrival in Constantinople, and was the reason for his reluctance to see Urquhart return to the Turkish capital. Nor does he note that Urquhart was greeted with marked coldness by Ponsonby, but that so long as he resided at the embassy, Urquhart obeyed the ambassador's instructions.

Webster gives the impression that Urquhart began to act behind Ponsonby's back almost as soon as he arrived in Constantinople. Moreover, he states: "There can be no doubt that in conducting the negotiations for the commercial convention he acted against Ponsonby's instructions...."² Urquhart did not open negotiations with the Porte; he planned to add details to the convention sent by the British government to the embassy, but Ponsonby presented the convention to the Porte before showing it to him. Urquhart thought that he had been appointed Secretary of Embassy to negotiate the commercial convention, and perhaps he had reason to believe this, for Palmerston had requested him to draw up a convention. Certainly Ponsonby was as much to blame for the quarrel, but to Webster, his conduct is above reproach. It would be difficult to blame Urquhart for reacting against Ponsonby who never used his services, and

1

Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 12, 1837: B.P.

2

C.K. Webster, "Urquhart, Ponsonby and Palmerston," English Historical Review. LXII, 1947, pp.327-351.

ordered him to remain inactive.

B. The Employment of British Officers

The Porte requested the British government, through Nouri Effendi in London, to send British officers to Turkey to instruct the Turkish army. While Mahmoud preferred to obtain French officers, Russia protested.¹ Palmerston had been introduced by General Czertorysky to General Chrzanowski. Impressed with Chrzanowski, Palmerston engaged his services to give Reschid Pasha, the Turkish commander in Asia Minor, "hints and suggestions as to the organization of his troops, the selection of points for fortification, the arrangement of Plans; and all matters requiring military experience and scientific acquirement." Chrzanowski was instructed to travel secretly to Smyrna, and should he hear that the Sultan had accepted his services, he would continue on his trip to Asia Minor. Palmerston thought that Russia had no right to complain against his employment. Two Polish officers accompanied Chrzanowski.²

As the Porte had not informed the British government about the number of officers required, Palmerston decided to send only two British officers for the instruction of the Turkish army until the Porte had stated a specific number. Lt. Colonel Considine of the Fifty-Third Regiment was selected to train the Turkish infantry and Captain Du Plat, of the Royal Engineers, to organize the Department of Engineers in the Turkish army.³

¹ C. K. Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830 - 1841. London, 1951, pp. 544 - 545.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 7, 1836: F.O. 78/271.

³ Same to same, April 28, 1836: ibid.

The Sultan requested Chrzanowski to travel incognito through the vicinity of Constantinople, so he could meet secretly with the Seraskier Pasha.¹ As Chrzanowski arrived in Turkey in the middle of May 1836, at the beginning of the Churchill affair, the Sultan hesitated to send Hosrew Pasha to the Pole, apparently waiting to see whether the British government would support Ponsonby's demands. Chrzanowski was impatient, living incognito and isolated² for more than six months. The Russians finally discovered that the Sultan considered employing a Polish officer, and demanded that Chrzanowski should be surrendered to the Russian government.

Ponsonby pledged to give Chrzanowski protection "at all risk," and also sent the Pole a British passport.³ Chrzanowski, Ponsonby believed, had a right to be employed by Great Britain in Turkey, because Hantechery, Russia's first dragoman, had been involved in conspiracies in Constantinople during the Greek Revolution and had been obliged to flee for his life.⁴ However, as the Russians had agents throughout Turkey, and Mahmoud promised him no portection, Chrzanowski feared for his life. Ponsonby noted: "the Sultan trembles when Russia orders for he has no belief in probability of receiving aid from anybody, if he should venture to oppose his Master."⁵

Chrzanowski requested Ponsonby to permit him to return to Malta. Although Ponsonby thought that the Pole could do "great

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 16, 1836: B.P.

² Same to same, July 21, 1836: ibid.

³ Same to same, March 1, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Same to same, March 15, 1837: ibid.

things," and could be "employed in case of war" in helping to detach all the Poles and many Russians in the Russian army, the ambassador felt that he would be wrong in opposing Chrzanowski's wish to leave Turkey.¹ Before he left Turkey, Chrzanowski saw Halil Pasha, who had replaced Hosrew Pasha in November as Seraskier Pasha. The Turk tried to convince Chrzanowski that the Porte would have employed him had he come directly to him, but Chrzanowski was able to expose Halil Pasha's lie, placing the responsibility upon the Porte.² During his residence in Turkey, Chrzanowski did no more than draw up a plan for the defence of Turkey, which Pertev Pasha approved and submitted to the Sultan.³

At the beginning of June 1836, Considine arrived in Constantinople and soon obtained an interview with the Seraskier Pasha, who told him that he would ask the Sultan the number of British officers required.⁴ Although the Seraskier Pasha never gave Considine a specific number of officers required, Considine requested the British government to send a number of officers and non-commissioned officers. Prevented by the Churchill affair from receiving attention, Considine complained that he was neglected and that the Porte showed a lack of courtesy. Ponsonby urged him not to be impatient, and to collect information which could later be valuable.⁵ Not until October did Considine receive an interview with the Seraskier Pasha. In the interview

¹ Same to same, April 7, 1837: ibid.

² Same to same, April 25, 1837: ibid.

³ Same to same, March 15, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 28, 1836: F.O. 78/275.

⁵ Same to same, July 21, 1836: F.O. 78/276.

the Seraskier Pasha informed him that he could not give him a commission in the Turkish army, and had the Porte known that he would accept only a commission, he would have answered long before. When Considine claimed that he had more than once asked for a commission, Hosrew Pasha answered that the Porte had misunderstood, and he could be employed only if he were subjected to the command of the junior officer in the regiment. The Seraskier Pasha assigned religious reasons for the Porte's refusal to grant him a commission.¹

The Porte, Ponsonby was convinced, was making excuses, and the Seraskier Pasha had intended to give Considine a commission, but had changed his mind because he could not "resist superior power." Ponsonby noted to Palmerston that he had picked a poor time to arrange a meeting between Considine and the Porte, but the measure had been forced upon him "by circumstances which it would be tedious to detail."² Reluctant to press the employment of the officers until the Churchill affair had been concluded, Ponsonby informed the Porte that the British government would not request the Porte to do anything which conflicted with religion. Considine was advised by Ponsonby to leave Turkey; the ambassador believed Considine now could do nothing in Turkey.³

After Considine's departure Reschid Bey, the new Turkish ambassador to London, informed Palmerston that Considine had left without giving the Porte notice, and the Porte was still

¹ Considine to Ponsonby, October 11, 1836: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 11, 1836: F.O. 78/277.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 11, 1836: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 20, 1836: ibid.

considering Considine's employment. Religion did not create difficulties; the only difficulty was the reaction of public opinion to the appointment of a Christian to a command in the Turkish army. Palmerston replied that the British government did not desire that the Porte should give Considine a commission in the Turkish army, but he must be given authority to make his orders obeyed. Following his meeting with Reschid Bey, Palmerston chided Ponsonby for advising Considine to leave Constantinople, and ordered Ponsonby "to omit no effort" to persuade the Porte to employ Considine.¹

Considine returned to Constantinople at the end of May, 1837. As he could not obtain an immediate interview with the Seraskier Pasha, Considine suggested that he should go to Asia Minor to see the Turkish army in the field and Ponsonby agreed.² Considine visited Hafiz Pasha, who had been given command of the army after Reschid Pasha's death. Meanwhile, Ponsonby delicately presented the employment of British officers to the Porte. He noted to Palmerston: "There are immense difficulties in the way of success, and I do not expect to obtain it."³ Pertev Pasha, Ponsonby pointed out, did not oppose his representations, but he would not support them "till after he shall have seen his way more clearly." Great Britain could not expect the Sultan to employ British officers unless she gave "him a sufficient guarantee that she would protect him against the resentment of Russia." Feeling that "a vigorous and real"

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, February 4, 1837: F.O. 78/300.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 8, 1837: F.O. 78/303.

³ Same to same, August 7, 1837: F.O. 78/304.

British influence did not exist in Constantinople, Ponsonby suggested to Palmerston that for the present the best measure Great Britain could take would be to unite the British engineers with the Prussian engineers, and limit activities to improving the Turkish artillery.¹ However, Ponsonby continued seeking employment for Considine.

Palmerston instructed Ponsonby to ask the Porte to send Du Plat to Varna with the Prussian engineers. Expecting hostility at the Porte, Ponsonby secretly communicated with Pertev Pasha, requesting the Kiahaya Bey to send Palmerston's instruction through the usual channel to the Sultan. Pertev Pasha agreed, deciding to abandon his non-committal position. When Pertev Pasha broached the subject to the Porte, he encountered opposition, but the Sultan commanded the reluctant Halil Pasha to request Ponsonby "in his own name" that Du Plat should accompany the Prussian officers to Varna.²

The employment of British officers was more difficult to arrange. Halil Pasha objected upon two grounds: 1) the British officers would not be useful because the British military system differed from the French system, employed in the Turkish army; and 2) the Porte would have to inform the Russians that British officers would be employed, and the Russians would object.³ To aid him to counter the opposition at the Porte against the employment of British officers, Pertev Pasha suggested to

¹ Same to same, August 8, 1837: B.P.

² Same to same, August 8, 1837: F.O. 78/305.

³ Same to same, September 5, 1837: ibid.

Ponsonby that he should write a letter refuting Halil Pasha's contentions. Pertev Pasha suggested that the letter should state that the British officers were acquainted with the French military system, British officers had trained the Portugese to fight Napoleon's armies, and as the Sultan was an independent ruler, he could employ any foreign officer. Ponsonby wrote a note "containing exactly" Pertev Pasha's suggestions.¹

Nevertheless, the Porte still hesitated, and meanwhile Halil Pasha organized an intrigue against Pertev Pasha. The Russians may have been involved indirectly, for Aristarchi, a notorious Russian partisan, seems to have aided Halil Pasha and his party in the Divan. In the second week of September, Pertev Pasha was deposed, and was replaced by Akif Effendi.² Not content with merely his deposition, Pertev Pasha's enemies persuaded the Sultan to poison him.

Fearing that Pertev Pasha's fall would doom the plan to employ Considine, Ponsonby instructed F. Pisani to obtain an explicit answer from the Porte whether Considine would be employed. To prevent the Porte from resorting to excuses, F. Pisani was instructed to say that pay was unimportant and the British officers did not desire commands.³ Akif Effendi told F. Pisani that four officers, Considine, Captain Campbell, Du Plat and Lieutenant Knowles, and three sergeants recommended by Ponsonby, would be employed.⁴ But when Du Plat was sent by

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, September 16, 1837: ibid.

³ Same to same, September 20, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, October 3, 1837: F.O. 78/306.

Ponsonby to ask Akif Effendi for permission to survey Varna, the Turk was non-committal.¹

Halil Pasha saw Considine, Du Plat and Knowles on October 19. The Seraskier Pasha said that he would give Considine the Twelfth Regiment of four battalions. When Considine noted that the Porte appeared to desire his employment merely as an instructor, which he could not accept, Halil Pasha replied that he would be more than an instructor, and the Turkish colonel commanding the regiment would be instructed to obey his orders on the discipline of the troops on the field and in the barracks. Campbell was promised a squadron of cavalry and Knowles a battery of artillery. Considine requested one British officer for each battalion and one non-commissioned officer for each company. Halil Pasha replied that the Porte could not permit the employment of so many foreigners and he tried persuading Considine that he did not need more than a Lieutenant-Colonel and a Major to serve under him. The Turk added that the Sultan did not want to change the French system employed in the Turkish army. Although Considine realized that Halil Pasha opposed the employment of British officers, he played into his hands by requesting a minimum of twenty non-commissioned officers for the infantry, two for the cavalry and four officers for the cavalry.²

After Considine's request was studied by the Porte, Halil Pasha, on October 26, told Considine that he would be given the regiment as promised, Campbell a squadron of cavalry and Knowles

¹ Same to same, October 4, 1837: ibid.

² Considine to Ponsonby, October 19, 1837: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 7, 1837: ibid.

a company of artillery, but the Porte could not give the three officers non-commissioned officers or officers to assist them. Should additional British officers and non-commissioned officers be employed, Russia and France would demand the same privilege. Halil Pasha added that the Porte desired to retain her military system, and would employ Considine, Knowles and Campbell only to show Turkish friendship for Great Britain. Considine replied that he could not instruct a regiment without the aid of officers and non-commissioned officers.¹ At a third meeting on November 6, Halil Pasha told Considine that when the Porte had requested British officers, it had not known that the English and French military systems differed. The Turk claimed that British Officers would be useless, but the Sultan, to show his friendship for Great Britain, would give Considine a decoration.²

However, the Porte kept its promise to send Du Plat to Varna with the Prussian officers. Halil Pasha informed Du Plat that he would be sent to Schumla, Silestria and Rustchuk and several passes in the Balkans as well as Varna.³ This illustrates that Mahmoud did not completely trust the Prussian engineers who had been endorsed by the Russians. Accompanied by E. Pisani, who served as his interpreter, Du Plat left for Varna on November 13.⁴

In December, on Palmerston's instructions, Ponsonby

¹ Same to same, October 26, 1837: enclosure ibid.

² Same to same, November 6, 1837: enclosure ibid.

³ Du Plat to Ponsonby, November 4, 1837: enclosure ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 13, 1837: ibid.

requested Vogorides to ask Halil Pasha whether Chrzanowski could be employed. When Vogorides asked Halil Pasha, the latter replied that Hantechery, the Russian dragoman, had made three representations against Chrzanowski's employment. The Seraskier Pasha said that the Pole for the present could not be employed in Constantinople. Vogorides then suggested that Chrzanowski could be useful at Hafiz Pasha's headquarters in Asia Minor, and Halil Pasha agreed, promising to send the Pole to Hafiz Pasha.¹ Chrzanowski returned to Turkey and, given denization papers by the British government, he served for a time as an advisor to Hafiz Pasha.

The Porte's vacillation upon the employment of British officers illustrates the extent to which the British government's refusal to support Ponsonby during the Churchill Affair had hurt British influence. Ponsonby refused to blame the Porte for its failure to employ the officers, rather he reproached his government for not instilling in the Turks "confidence" in Great Britain. The Porte, Ponsonby maintained in a private letter to Palmerston, would "not trust to any thing less than a specific promise" that the British government would "defend them under given circumstances." Nor would Ponsonby criticize Considine's uncompromising position in respect to his employment. The ambassador reasoned that as Halil Pasha's half measures would have accomplished little for the Turkish army and would have turned many bigoted Turks against Great Britain, Considine had acted correctly in refusing to compromise.²

¹ Same to same, December 7, 1837: B.P.

² Same to same, November 8, 1837: ibid.

Palmerston, however, was incensed, and ordered Ponsonby to inform the Porte "that its conduct upon this matter had been such as to afford to Great Britain just cause of offence." Moreover, Ponsonby was instructed to return to the Porte all the decorations given by the Sultan to the British officers, and to state that the British government did not consider the decorations warranted by services rendered.¹

C. Negotiations for a Commercial Treaty

After he submitted the British Commercial Convention to the Porte in October, 1836, Ponsonby took no measures to support it. The ambassador felt that if he pressed negotiations, the Russians would interfere. As the convention was designed to increase Turkish corn export to Great Britain, which would hurt Russian export from Odessa, the Russians had reason to object to it. Ponsonby pointed out: "As things stand at present, Russia is able to make her will the Law."²

At the end of December, 1836, the Turks informed Ponsonby that they objected to the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth articles of the Commercial Convention submitted to the Porte. The second article provided that after a payment of three per cent duty, a British merchant could send an article to any part of Turkey to be sold without additional duty; the Porte insisted that the purchaser also should pay duty upon the article. The third article specified that the value of the merchandise should be the article's price at the place of origin; the Turks

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 8, 1837: F.O. 78/300.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 19, 1836: F.O. 78/277.

desired that the article's value should be the price in Constantinople. The fourth article provided that any Turkish product could be exported; a prohibition upon the export of grain, the Porte argued, had been in existence since the beginning of the Empire. The fifth article specified that a higher duty should be levied on Turkish exports than the three per cent now levied; the Porte claimed that an increase in duty would not compensate for the revenue lost should monopolies be abolished. The sixth article eliminated transit duty, but the Porte was reluctant to abolish the three per cent duty.¹

Ponsonby selected three British Commissioners to discuss unofficially the convention with the Turkish Commissioner, Tahir Bey, instructing the commissioners to do not more than point out the advantages of the convention. They could not bind the British government to anything. Ponsonby promised Palmerston that he would try to show the Porte that the monopoly on grain drove the cultivators from their land, and Turkey would benefit should the monopoly be abolished.² But Ponsonby showed little energy, fearing that his influence at the Porte was too weak to try to carry so important a convention. Powerful Turks, who would lose their fortunes if monopolies were abolished, would combine with the Russians to form a formidable barrier against the convention.³

Time, Ponsonby thought, was Great Britain's "best ally," and the convention might be obtained "by patience and perseverance."

¹ Same to same, December 26, 1836: F.O. 78/278.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, January 4, 1837: F.O. 78/301.

⁴ Same to same, February 6, 1837: ibid.

The ambassador believed that he was in as good a position as he could expect, and was "confident" it was "due to the manner" in which the question had been conducted that he had "not already failed."¹ However, if the obstacles in the way of the convention "be found insuperable at present," the British government could negotiate a "Tariff for a short period of time." Ponsonby refused to ~~order~~ the commissioners to negotiate officially until the British government ordered him to do so.²

In the middle of February, 1837, the Russian government, in keeping with its intention to demonstrate to the Powers its disinterestedness in Turkey, consented to abandon its tariff, and accept one similar to the tariff granted to Great Britain. This was a turning point in Ponsonby's attitude towards conducting negotiations. A month before, he had written to Palmerston that the Russian tariff could "materially, perhaps fatally, interfere" with negotiations.³ After this Russian action, Ponsonby's despair turned to optimism, and he wrote that Russia would be "unable to resist with effect the strenuous exertion" of British influence in Constantinople.⁴ To increase his effectiveness, Ponsonby obtained the aid of d'Eyrague who had commenced negotiations upon a tariff for France. A critic of the Turkish monopoly system, d'Eyrague appeared to be a valuable ally. Ponsonby believed that if France manifested her support of Great

¹ Same to same, January 4, 1837: ibid.

² Same to same, January 24, 1837: ibid.

³ Same to same, January 4, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, February 18, 1837: ibid.

Britain's proposals, "it is possible that Russia may not choose to try to do that which she may probably be unable to accomplish."¹

D'Eyrague sent the French commissioners to commence negotiations with Tahir Bey. Ponsonby decided that the English commissioners should delay their discussions with Tahir Bey until the latter had expressed the Porte's feelings to the French commissioners.² Meanwhile, Ponsonby increased his pressure upon the Porte, demonstrating the benefits Turkey would receive from the British Commercial Convention. But prospects for a convention did not appear too bright, as the French commissioners encountered an unfavourable reaction to the abolition of monopolies.³

At the end of February, Houloosi Pasha informed Ponsonby that he would give Tahir Bey instructions to meet jointly with the British, French and Austrian commissioners. However, Ponsonby calculated that he would hurt his position if he permitted his commissioners to act in conjunction with the other commissioners, for Austria and France sought only tariffs. Hence, he declined, arguing that he had no instructions; moreover, he maintained that as the British government already had made proposals, the Porte should make counter proposals before discussions began. As the Porte maintained that the old tariff was no longer binding, Ponsonby warned Houloosi Pasha that the British and French embassies would hold the Porte accountable for any departure from the old tariff while negotiations were being conducted.⁴ Ponsonby believed that this measure would be "the

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, March 1, 1837: F.O. 78/302.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, March 15, 1837: ibid.

arm that can be used with most force against the Porte in the present case," for the old tariff fixed values for articles, and inflation had doubled prices since the treaty had been signed. ¹

On March 20, Ponsonby instructed the three British commissioners, Black, Sarell and Wright, to discuss alone with Tahir Bey the defects in the system of commerce between Great Britain and Turkey and the Porte's objections to the British Commercial Convention. The commissioners had no authority to bind the British government to any measure. ² Noting that the Porte appeared reluctant to accept a commercial convention, the ambassador decided upon limiting his quest to a tariff, including in it as many provisions as possible from the British Commercial Convention. After the British commissioners had had preliminary discussions with Tahir Bey, Ponsonby decided that the French commissioners for the present should proceed alone, and withdrew the British commissioners from the discussions. ³

Ponsonby and d'Eyrague agreed that the French commissioners should insist that foreign merchants should not be obliged to pay duty upon articles bought in one part and sent to another part of Turkey, for internal duties were contrary to the "spirit and letter" of the British and French capitulations. All duties upon articles should be strictly defined, and foreign merchants should be permitted to pay the duties at one time and in one

¹ Ibid.

² Ponsonby to Black, Sarell and Wright, March 20, 1837: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 29, 1837, No. 61: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 9, 1837: F.O. 78/303.

place. Duties could not be altered without previous notice by the Porte. Every monopoly permitted by the Porte should be a general monopoly; no person should be exempted from the monopoly, and the prohibition, when lifted, should be lifted for everyone.¹

The French commissioners made some progress in discussions with Tahir Bey. Ponsonby paid tribute to d'Eyrague's energy and ability, and noted: "I should have had much greater difficulty than M. d'Eyrague in obtaining, as he has done, the concurrence of the Austrian and Russian Missions and certainly my acts would have been regarded by them with much more jealousy. This was one great reason with me for wishing to leave all the preliminary work in the hands of M. d'Eyrague, to which I will add that I was sure he could execute it better than myself."² Nevertheless, Tahir Bey, who led the faction at the Porte which opposed monopolies, constantly tried to frustrate the efforts of the British and French embassies.³ The only minister at the Porte who appeared inclined to champion the abolition of monopolies was Pertev Pasha. In the latter part of June, the Kiahaya Bey informed Ponsonby that he was framing a report to the Sultan setting out arguments in favour of the ambassador's proposals.⁴ However, Pertev Pasha fell from power in September, leaving Ponsonby without a champion at the Porte.

At the beginning of July, Houloosi Pasha died, and was succeeded as Reis Effendi by Reschid Bey, who was in London.

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, May 9, 1837: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 21, 1837: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 4, 1837: ibid.

Negotiations were suspended until Reschid Bey's return to Constantinople.¹ Roussin arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of August. Ponsonby, still unable to forgive Roussin for the part he had played during the Churchill Affair, placed no confidence in the French ambassador, writing to Palmerston that he would "consider it necessary" that he "should act with great caution" in his relations with Roussin.² When negotiations were resumed at the beginning of 1839, Ponsonby did not place the same reliance upon Roussin as he had upon d'Eyrague.

Although negotiations were suspended during the latter half of 1837, Ponsonby was still active. The party, which desired to frustrate the tariff, continued trying to persuade the Porte to reject the proposals submitted by the British and French embassies. When Ponsonby learned that Akif Effendi desired a different tariff, he warned him that should Great Britain, France and Austria not receive satisfactory tariffs, they would demand that the Porte should repay all duties now illegally levied.³ Despite this warning, the Porte, claiming that the old tariff had expired, continued to levy duties based upon current prices in Constantinople.

Ponsonby had commenced negotiations upon a tariff on his own responsibility, without waiting for Palmerston's instructions. After weighing Ponsonby's suggestion that Great Britain should

¹ Same to same, July 4, 1837: F.O. 78/304.

² Same to same, September 6, 1837: F.O. 78/305.

³ Same to same, November 7, 1837: F.O. 78/306.

accept a tariff, Palmerston wrote to Ponsonby, on August 4, that the British government considered that its goals could be attained only in a commercial convention, but would be prepared to accept the "imperfect arrangement" Ponsonby had suggested should a commercial convention be unattainable. Palmerston informed Ponsonby that the British government could not agree to a small addition to the three per cent import duty on goods in transit through Turkey, which Ponsonby had suggested, but his other suggestions could be inserted in a tariff "in the form and in the term which shall be most binding upon the Porte."¹

In spite of the momentary reversal imposed by Pertev Pasha's deposition, Ponsonby slowly re-established his influence in the latter part of 1837. Ponsonby enjoyed the goodwill of Pertev Pasha's successor, Akif Effendi, as the latter could not forgive the Russians for abandoning him during the Churchill Affair. As fear of Russia was declining among the Turks, time favoured Ponsonby. Under these circumstances, the Russians attempted to arrest the decline of their influence by abandoning their tariff, and in so doing strengthened Ponsonby's hand in negotiations for a commercial convention.

CHAPTER VI: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH INFLUENCE

A. The Treaty of Balta Liman

During the latter half of 1837, Ponsonby had begun to recover the influence he had lost during the Churchill Affair, but Russian ascendancy still appeared to be unassailable. However, with the new year came unexpected opportunities to continue his struggle with the Russian embassy. Bouteneff, who commanded the respect and obedience of the Turks, took leave of absence, returning only at the end of summer, 1838. His temporary replacement, Baron Ruckman, who during his term as Russian consul in Bucharest had achieved notoriety for his manipulation of the Hospodars and assemblies in the Principalities, lacked Bouteneff's prestige¹ and ability, and proved to be a less formidable adversary for Ponsonby.

Reschid Bey returned to Constantinople in January, 1838, and at the end of the month was created a Pasha. Educated in France, Reschid Pasha was oriented towards Great Britain and France, and imbued with the spirit of reform. When he returned to Constantinople, he found the Porte in a state of confusion and the Sultan exclusively preoccupied by the idea of crushing Mehemet Ali. Noting that Mahmoud desired money to improve his army and obtain British support in crushing the Egyptian Pasha, Reschid Pasha realized that a commercial convention could be used to reform Turkey, increase her revenue, and persuade Great Britain to support Mahmoud against Mehemet Ali. Consequently, the negotiation of the commercial convention and Mahmoud's preparation

¹ Ruckman held the rank of chargé d'affaires, which placed him at a disadvantage to Ponsonby.

for war were connected. Bouteneff's absence, combined with the return of Reschid Pasha, gave Ponsonby an opportunity to undertake new measures to weaken Russian influence.

Soon after he assumed his position as Reis Effendi, Reschid Pasha was instructed by the Sultan, who was disquieted by Mehemet Ali's warlike concentrations in the vicinity of Bagdad and the Taurus Mountains, to request Ponsonby to state whether his government considered the Pasha's measures aggressive actions.¹ As he had no instructions, Ponsonby sought to avoid giving the impression that the British government would condone a war, yet he recognized that an unfavourable or non-committal answer would jeopardize his influence with the Sultan. Consequently, the ambassador replied that an attack upon the Sultan's territory would not be "any thing less than equivalent to a declaration of war" by Mehemet Ali, but avoided committing Great Britain by stating that she would do "that which would be most consistent with the interests of England in such a case," and the Sultan knew Great Britain's interests. Ponsonby suggested that the Porte should act with

the most scrupulous prudence in this crisis. It will be the policy of Mehemet Ali to endeavour to make the Sublime Porte the aggressor, and if the Sublime Porte shall be deceived and entrapped into any measures that may answer the views of the Pasha, the Sublime Porte will act with infinite indiscretion and want of skill in politicks, and will give an immense advantage to Mehemet Ali. The Sublime Porte cannot gain anything by attempting to bring on a crisis by finesse on this occasion.... If Mehemet Ali ventures to attack the Sublime Porte, I am of opinion he will thereby occasion his own destruction.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 10, 1838: F.O. 78/329B.

The Sublime Porte cannot lose anything
by patience and prudence. ¹

Ponsonby's comments seem to have pleased Reschid Pasha, who
promised that the Porte would follow a defensive policy. ²

However, Mahmoud was not completely satisfied with Ponsonby's
observations, and instructed Reschid Pasha to obtain explicit
answers to three questions: 1) should an attack upon Bagdad by
Mehemet Ali constitute a declaration of war and should the army
in Bagdad be too weak to resist Mehemet Ali, could the Sultan
send troops to Bagdad to repel the Pasha's invasion; 2) should
Mehemet Ali attack the Sultan's forces in Asia Minor, could the
Turkish army repel the invaders; and 3) could the Sultan now
build up his artillery in Asia Minor. ³ Ponsonby, on February 8,
replied that as an attack by Mehemet Ali would be an act of war,
the Porte had "the Right to take such measures for defence, as
it may think fit, and those measures cannot be subject to any
control except that of prudence and wisdom of the S. Porte," and
military men alone could decide whether the artillery should be
strengthened in Asia Minor. He added that the Sultan should
"carefully examine" his military resources before engaging in a
war with Mehemet Ali, as "A defeat might oblige the Porte to seek
aid from Allies who might eventually abuse their power and sub-
jugate the nation they had succoured. Well concerted defensive
measures would probably be best for the Sublime Porte to adopt,
and such prudent delay will afford time to the Governments of

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, January 26, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to
Palmerston, February 10, 1838: ibid.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, January 29, 1838: enclosure ibid.

³ Same to same, February 6, 1838: enclosure ibid.

England and France to obtain knowledge of the fact that the Sultan had been unjustly attacked, and the status quo endangered by his enemy...." The Powers then would be obliged to interfere, and would "disable Mehemet Ali from ever again giving umbrage to the Sublime Porte."¹

Believing that the Turks were "not only ignorant, but impatient and inattentive, and truth must be driven into them by the renewal" of his efforts, Ponsonby, two days later, sent another message, which was similar to the previous one, to Reschid Pasha. Ponsonby suggested that it was "a thousand times less evil for the Sultan to make his army retire no matter how far, than to allow it to receive a severe check or defeat." F. Pisani was instructed to repeat these arguments "often," if necessary.²

These arguments were well received by Reschid Pasha, who promised that the Porte would be prudent.³ Yet the Porte's answer could not be relied upon. However, the Sultan's apprehensions declined when he learned that an insurrection had broken out in Syria.⁴ With Ibrahim occupied in crushing the rebellion, Mahmoud had little to fear from Mehemet Ali.

Although Palmerston did not comment upon Ponsonby's answers to Reschid Pasha, the answers were in some respects a departure from the Foreign Secretary's previous instructions. In his instructions in December, 1835, Palmerston clearly stated that the Peace of Kutaya bound the Sultan as well as Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby had refused to accept this argument in 1835, and by 1838

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, February 8, 1838: enclosure ibid.

² Same to same, February 10, 1838: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 13, 1838: F.O. 78/330.

⁴ Same to same, February 20, 1838: ibid.

his attitude had not changed. Yet it is difficult to criticize Ponsonby's conduct, as he may have been correct when he asserted that if the arguments presented were not cautiously worded, they would do no more than antagonize the Turks, and perhaps lead the frustrated Sultan to embark upon his contemplated measures.

While Reschid Pasha, at the beginning of March, gave Tahir Bey full powers to negotiate a tariff,¹ the commissioners of the two sides failed to meet until April. However, during this lull Ponsonby was not inactive. Rather than limit his quest to a simple tariff, Ponsonby sought an agreement which included the abolition of monopolies. To win over the Turks, he argued that the abolition of monopolies would be a blow to Mehemet Ali's power,² mingling this with a threat to insist upon the British Commercial Convention should the Porte not quickly settle the tariff. Moreover, he continued to assert that the old tariff was still in force.³

As Roussin was jealous of the prestige he had acquired, Ponsonby did not contemplate receiving the same co-operation from him as he had from d'Eyrague. Although Roussin agreed to insist upon the maintenance of the old tariff while negotiations continued, he maintained that a small increase in transit duty should be granted as a concession to the Porte. It is possible that Roussin was acting directly upon instructions from his government, as France's transit trade through Turkey was but a fraction of Great Britain's. However, Ponsonby suspected that the French ambassador probably was acting upon his initiative. Thinking

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 15, 1838: ibid.

² Same to same, March 14, 1838: ibid.

³ Same to same, March 12, 1838: ibid.

that "it would be mischievous to the cause to have a division between England and France," Ponsonby was careful in avoiding in his "language to the Ambassador running counter to any opinion he may have formed." At the same time, Ponsonby "stated the positive refusal" of the British government "to admit of the Duty."¹

The unreliable Roussin soon decided against insisting that the old tariff still was in force. Cautious not to offend the Frenchman, Ponsonby skilfully tried persuading him to change his mind. Stürmer, who also was negotiating a tariff and supported Ponsonby's position on the old tariff, promised that he would use his influence upon Roussin.² At the same time, Ponsonby requested that Palmerston apply pressure upon the French government to instruct Roussin to co-operate with the British and Austrian embassies.³ Finally, in the middle of April, Roussin notified Ponsonby that he would support his representations to the Porte upon the old tariff.⁴

At the beginning of April, Reschid Pasha and Ponsonby agreed that the British commissioners would meet with Tahir Bey on Wednesdays and Fridays.⁵ The commissioners made steady progress upon fixing the prices of articles. Meanwhile, Ponsonby pressed the Turks to accept the British Commercial Convention, and indeed succeeded in laying the Convention before the Sultan. However, as Pertev Pasha was no longer in power, Ponsonby did not have a

¹ Same to same, March 9, 1838: ibid.

² Same to same, March 18, 1838: ibid.

³ Same to same, March 27, 1838: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, April 13, 1838: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, April 9, 1838: ibid.

reliable minister to present his arguments to the Sultan and defend them in the Divan. Consequently, the ambassador requested Palmerston to inform the Turkish ambassador that if the Porte did not accept Great Britain's proposals, she would demand the strict enforcement of her capitulations. If the Turkish ambassador were told that the details of this communication would be sent to the embassy in Constantinople, the Porte could not withhold the communiqué from the Sultan.¹

Considering Reschid Pasha, the most progressive Turkish minister, a potential ally against the reactionary element at the Porte, Ponsonby directed his arguments towards him, instructing F. Pisani to omit no argument to convince Reschid Pasha that monopolies should be abolished. Ponsonby's crucial argument was that the abolition of monopolies "will cut up by the roots the power of Mehemet Ali in Egypt and Syria," because the abolition of monopolies in Egypt "must command the exertion of the force and influence of England to ensure its execution by the Pasha of Egypt if it shall become a Treaty between Great Britain and the Sublime Porte."² Reschid Pasha, who appeared "very well disposed" towards the abolition of monopolies, said that many of his colleagues did not agree with him, but promised that he would try to persuade the Porte to abolish monopolies, for he knew that Turkey would benefit.³

Knowing that the Seraglio was unfavourable to the abolition of monopolies, Ponsonby used "both lures and menaces" there,

¹ Same to same, April 16, 1838: ibid.

² Ponsonby to F. Pisani, April 17, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 21, 1838: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 21, 1838: ibid.

including a threat to demand money levied illegally.¹ But the Seraglio could not be easily persuaded, and it remained steadfastly opposed to the abolition of monopolies to the day the Commercial Convention was signed.

The Porte continued to assert that the old tariff was no longer binding, sending, on April 16, an official note to Ponsonby claiming that 3,582,600 piastres were due to the Turkish custom house since the expiration of the old tariff on March 13, 1834.² Similar notes were sent to the French and Austrian ambassadors. Before answering the Porte's official note, Ponsonby sent F. Pisani to tell Reschid Pasha that the most convenient way to conclude the tariff question would be to accept the British Commercial Convention, for should the Porte not agree to the Commercial Convention, Great Britain, Austria and France would demand that the Porte should accept d'Eyrague's tariff "though with less advantage yielded by the British Government to the Porte, than is contained in M. d'Eyrague's projet /Sic/." If the Porte refused the tariff proposed by the Three Powers, they would demand the literal implementation of their capitulations and that the old tariff still should bind the Porte; "every hour during which the delay of the settlement is carried on, will add largely to the augmentation of the present inconveniences and loss to the Porte."³ To this threat, Reschid Pasha replied that he wished to abolish monopolies, but the ambassadors unfairly tied the maintenance of the old tariff in force to the abolition of

¹ Ibid.

² Official Note by Reschid Pasha to Ponsonby, April 16, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 8, 1838: F.O. 78/331.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, April 29, 1838: enclosure ibid.

monopolies. The two were separate questions.¹

After receiving Reschid Pasha's reply, Ponsonby sent an official note to the Porte, which denied that money was due to the Turkish custom house, and asserted that Tahir Bey had violated the capitulations by levying more duty than fixed by the old tariff. Great Britain, Ponsonby claimed, could legally demand money which had been levied in violation of the old tariff. But as Ponsonby wanted the Porte to bring forward its own arguments "without giving it the advantage" of having his to answer, he avoided "entering into argumentation."²

On May 10, Reschid Pasha and Ponsonby had a four hour conversation on Turkish affairs, in which Ponsonby endeavoured to persuade the Turk to accept the Commercial Convention. Ponsonby soon found himself trying to defend Great Britain's Turkish policy. As Reschid Pasha appeared to be uneasy about Great Britain's resolve to defend Turkey, Ponsonby argued that Great Britain "had been accused most unjustly" of being indifferent to Turkey's security. To illustrate this he asserted that Great Britain maintained a large fleet at Malta to protect Turkey, and its presence had forced the Russians to withdraw from the Straits after the conclusion of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. Russia "had ceased to threaten and to contemplate any active measures of coercion against the Porte" because she knew that the fleet would come to Turkey's rescue. Only Great Britain opposed the partition of Turkey, but should the Sultan place himself in Russia's hands, Great Britain would seek ways to protect her interests. Reschid

¹ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, May 3, 1838: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 8, 1838: F.O. 78/331.

Pasha replied that he had persuaded the Sultan not to rely upon Russia's sincerity. The discussion then turned to the Commercial Convention. When Reschid Pasha asked Ponsonby why the Sultan should abolish monopolies, Ponsonby replied that the monopoly system ruined Turkey, Turkey's population was decreasing, and the Empire could "become nearly a desert," and starvation could induce the population of Constantinople to rise against the Sultan. The Sultan also had "a personal interest:" the British government would be obliged to force Mehemet Ali to abolish monopolies, if the Sultan accepted the British Commercial Convention.¹

These observations were submitted to the Sultan by Reschid Pasha. On May 21, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that the Sultan had expressed in writing approval of his comments to Reschid Pasha, and was "disposed to consent" to the convention. Ponsonby promised that he would show the Sultan how the abolition of monopolies "would at once put money into his pocket," because he knew that the Sultan would accept the Commercial Convention should he be persuaded that it would increase his revenue.²

As the Powers recognized that the peace of Kutaya, which was only a verbal agreement, would not long be honoured by the Sultan or Mehemet Ali, immediately after the conclusion of the war between Mahmoud and the Pasha, they began discussions upon a permanent solution. Czar Nicholas obtained from Metternich, at the meeting of the Three Sovereigns at Münchengratz, an agreement that when the Turkish Empire appeared to be moribund, Austria and Russia would discuss the partition of the Empire. In the latter part of 1833 and the beginning of 1834, Palmerston and

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 10, 1838: ibid.

² Same to same, May 21, 1838: B.P.

Metternich discussed the nature of a settlement in the Levant, but Metternich's insistence upon Russia's disinterestedness in Turkey persuaded Palmerston that the Powers did not have a common understanding of the Turkish question, and discussions would be fruitless. Discussions upon a conference were not resumed between the two statesmen until 1836, but Metternich's insistence upon Vienna as the site of discussions and his desire to define the nature of the discussions were unacceptable to Palmerston. In 1838, the Powers seemed to be further from a solution than they had been in 1833.

Soon after he conquered Syria, Mehemet Ali realized that the Syrians were not docile subjects. The revolt in 1834 was crushed with difficulty, and was followed by others almost every year. At the end of 1836, Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali opened discussions upon a permanent settlement, but as the Pasha demanded to retain all his conquests and Mahmoud would offer him hereditary rule in only Egypt and Acre, the negotiations ended with both parties recognizing that a peaceful settlement was impossible.¹

Upon learning, in the spring of 1838, that a revolt had broken out in Syria, the Sultan considered sending his fleet to encourage the Syrians. Fearing that the Sultan's action could spark a war, Roussin exhorted Ponsonby to co-operate with him to protest against Mahmoud's intentions, and convince Mahmoud to reduce his large army and navy. Ponsonby termed the latter proposal "very near nonsense," and he declined to protest against sending the fleet to Syria because he had been "authorized to do

¹ Sarim Effendi to Mehemet Ali, dated 23 Zelkadi, 1252: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, April 8, 1837: F.O. 78/319.

no more than examine the probable consequences of the appearance of the Sultan's Fleet in that part of the world." Ponsonby's true reason for declining Roussin's request was because he believed that if the Sultan were "confident of obtaining such success," he would "not listen to one word" said, but would "hate" the British government for its "interference and suspect" it.¹ Despite Ponsonby's refusal to support him, Roussin made his protest. When Reschid Pasha informed him about this protest, Ponsonby told the Turk that Roussin had no right to protest, for Turkey was independent. However, Ponsonby advised Reschid Pasha not to send the fleet because the measure would give "umbrage" to the French government.² Hence, Ponsonby, once again, reinforced his contention that the British government recognized that the Sultan was master in his own house.

Although Mehemet Ali apparently did not know that the Sultan contemplated sending his fleet to encourage the Syrian insurgents, he blamed Mahmoud for inciting the Syrians to revolt, and was convinced that so long as he remained the Sultan's vassal, the latter would not relent in his intrigues to destroy him. Hence, the Pasha, on May 25, informed Campbell and Cochelet, who had replaced Mimaut as the French consul-general, that he intended to declare his independence, but before doing so he would wait until the British and French governments had been informed about his intention. Cognizant that he would weaken his position if he showed open defiance to the Sultan, the Pasha promised Campbell that he would commit no aggressive action against the Sultan

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 27, 1838: F.O. 78/331.

² Same to same, June 14, 1838: ibid.

until the Powers had replied to his notification.¹

The Sultan reacted to Mehemet Ali's statement that he would declare his independence by preparing his fleet to sail. When Ponsonby learned about Mahmoud's intention, he co-operated with Roussin to dissuade the Sultan. However, Ponsonby declined to adopt Roussin's representation that as Mehemet Ali was stronger, he certainly would be victorious in war, believing that this could give the Sultan the impression that his government favoured Mehemet Ali.² Instead, the British ambassador represented to the Porte that it should place "the odium of aggression" upon the Pasha. As Mehemet Ali would not attack the Sultan if the Turkish army were strong and commanded by an able general, General Chrzanowski should be given "virtual command" of the army in Asia Minor.³ Bouteneff and Stürmer also represented against sending the fleet to the Syrian coast.

Unable to resist the combined pressure of the ambassadors, the Porte promised Ponsonby, on June 26, that the fleet would remain at Mytelene for one month. Although this was not a long range commitment, Ponsonby felt that when this period terminated, he could regulate the fleet's movement "by counsel prudently given and calculated to avoid wounding the Sultan by unreasonable interference with his authority." Moreover, in these representations he would have to be careful not to give the impression that Great Britain favoured the Pasha, because Mahmoud's "jealousy on this point" was so great that if he learned that England "favoured his hated rival, His Majesty would gladly prefer submitting himself and his Empire to Russia, rather than consent

¹ Campbell to Palmerston, May 25, 1838: F.O. 78/342 Pt.II.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 11, 1838: F.O. 78/331.

³ Same to same, June 24, 1838: ibid.

to permit us to establish Mehemet Ali in the secure possession of those countries he has usurped from His Sovereign."¹ Considering the reduction of Mehemet Ali as eventually the only means to end Mahmoud's quarrel with the Pasha, Ponsonby warned Palmerston that if Great Britain pursued the status quo too strictly, "the means intended to preserve peace may become the direct cause of war."²

Aware of Ponsonby's antipathy towards Mehemet Ali, his desire to save Turkey from Russia, and familiar with his arguments that the status quo could not continue indefinitely, Roussin thought that Ponsonby had counselled the Sultan to go to war. Only with difficulty could Ponsonby convince the French ambassador that he had done the opposite.³

The Porte's promise to withhold sending the fleet to the Syrian coast marks the end of the crisis. There existed no threat of an attack by Mehemet Ali, who desired to prevent an incident which Mahmoud could use to his advantage. When Campbell and Cochelet, upon receiving reports that the Sultan would send troops and a frigate to Cyprus, requested him to avoid a collision,⁴ the Pasha instructed his fleet to exercise in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and the squadron in Candia was ordered to join it.⁵

On June 23, Palmerston, expecting that Mehemet Ali soon could declare his independence, wrote an instruction which did

¹ Same to same, June 26, 1838: F.O. 78/331.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, July 30, 1838: B.P.

⁴ Campbell to Palmerston, July 8, 1838: F.O. 78/343 Pt. II.

⁵ Same to same, July 12, 1838: ibid.

much to influence the Sultan's subsequent foreign policy, and earned for Great Britain acceptance of her Commercial Convention. Ponsonby was instructed to ask the Porte: 1) what would the Sultan do should Mehemet Ali declare his independence; 2) would the Sultan attack by land or establish a blockade; 3) what force could he send against the Pasha; 4) should the British fleet be placed at his disposal, would the Sultan take necessary measures to achieve success; 5) would the Sultan request British naval aid; and 6) would he contract the necessary arrangements to obtain British aid.¹

When he received the instructions, Ponsonby requested an interview with Reschid Pasha, which the Sultan fixed for July 13. After Mahmoud had reviewed the instructions, Ponsonby and Reschid Pasha met to discuss the reaction of the Sultan. The Sultan, Reschid Pasha said, would attack by sea and land when circumstances were favourable, but would be guided to a certain extent by British wishes, and would remain inactive so long as his interests were not endangered. If necessary, the Sultan would request British and French naval aid and would conclude agreements with Great Britain and France. Ponsonby asked whether the Sultan would conclude a six or eight year agreement, but Reschid Pasha would not answer.²

The conversations were resumed on July 24, at Reschid Pasha's house. When the latter asked whether Great Britain would support the Sultan against Russia, Ponsonby avoided giving a direct answer, saying that the Turks knew that Great Britain desired to see Turkey independent. During the meeting, Reschid

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, June 23, 1838: F.O. 78/329 A.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 30, 1838: B.P.

Pasha promised that the Sultan would not seek naval aid from Russia, but would accept the British proposal for an agreement. The two men then entered into a general discussion on the provisions of a convention, but Ponsonby purposely avoided discussing the introduction of British warships into the Bosphorus, because the Russians could learn about the proposal.¹

The remarks made by Ponsonby apparently gave the Sultan the impression that Great Britain would consider allying herself with him to reduce Mehemet Ali. This alliance was necessitated even more by the Pasha's attitude upon independence. By the middle of July, Medem, Laurin, the Russian and Austrian consuls-general respectively, Campbell and Cochelet were exhorting Mehemet Ali to renounce his desire for independence. Despite the pressure of the four consuls-general, the Pasha maintained his position, boasting that he could defeat an expedition sent against Egypt by Great Britain and France.² Finally, after a month of representations by the consuls-general, Mehemet Ali consented not to declare his independence immediately, but refused to pledge that he would not declare it in future. He said that he would try to obtain hereditary rights for his family by negotiations, but should the negotiations fail, he would declare his independence.³ As Mahmoud regarded negotiations as a waste of time, he considered that his dispute with the Pasha could be concluded only by the latter's reduction. To this end, the Sultan required British naval aid, and hence decided to send Reschid Pasha to London to conclude

¹ Ibid.

² Laurin to Metternich, August 18, 1838: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, August 24, 1838: F.O. 78/343 Pt.II.

³ Mehemet Ali to Medem, July 21, 1838 (O.S.): enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, September 6, 1838: ibid.

an agreement. Reschid Pasha was scheduled to depart on August 16. The acceptance of the British Commercial Convention served as an illustration by the Sultan that he was not indifferent to British interests.

Meanwhile, negotiations upon a commercial convention had begun. There is no indication in either the Foreign Office Papers or Ponsonby's private correspondence of the exact date that Reschid Pasha requested Ponsonby to appoint British commissioners to open discussions with the Turkish commissioners, Nouri Effendi and Vogorides. Henry Lytton Bulwer, who with consul-general Cartwright served as the British commissioners, indicated in a resumé of his activities, dated July 18, that he had had more than one meeting with the Turkish commissioners.¹ Hence it is likely that the Sultan ordered the commencement of negotiations upon a commercial convention not later than the second week of July. As Palmerston's instructions of June 23 were not submitted to Reschid Pasha before July 13, Mahmoud's decision probably was not influenced by the instructions. But the instructions unquestionably acted as a catalyst upon the negotiations.

In his conversations with Nouri Effendi and Vogorides, the Turkish commissioners, Bulwer obtained a promise that the Porte would abolish monopolies, prohibitions and teskeries in return for an increase in duty. However, the Porte refused to abolish duty levied upon British products sold by the importer inland, unless the British government would agree to one fixed duty, in addition to the three per cent duty paid on imports, to be paid by the merchant at a specific place. Bulwer favoured

¹ Bulwer to Ponsonby, July 18, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 25, 1838: F.O. 78/332.

this Turkish proposal, because the collection of duty would be placed in the hands of appointed tax collectors, thus ensuring that the money would flow into the Turkish treasury. Moreover, the additional tax would eliminate internal duties, which ranged from twelve to fifty per cent, and would place British merchants on an equal footing with Musulman and Rayah merchants.¹

After only a week of negotiations, Tahir Bey's party succeeded in obtaining the suspension of the negotiations, as Reschid Pasha proved too weak to counter the arguments of this reactionary party. The commercial convention was saved only because the Sultan desired to ensure that Great Britain would extend him aid against Mehemet Ali. Negotiations, resumed after three weeks' suspension, proceeded in haste because Reschid Pasha was scheduled to depart for London on August 16. While Bulwer, after consulting British merchants in Constantinople, had decided to accept a duty of twelve per cent, in addition to the existing three per cent duty on Turkish exports, Reschid Pasha, anxious to conclude the convention before he departed, requested only nine per cent. In addition, he requested a fixed duty of two per cent, rather than the two and one-half per cent which Bulwer had been prepared to concede, upon imports into Turkey. In return, Bulwer accepted a three per cent transit duty upon which the Turks insisted.²

By the second week in August, the two sides had agreed upon all the provisions of the commercial convention, and only the drafting of the convention remained. However, a last attempt was made by Tahir Bey and his party to block the convention.

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, August 19, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston August 19, 1838: ibid.

Claiming that the agreement would infringe upon the Sultan's rights over his subjects, Tahir Bey drafted a paragraph, ostensibly intended to protect the Sultan's rights, to be inserted into the convention, for he believed that it would frustrate the objects of the convention. Using this as its excuse, the Porte refused to sign. Tahir Bey had strong support, winning over ministers, who had been undecided, by championing the Sultan's rights.¹

Uncertainty existed for two or three days, during which time Ponsonby "was actively employed in counteracting the designs" of Tahir Bey's party.² On August 15, Ponsonby and Bulwer met Reschid Pasha, Mustapha Bey and Nouri Effendi at Reschid Pasha's house in Balta Liman. When the Englishmen suggested that a statement protecting the Sultan's rights should be added to the first article of the convention, the Turks agreed. A commercial convention hurriedly was drafted, as was a separate document, containing proposals by the Porte which the British government was free to accept or reject. The treaty of Balta Liman was concluded at four o'clock on the morning of August 16.³

There is little doubt that Mahmoud regarded the Commercial Convention as a potential weapon against Mehemet Ali. As the latter's wealth and power depended upon his monopolies, he could not abolish these without cutting his military expenditures. If he refused to abolish the monopolies, Great Britain would be obliged to take measures forcing him to implement the Convention, and if the Pasha remained defiant, Great Britain would have no alternative but to proceed to reduce him.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

However, Mahmoud seems to have been confident that he would obtain from Great Britain an offensive treaty against Mehemet Ali before the Convention was scheduled to be implemented. Ponsonby's statements could not fail to give the Sultan the impression that the British government considered the peace of Kutaya as a temporary arrangement, and recognized that it had no right to dictate the policy he should pursue towards his vassal, Mehemet Ali. When Ponsonby presented Palmerston's instructions of June 23, he did not place enough emphasis upon the fact that the aid specified in the proposed alliance was strictly conditional upon a declaration of independence by Mehemet Ali. Undoubtedly, Ponsonby did not fail intentionally to emphasize this point; however, as the ambassador was anxious to reduce Mehemet Ali, he scarcely could hide the fact from Reschid Pasha, who probably concluded that Ponsonby mirrored the British government's feelings.

Bouteneff, who had been absent when the Commercial Convention was signed, wrote on his return to Nesselrode: "They are dazzled by the prestige of the assurances and promises lavished on them of late by the English embassy and seem to expect from Reschid's mission results more important than they dare admit, for example, the disarming of the Pasha of Egypt and the recovery of Syria!"¹

The British Commercial Convention certainly was not well received by Roussin, who was indignant that France had been excluded from the negotiations, which had been secret.² The Russian government suspected that the Convention had secret clauses

¹ Quoted by P.E. Mosely, Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Eastern Question in 1838 and 1839, Cambridge Mass., 1934. p.105.

² Ibid., pp.100 - 101.

and was not limited to commercial matters. It was now Russia's turn to worry about a treaty. While Bouteneff reported that he was assured by the Porte that no secret clauses existed, the Russian government seems to have remained uneasy for some time.¹

B. The Persian Crisis

With the Sultan resolved to wait for the results of Reschid Pasha's mission before committing himself to hostilities, and Ponsonby absorbed in Persian affairs, the Mehemet Ali question was not prominent in the latter half of 1838. In the first half of 1837, Ponsonby had exhorted Palmerston to send British warships into the Black Sea.² When Palmerston, in November of 1837, indicated that the British government would send small warships to sound the Turkish shores of the Sea during the winter,³ Ponsonby was elated, regarding this as the first step in asserting British power in the Black Sea. However, the small warships were never sent. As the Russians gave no indication, in the first half of 1838, that they would encroach upon Turkey, Ponsonby, busily engaged in negotiating the Commercial Convention, made no complaint to Palmerston. During the first half of 1838, Ponsonby's measures for the protection of Turkey against Russia did not go beyond an attempt to convince the Porte that the Sultan should obtain a sufficient number of steamers "to tow the Turkish fleet in a crisis to the mouth of the Bosphorus," where it could be placed "to

¹ Ibid., pp. 115 - 116.

² Vide Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 18, 1837: F.O. 78/301.

³ Palmerston noted that "it would be a beginning; & once in, they might stay there some Time, & one Frigate might relieve another." Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 12, 1837: B.P.

render the passage of the Russian Fleet actually impossible."¹

Suddenly, in July, Sir John McNeill, a Russophobe, and a good friend of Ponsonby, broke off relations with the Persian government, and left Persia. Fearing that the Russians could attempt a sudden naval attack upon Constantinople, Ponsonby proposed to Reschid Pasha, before he left Constantinople, a plan to employ the Anglo-French fleet to preclude such a Russian move. Ponsonby calculated that the presence of the fleet in the Black Sea not only would frustrate Russia's designs for expansion, but weaken her hold upon the countries bordering upon the Black Sea.

However, Reschid Pasha, without much consideration, declined to accept the plan, and would promise only that so long as Great Britain supported Turkey, Russian aid would not be requested. Disappointed, Ponsonby did not place much confidence in Reschid Pasha's promise, because he believed that the Russians could assert to the Sultan that as a war between Great Britain and Russia was imminent, the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi should be implemented.²

After Reschid Pasha had left Constantinople, Ponsonby pressed Nouri Effendi, the acting Reis Effendi, and Mustapha Kianee Bey, his assistant, to persuade the Sultan that his security depended upon the presence of British and French warships in the Black Sea. Only a small number of warships, having no marines aboard, need be sent into the Bosphorus, thus removing from the Russians the right to complain that the ships intended attacking Russian territory. Ponsonby argued that the Sultan would not

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 10, 1838: F.O. 78/329 B.

² Same to same, August 24, 1838: F.O. 78/332.

break his treaty obligations, because he had a right to permit warships to pass through the Straits during peacetime. Both Turks replied that they were well-disposed to the plan, and suggested that Russian ships could accompany the Anglo-French warships, which Ponsonby accepted.¹ But it is doubtful whether Nouri Effendi, who had a habit of saying one thing, and doing another, laid Ponsonby's proposal before the Sultan. Ponsonby did not suggest the plan to Roussin, because he thought that the first dragoman of the French embassy was unreliable, but requested Palmerston to discuss the plan with the French government,² which Palmerston apparently did not do. Preparing for a possible Russian descent upon Constantinople, Ponsonby wrote to Stopford that, should the Russians make a move against the Turkish capital, he would make a "formal demand" to him to bring up the squadron. He assured the admiral that the Turkish batteries at the Dardanelles would not fire upon the British squadron. Stopford replied that as his instructions did not authorize this step, and the Russian Black Sea fleet was superior to his squadron, he would decline such a request. In a subsequent letter Stopford indicated that he would return to Malta, after his squadron concluded its cruise with the Turkish fleet.³

Meanwhile, Roussin foolishly told the Porte that Great Britain and France were united upon the Mehemet Ali question, but did not have common interests upon Persia and India. This alarmed Nouri Effendi, who thought that Great Britain and France really were not united upon the Mehemet Ali question. Although Roussin

¹ Same to same, September 5, 1838: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 27, 1838: ibid.

tried to convince Nouri Effendi that the two Powers were united on this question, and to some degree succeeded in calming the Turk, Nouri Effendi remained uneasy.¹ The imprudent comments by Roussin made the Porte more reluctant to consider the admission of an Anglo-French squadron into the Black Sea.

However, Palmerston, too prudent to favour Ponsonby's recommendations to send the fleet into the Sea of Marmora, noted to Ponsonby that if the British fleet sailed through the Dardanelles, the Russians could send their fleet through the Bosphorus, which would intensify the dispute between the two countries. If the Russians did not respond by sending their fleet through the Bosphorus, the presence of the British fleet in the Sea of Marmora "would apparently produce no particular Result," for the fleet would have nothing to do when it reached the Sea. The presence of the fleet in the Sea "must be of temporary duration because we could not leave our Ships in the Sea of Marmora, as they would be wanted elsewhere," and would make a second passage, when really necessary, harder to obtain.²

It is possible that Ponsonby's proposals may have leaked out, for a rumour swept Constantinople in September that the British fleet would enter the Dardanelles on some pretext. Bouteneff at once warned the Sultan that as Russia would not regard with indifference the entrance of the British fleet into the Dardanelles, a war in the Levant could break out. The Sultan hastened to assure the Russian minister that under no circumstances would the British fleet be permitted to enter the Strait, adding

¹ Same to same, September 27, 1838: B.P.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, October 2, 1838: ibid.

that the British embassy had never requested passage through it.¹ This warning by Bouteneff undoubtedly convinced Mahmoud to move carefully in his relations with Russia until he had received a firm commitment of British support against Mehemet Ali. As the Sultan was nagged by the fear that Russia could combine with Mehemet Ali against him, he was careful not to provoke the Russians.

By the end of September, the Persian Crisis had ended, with Russia backing down. Thinking that Russia had "gone too fast," Ponsonby pointed out to Palmerston that as Russia could not easily retreat, now was the best time to send the British squadron into the Black Sea, for without the British squadron there, Great Britain could not reach a final settlement with Russia. As the latter had hinted that she would help the Sultan to end the status quo, to "flinch now" could nullify Great Britain's "successes in Persia." France would follow Great Britain, because France "wants to be led. Besides feeble men always follow bold ones when the latter have the means to act."² Palmerston apparently gave Ponsonby's recommendations little consideration, as he desired to avoid further disputes with Russia.

During Bouteneff's leave of absence, the Porte and the British government had arranged that the Turkish fleet, to obtain much needed instruction, should cruize in Turkish waters, with a detachment of the British Mediterranean fleet. Suspecting that the British squadron could seek some excuse to pass the Dardanelles, the Russian government instructed Bouteneff

¹ Mosely, op.cit., pp.105-108.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 27, 1838: B.P.

to carefully observe the movements of the joint squadron and preclude any attempt by the British to penetrate the Strait. Accordingly, Bouteneff endeavoured to keep the British squadron at a distance from the Dardanelles, complaining to the Porte that the joint squadron was too close. Ponsonby reluctantly agreed to Nouri Effendi's entreaties to instruct Stopford to cruize in the Archipelago, and go only as far as Rhodes.¹ But before Ponsonby could send the instructions, he learned that Bouteneff had sent a note to the Porte, saying that the British fleet was near the Dardanelles, preparing to pass through the Strait, and warning that should her fleet pass through the Dardanelles, Great Britain would infringe upon the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. Infuriated, Ponsonby instructed Stopford "to remain near the Dardanelles",² and "officially and formally" requested him not to return to Malta until he had received instructions from the British government.

After he returned to Constantinople, Bouteneff began to whittle away the influence which Ponsonby had acquired in the first part of 1838. Believing that Bouteneff's high handed activities at the Porte were part of a Russian scheme, Ponsonby reviewed his ideas upon the objectives of Russian policy, coming to the conclusion that the Czar had altered his previous policy, "which having been penetrated is no longer available." The Russian proposal to the Porte that the Sultan should give Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt if he returned Syria seemed to hold the key to Russia's objectives. Ponsonby reasoned that the

¹ Same to same, September 27, 1838, No.212: F.O. 78/332.

² Ponsonby to Stopford, September 20, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 27, 1838, separate: ibid.

object of the proposal was to "be the calling here, when it suits Russia, of an Army and a Fleet."¹ As Mehemet Ali would not cede Syria, relations between the Sultan and the Pasha would deteriorate, finally resulting in a call by the Sultan for Russian aid. The Russians were "not nice about means, and it would cost them little to betray and abandon Mehemet Ali."²

To counter this Russian intrigue, Ponsonby exhorted Palmerston to take "energetic measures" to instill courage into the Sultan "to act as He is personally desirous of acting that is - of throwing Himself into the hands of the British Government."³ Again Ponsonby urged that the British squadron should be sent into the Black Sea, this time arguing that the squadron would serve as a check also against France, who had illustrated that she did not have common views with Great Britain on Persia and India; Ponsonby suspected that France had designs upon India. As an alternate plan, Ponsonby suggested an equally well used proposal, to send French, British and Russian warships into the Bosphorus. He pleaded that the British government should order Stopford to abandon his intention of returning for the winter to Malta, so as not to permit the Russians "to avail themselves of the winter and secure their predominance."⁴

Russia's designs, Ponsonby believed, made the acceptance of the treaty which Reschid Pasha had been sent to London to negotiate more imperative, for Reschid Pasha's failure would

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 3, 1838: ibid.

² Same to same, October 13, 1838: B.P.

³ Same to same, September 27, 1838: F.O. 78/332.

⁴ Ibid.

turn the Sultan towards Russia. As he had done at the end of 1835, when he had refrained from implementing Palmerston's instruction, Ponsonby argued to Palmerston that no lasting agreement had been concluded at Kutaya. The Sultan had promised that he would nominate Mehemet Ali and Ibrahim to hold the government of certain provinces, and as they were merely governors, the Sultan was not bound indefinitely to maintain them in their governments. Moreover, Great Britain could not be bound by any agreement to maintain a rebel against his sovereign. The status quo was "a virtual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire effected under false pretences." Egypt might, for a time, fall into disorder should Mehemet Ali be removed, but the confusion which now reigned in the Turkish Empire would end, and the Sultan could turn his attention to defending his Empire against Turkey's enemies. Ibrahim's troubles in Syria showed that the Turkish army, victor over the Koords, was not inferior to the Egyptian army. Should Chrzanowski be given command of the Turkish army, he would be superior to all Mehemet Ali's French generals. Mehemet Ali had obtained much strength by cleverly circulating in Turkey the idea that he was protected by Great Britain and France, "which of course he will lose when it shall be seen that England is not his ally." Great Britain must accept the Sultan's treaty, Ponsonby concluded: "there is no middle term to be found - that we must either succeed now, or be beaten and place India in peril by our defeat. I believe our time for deliberation is short."¹

Undoubtedly, Ponsonby was carried away by the force of

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 13, 1838: F.O. 78/332.

his arguments, and expressed opinions which he really did not believe. In more than one letter to Palmerston, Ponsonby questioned whether the Turkish army could conduct a successful campaign against Ibrahim's army. Informed by military experts that the Turkish army on manoeuvres hardly resembled an army,¹ Ponsonby knew that it would be defeated. However, as he believed that the status quo must be destroyed by the Sultan, Ponsonby at times indulged in wishful thinking. When war became a possibility in 1839, Ponsonby, fearful that the Russians would take advantage of a Turkish defeat, endeavoured to prevent a war.

The Russians continued pressing the Turks to persuade Ponsonby to order the withdrawal of the British squadron from the vicinity of the Dardanelles, but Ponsonby resisted the Porte's request. Stopford, however, decided on his own to return to Malta. The admiral wrote to Ponsonby that his arguments were unconvincing, and as the British government had not sent him instructions to remain in Turkish waters, he would return to Malta immediately after the British squadron had completed its cruise with the Turkish fleet.² Fearing that Stopford's departure would have "the air of a flight before the menaces of the Russians," Ponsonby entreated Palmerston to instruct the admiral not to withdraw from Turkish waters. The ambassador pointed out that Russia had been telling the Turks that she would not permit the British squadron to remain there, and the Turks would believe that the Russians had dictated to

¹ Du Plat to Ponsonby, February 26, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 13, 1838: F.O. 78/ 330.

² Stopford to Ponsonby, October 26, 1838: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 29, 1838: ibid.

the British government. Ponsonby noted: "This is a serious evil when the game you have been playing is in truth a game of Brag."¹

The British squadron departed for Malta in November and as the Russians told the Turks that Russia had ordered the British government to withdraw the fleet, Ponsonby felt humiliated.² Feeling the effects of Bouteneff's assault on his influence, Ponsonby feared that the departure of the squadron would give Bouteneff the upper hand and expose the Sultan to Russian dictation. Rumours that Czar Nicholas was mad, which were now circulating through Europe, disquieted Ponsonby who thought that the Czar could "lose sight of that prudence by which he ought to be governed and yield to his passion."³

Palmerston, however, saw no danger in the return of the British fleet to Malta. As Mehemet Ali's fleet was laid up in Alexandria, the Pasha presented no immediate threat to the Sultan. The British government had no reason to suspect that Russia had "at present & during the approaching winter, any design of attacking Constantinople." Consequently, the stationing of the fleet at the entrance of the Dardanelles would tend "to keep up general uneasiness without producing any good Result."⁴

However, Ponsonby's fears were unwarranted. While Bouteneff did make inroads into Ponsonby's influence, the time of Russian pre-eminence had passed. Bouteneff had no means to

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 30, 1838: B.P.

² Same to same, November 7, 1838: ibid.

³ Same to same, December 4, 1838: ibid.

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 11, 1838: F.O. 78/329A.

re-establish his influence, as the Russians long had shown that they desired to maintain the status quo. His threats merely served to caution the Sultan against assuming a hostile attitude towards Russia. Mahmoud waited for Reschid Pasha's reports from London, meanwhile declining Russia's proposals for a settlement with Mehemet Ali.¹

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 6, 1838: F.O. 78/333.

CHAPTER VII: THE SECOND MEHEMET ALI WAR

A. The Outbreak of War

By the beginning of 1839, Mahmoud was having second thoughts about waiting for Reschid Pasha's reports before deciding upon war. He found difficulty in mastering his aversion for Mehemet Ali, and was subjected to strong pressure from within the Seraglio and Hafiz Pasha, the Turkish commander in Asia Minor, to waste no time in striking a decisive blow against the Pasha.¹ Yet the Sultan was aware that the depleted state of his treasury and the poor discipline of his army made an attack, unsupported by Great Britain, a risky undertaking.

On January 22, a council was held at the Porte to determine whether an immediate attack should be launched. The council seems to have decided upon delay, and the Riala Bey was sent to Alexandria to determine the strength of Mehemet Ali's army and navy. Meanwhile, the Sultan ordered that eighty-thousand men should be conscripted for the Turkish army.² On February 4, a council, held to discuss whether Rayah regiments should be formed, recommended against the measure.³ On the recommendation of the Porte, Mahmoud resolved to remain passive until Reschid Pasha reported from London.

As has been seen, Ponsonby, in the latter half of 1838 had reached the conclusion that Russia had altered her Turkish policy. By the beginning of 1839, Ponsonby was convinced that the Russians on the one hand were urging Mahmoud to attack

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 12, 1839: F.O. 78/354.

² Same to same, January 27, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, February 6, 1838: ibid.

Mehemet Ali, and on the other were endeavouring to ally the Pasha with Persia. The object of the Czar was the creation of a war in the Levant which would give him an opportunity to send his fleet to Constantinople and obtain the renewal of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.¹ The ambassador was so blinded by his Russophobia that he thought that all who were urging war were Russian partisans, including Hafiz Pasha. When Ponsonby learned about a statement by the Russian dragoman to the Porte that the Russian government had arranged that the British fleet would not approach the Dardanelles, he concluded that the Russians were attempting to convince the Turks that Great Britain would not aid Turkey against Mehemet Ali, and Turkey could look only to Russia.²

To frustrate this supposed Russian intrigue, Ponsonby constantly exhorted the Porte to suspend for the present any plans for attacking Mehemet Ali. As he believed that Austria also desired the prevention of war, Ponsonby began trusting in Stürmer, and the two ambassadors, so long antagonists, co-operated splendidly. Ponsonby had nothing but praise for Stürmer.³

During the first five months of 1839, Ponsonby made a series of representations to the Porte. In January, the ambassador counselled the Turks against undertaking any hostile measures until Reschid Pasha had reported upon the proposed treaty with Great Britain.⁴ On February 8, Ponsonby told the Porte that the Sultan had no grounds to "form a sound

¹ Same to same, January 27, 1839: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, February 4, 1839: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, January 27, 1839: ibid.

judgement" upon his prospects in a war with Mehemet Ali. The Porte replied that the Sultan would take no measures which could precipitate a conflict.¹ This pleased Ponsonby, who concluded that the Russians and the Seraglio would not succeed in driving the Sultan to attack Mehemet Ali.² Stürmer, however, considered war likely, and was unable to perceive how the Russians could be prevented from intervening.³

At the end of February, the Turkish fleet was brought out of port, and readied.⁴ On March 2, Nouri Effendi informed Ponsonby that the Porte could not endure the financial cost to maintain a large army to defend against Mehemet Ali.⁵ In the middle of March, Nouri Effendi complained that Ibrahim had moved reinforcements to Adana. He asked Ponsonby whether Hafiz Pasha should accept the recommendation of the Prussian officers to change his position. Ponsonby replied that he was not competent to give military advice, but "any false step might occasion irremediable mischief." As the Porte lacked precise information upon the affairs in Syria, it should be cautious and do nothing for the present.⁶

In the latter half of March, the Porte learned from Reschid Pasha that the British government would not consent to an offensive treaty against Mehemet Ali. This left Mahmoud

¹ Same to same, February 8, 1839: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, February 4, 1839: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, February 26, 1839: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, March 7, 1839: ibid.

⁶ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, March 18, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 19, 1839: ibid.

no alternative but to attempt unaided to reduce the Pasha. The Sultan was under pressure to begin operations immediately. Hafiz Pasha wrote to the Porte that as conditions never would be so favourable for an attack upon Ibrahim, the moment should not be lost, and Ahmet Pasha, the Capudan Pasha, echoed this argument.¹

By the time Ponsonby received a communication from Palmerston upon the treaty, the Porte already was aware that the British government was not disposed to accept the treaty. In the communication, Palmerston argued that he and Reschid Pasha had agreed upon the nature of a treaty, and that the details were being discussed. He cautioned that Mahmoud should not take any "hasty steps" which would make impossible the conclusion of the treaty, but should realize that time was in his favour and against Mehemet Ali, "whose difficulties seem to increase instead of diminishing."² In his representation to the Porte, on April 6, Ponsonby pleaded only for delay, because he believed that he would do "greater harm than good by calling for more." Nouri Effendi replied that the treaty proposed by the British government was not satisfactory as it would bind the Sultan to maintain the status quo, which he was intent upon destroying.³

Ponsonby at last admitted to Palmerston that war was likely.⁴ Although Bouteneff urged the Porte to remain inactive, Ponsonby continued believing that the Russians were

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 19, 1839: ibid.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 13, 1839: B.P.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 6, 1839: F.O. 78/355.

⁴ Ibid.

encouraging the Porte to attack the Pasha. Ponsonby noted to Palmerston that Bouteneff truly urged the Porte not to engage in war, but Russia could desire "to have ostensible documents to prove her co-operation with the other Powers." Russian agents were urging war, while Bouteneff was counselling against war.¹ Ponsonby could not believe that Russia wanted to prevent a war; logic dictated that Russia would benefit from a change in the status quo, and therefore, the Russian government would attempt to produce a war in the Levant.

While Ponsonby continued counselling the Porte "to delay at least" any measure which would commit the Porte to a "perilous enterprise," he felt powerless to stop the Sultan. When he learned that a high-ranking official had been dispatched by the Porte to Hafiz Pasha, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that he probably carried instructions which were "not of a nature to please Your Lordship."² Ponsonby implored the Porte not to reject the treaty proposed by the British government, but he was seriously handicapped in his representations, because Palmerston had not sent him a copy of the treaty. Not until April 18, did Ponsonby learn the details of the treaty, when the Porte gave him a copy, sent by Reschid Pasha to the Porte.

By the end of April the foreign diplomatic corps considered that war was only a matter of time. Nouri Effendi, on April 21, informed Ponsonby that no treaty would be to the Sultan's advantage, unless it were designed to destroy Mehemet Ali. Expecting this comment, Ponsonby answered that Great Britain

¹ Same to same, March 23, 1839: ibid.

² Same to same, April 6, 1839: ibid.

could not alter her policy; the treaty proposed by the British government would protect the Sultan against Mehemet Ali, permitting Mahmoud to diminish his military expenses. Nouri Effendi stated that he would submit these comments to the Sultan, but Ponsonby had no faith in Nouri Effendi's promises, suspecting that he had urged the Sultan to reject the treaty and immediately attack Mehemet Ali. Fearing that he would not report the conversation, and would continue intriguing with Russia to block the treaty, Ponsonby warned Nouri Effendi that he would expose himself to danger should he serve as "the Instrument to prevent the formation of this valuable alliance between England and Turkey."¹

For a time Mahmoud remained passive, but the Porte refused to pledge that the Sultan would maintain peace, and dwelt only upon Mehemet Ali's misdeeds and his desire for independence.² In the middle of May, the Sultan received a letter written by Artin Bey, Mehemet Ali's interpreter, on April 29. The letter so infuriated the Sultan, that he ordered a declaration of war. However, he soon mastered his passion and rescinded the order, but instructed the Porte to put the army and navy on a war footing. The Sultan asserted that he would rather die or be controlled by Russia than permit Mehemet Ali to retain his power.³

By May, Ponsonby seems to have abandoned hope that the Russians could be prevented from persuading the Sultan to

¹ Same to same, April 22, 1839: ibid.

² Nouri Effendi to Ponsonby, April 28, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 1, 1839: F.O. 78/356.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 20, 1839: ibid.

discard the status quo. To preclude the Russians from capitalizing upon a war between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby recommended to Palmerston that in the event of a war, Great Britain should claim the right of "equal interference," and support, if necessary, "that presumption by arms." If the Powers participated with Great Britain, Russia would be forced to co-operate. As Mehemet Ali had fortified the Taurus Mountains and desired to declare his independence, he was the aggressor, giving the Powers a valid reason to reduce him.¹

On the Sultan's orders, Nouri Effendi and Ahmet Pasha met Ponsonby on May 22. Nouri Effendi immediately began to complain that Mehemet Ali was menacing Bussora and Bagdad, and had done other provocative things. As it was obvious to Ponsonby that the Sultan was seeking an excuse to justify an attack upon the Pasha, the ambassador replied that he had received no report of these alleged provocations, and therefore could not consider a war justified. When Ponsonby requested the Porte to delay, Nouri Effendi answered that the status quo must be destroyed. Ponsonby carefully avoided giving Nouri Effendi the impression that Great Britain would aid the Sultan to alter the status quo, clearly stating that Great Britain would act only in concert with the Powers. After making this assertion, Ponsonby asked Nouri Effendi to state whether the Sultan had resolved upon war. When the Turk replied in the affirmative, Ponsonby made no attempt to dissuade the Porte, saying only that his government disapproved of war, and that it remained for him "to hope the Sublime Porte had taken the best measures to secure success."²

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, May 22, 1839: ibid.

Satisfied that he had done his utmost in preventing war and that further representation would be fruitless, Ponsonby remained inactive after the meeting of May 22. Stürmer, Ponsonby reported, also felt powerless.¹ Ponsonby now wrote to Palmerston that war was preferable to Mehemet Ali's proposals for a settlement, which in effect would partition the Turkish Empire. "We might easily prevent the destruction of the Empire by such a defeat and, I believe, repair the mischiefs it would occasion; but the slow, silent and perpetual action of universal disorder inherent in the partition of the Empire would defy our wisdom and baffle our power to resist and remedy."² Ponsonby requested General Jochmus, who had been sent by Palmerston for the purpose of seeking employment in the Turkish army, to draw up a plan for defending the Straits against Russia, added it to the plan he had outlined to Palmerston on January 5, 1834, and submitted his recommendations to the Sultan.³

On June 4, Stürmer, unaware that Hafiz Pasha already had crossed the Euphrates near Bir, made an unsuccessful representation at the Porte.⁴ On June 14, Roussin informed Ponsonby that he had received instructions stating that as France and Great Britain were united upon the Turkish question, the British and French embassies should co-operate in preventing or stopping hostilities. As he believed that the Porte would not order Hafiz Pasha to recross the Euphrates and suspected that

¹ Same to same, May 26, 1839: ibid.

² Same to same, May 27, 1839: F.O. 78/356.

³ Same to same, June 24, 1839: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 12, 1839: ibid.

the French government had not communicated with the British government upon the representations, Ponsonby declined to co-operate with the French ambassador, claiming that his instructions did not cover the new situation.¹

Notwithstanding Ponsonby's refusal to support him, Roussin on June 21, requested the Porte to withdraw its troops across the Euphrates River. Upon learning that the Porte had declined sending Roussin's representation to the Sultan for consideration, Ponsonby suspected that France could take measures to stop the war, perhaps instructing the French fleet to intercept the Turkish fleet as it passed through the Dardanelles. To avoid a misunderstanding between the Capudan Pasha and the French admiral, Ponsonby, on the Capudan Pasha's suggestion, instructed Etienne Pisani to sail with the Turkish fleet, serving as a translator for Ahmet Pasha.² E. Pisani, however, does not seem to have sailed with the Turkish fleet, or at least did not sail as far as Rhodes, where the Capudan Pasha met the French fleet.

Ponsonby has been accused by Bolsover of secretly encouraging the Sultan to attack Mehemet Ali,³ but Bolsover's footnotes do not support his contention. Rodkey has presented a more formidable attack upon Ponsonby's activities in the period preceding the war, citing the fact that the ambassador failed to present Palmerston's instructions of March 15. Ponsonby indeed did excuse himself on the grounds that he could not decypher the instruction, as Rodkey asserts, but there is

¹ Same to same, June 16, 1839: ibid.

² Same to same, June 24, 1839: ibid.

³ G. H. Bolsover, "Lord Ponsonby and the Eastern Question, 1833 - 1839," Slavonic Review, XIII, 1934, p.112.

no reason to accept Rodkey's contention that Ponsonby "evaded... directly instructions of which he did not approve."¹

Palmerston's instructions of March 15 stated that the British government supported Ponsonby's language in his representations to the Porte earlier in the year, and ordered the ambassador to inform the Sultan that while the British government would "undoubtedly assist him to repel any attack on the part of Mehemet Ali, it would, on the other hand, be a different question if the war was [sic] begun by the Sultan."² As has been seen, Ponsonby's communications, until his meeting of May 22, were in keeping with this instruction. Rodkey, who did not have access to the Broadlands Papers, could not have known that on March 13, two days before sending the dispatch in question, Palmerston wrote Ponsonby a private letter, which Ponsonby implemented.

Webster states that Ponsonby was reluctant to implement Palmerston's instructions to prevent a war because he feared that this course would injure his influence.³ However, there is no evidence that Ponsonby possessed comprehensive instructions before he received Palmerston's instructions of March 13, probably in the first week of April. The instruction which immediately preceded that of March 13, dated September 15, 1838, was merely a description of a conversation between Palmerston and Ahmet Fethi Pasha, who was Reschid Pasha's predecessor as

¹ F.S. Rodkey, "Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1831 - 1841, Part I," Journal of Modern History, I, 1929, p. 591.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 15, 1839: F.O. 78/352.

³ C.K. Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830 - 1841, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 611.

ambassador to London. In the conversation, Palmerston had cautioned that the Porte should avoid war, because the Sultan would be beaten.¹ Hence, Ponsonby acted on his initiative in framing his arguments against war, knowing only that his government had desired in September, before Reschid Pasha's arrival in London, to prevent a war. Nor is there evidence showing that Ponsonby, before the meeting of May 22, was reluctant to employ his influence in urging the Sultan to remain passive.

The French government, however, concluded that Ponsonby had urged war upon the Sultan. Bourqueney, the French ambassador to London, complained to Palmerston that Ponsonby had declined ~~to support~~ Roussin's representations at the Porte. When Palmerston showed him Ponsonby's dispatches outlining his activities in preventing war, Bourqueney replied that Ponsonby's desire to end the status quo was notorious, and undoubtedly hurt his representations. Bourqueney noted that Palmerston had reservations upon Ponsonby's policy, and that a government in any other country would have replaced the ambassador.² To Roussin, indeed, Ponsonby's behaviour in this period was but the culmination of the feud which had begun with the Churchill Affair, and Roussin, after being recalled in the latter half of 1839, did not hide his animosity towards Ponsonby. H. Reeves wrote to C. Greville, on October 27, 1840: "Admiral Roussin told me such things of Ponsonby's behaviour before the

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, September 15, 1838: F.O. 78/329A.

² Bourqueney to Soult, July 9, 1839: M. Guizot, Memoirs pour servir à l'histoire de Mon Temps, Vol. 4, Paris, n.d., pp. 504-516.

battle of Nezib, that my hair stood on end."¹

B. Measures Preventing Direct Negotiations

When Mehemet Ali learned, at the beginning of May, that Hafiz Pasha had crossed the Euphrates near Bir, he instructed Ibrahim not to advance, demonstrating that he was not the aggressor.² Mehemet Ali promised Campbell that should the Turkish army recross the Euphrates, he would order his troops to retreat, and Ibrahim to return to Damascus; should the Porte respond by ordering Hafiz Pasha's withdrawal from Malatia, Ibrahim would return to Egypt.³ The four consuls-general represented together to the Pasha that Ibrahim should avoid an engagement with Hafiz Pasha. Mehemet Ali, on June 4, responded by instructing Ibrahim to enter into communication with Hafiz Pasha, place Aintab in a state of defence, and commence hostilities only if the Turkish army attacked the outlying defences of the city. Mehemet Ali also promised that he would not order the Egyptian fleet to sail from Alexandria until he had learned that the Turkish fleet had passed the Dardanelles.⁴

However, Hafiz Pasha already had attacked the Egyptian cavalry before Aintab, and had armed and encouraged the

¹ Reeves to Greville, October 27, 1840: A.H. Johnson (ed.), The Letters of Charles Greville and Henry Reeve: 1836-1865, London, 1924, p.44.

² Campbell to Palmerston, May 5, 1839: F.O. 78/373.

³ Mehemet Ali to Campbell, N.D.: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, May 19, 1839: F.O. 78/374.

⁴ Process Verbal of a Meeting of the Four Consuls-General and Mehemet Ali, June 4, 1839: enclosure Campbell to Palmerston, June 5, 1839: ibid.

the inhabitants of that province to attack the Egyptian forces,¹ Having established that the Sultan was the aggressor, Mehemet Ali informed Campbell, on June 10, that he would order Ibrahim to drive the Turks from Syria, and occupy Orfa and Diarbekir.² The Pasha turned a deaf ear to the representations of the four consuls-general against an advance by Ibrahim beyond the Syrian frontier. However, Captain Callier, sent by the French government to inform Mehemet Ali that France was discussing measures with the Powers for the conclusion of the Turkish question, eventually dissuaded the Pasha. Mehemet Ali permitted Callier to deliver a letter to Ibrahim, forbidding the army's passage beyond the Syrian frontier, and ordering it immediately to suspend its advance if it had passed that frontier.³ The Pasha's decision was influenced considerably by a Russian threat of intervention if Ibrahim passed the frontier.⁴

After Ibrahim defeated the Turkish army near Nezib, on June 25, he immediately dispatched troops to occupy Orfa and Diarbekir. Before Caillier could reach Ibrahim's headquarters, the two Pashalics had been occupied.⁵

Mahmoud suddenly fell ill in June, and soon it was obvious that the illness would be fatal. Ponsonby feared that the Sultan's death could plunge the Turkish Empire into

¹ Campbell to Palmerston, June 5, 1830 : ibid.

² Same to same, June 14, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 16, 1839: ibid.

⁴ T. Schiemann, Geschichte Russlands Unter Kaiser Nikolaus I, Vol. 3, Berlin, 1913, pp. 379-380.

⁵ Campbell to Palmerston, July 6, 1839: F.O. 78/374.

"complete anarchy". The Turkish ministers were corrupt and incompetent. Hosrew Pasha, although as "false as a counter," was the only man who could prevent anarchy, because he had influence in the army, but Hosrew Pasha was an old man, and Mahmoud's heir apparent was a boy of seventeen, educated by bigotted teachers.¹ As revolution in Constantinople appeared possible, Ponsonby instructed his agents to let the Turks know that any violent reaction, should Mahmoud die, could result in the destruction of the Turkish Empire, for the Empire's fate was in the hands of the Powers.² Suspecting that Stopford, with whom he had never been on good terms, could refuse to obey instructions directly from the British embassy, Ponsonby requested Palmerston to send the admiral "precise and positive" orders on what measures to take should Mahmoud die.

The Sultan's death, Ponsonby pointed out to Palmerston, would force Great Britain to make a decision on the future of the Ottoman Empire. The status quo could not be maintained because Great Britain could not permit a squabble among Musulmans to permit Russia to seize Constantinople. The Turkish question, which "is a naval one," could be solved with the British, French and Russian squadrons at Constantinople, and as the Black Sea would be opened to Great Britain, Turkey would have nothing to fear from Russia. Although the Russians would object to this settlement, they would bow to the wishes of the other Powers.³

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 19, 1839: F.O. 78/356.

² Same to same, June 24, 1839: B.P.

³ Same to same. June 19, 1839: ibid.

On July 1, Mahmoud died, succeeded by his eldest son, Abdul Medjid. Two days after Abdul Medjid's accession, Nouri Effendi announced to the five ambassadors that the new Sultan had decided to give Mehemet Ali hereditiy in Egypt, should the Pasha surrender all territories beyond the boundaries of Egypt. Orders would be sent immediately to Hafiz Pasha not to engage in any hostilities. Ponsonby welcomed the proposal, which he held as evidence that the new Sultan desired to live in harmony with Mehemet Ali.¹ However, as Mahmoud had offered the Pasha, at the end of 1836, Acre in addition to Egypt, it cannot be said that the new proposals were magnanimous.

Four days after Nouri Effendi's announcement, the Porte learned that Hafiz Pasha had been defeated at Nezib. Fortunately, Ponsonby, having foreseen that the Turkish army would be defeated, had obtained a promise from Hosrew Pasha, in the period after Mahmoud's death, that the Porte would make no concession to Mehemet Ali until the Powers had given their advice. Hosrew Pasha, who assumed control over the Porte after Mahmoud's death, appeared disposed to honour his promise.² However, Nouri Effendi, serving as Foreign Minister until Reschid Pasha returned to Constantinople, acted suspiciously, leading Ponsonby to suspect that he was pressing the Porte to treat directly with Mehemet Ali. As he believed that Nouri Effendi's "opinion is wholly in accordance with the policy of Russia,"³ he suspected that the Turk could persuade the Porte to be guided

¹ Same to same, July 3, 1839: F.O. 78/356.

² Same to same, July 8, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, July 20, 1839: No.181: F.O. 78/356.

by Russia's advice. To counter this supposed Russian intrigue, Ponsonby promised to help recover the Turkish fleet, which Ahmet Pasha had indicated would be surrendered to Mehemet Ali, in return for commitment by the Porte not to negotiate directly with the Pasha. Hosrew Pasha pledged that the Porte would not surrender "one inch" of territory without consulting the Powers, and would not request Russian intervention.¹

In keeping with his promise to Hosrew Pasha, Ponsonby instructed Stopford that should he encounter the Turkish fleet at sea, he should attempt to prevent Ahmet Pasha from surrendering it.² However, Ahmet Pasha already had reached Alexandria. When Ponsonby learned about the fleet's surrender, he began to fear that Mehemet Ali could attempt a naval coup de main. He believed that the Turco-Egyptian fleet would not be opposed "with any degree of vigour." The Sultan would yield to the Pasha, disgrace his ministers, and place the Porte in the hands of Mehemet Ali's partisans.³ As he thought that only immediate action by the Powers could frustrate the Pasha, Ponsonby exhorted Palmerston to implement the plan defending the Straits, which Jochmus had framed.⁴

Although Ponsonby magnified Russia's ambitions, Bouteneff, indeed did press the Porte to negotiate directly with Mehemet Ali.⁵ Knowing that they would have to surrender the Treaty

¹ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, July 20, 1839: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Stopford, July 19, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 20, 1838, No. 182: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 21, 1839, No. 185: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, July 21, 1839, No. 187: ibid.

⁵ Schiemann, op.cit., p. 384.

of Unkiar Skelessi if the Powers imposed a settlement on the Levant, the Russians strove to prevent interference by the Powers. Bouteneff did succeed in persuading the Porte to negotiate directly with the Pasha. On July 22, the Porte informed Ponsonby that the Sultan would offer Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt, Ibrahim the government of Syria, and upon Mehemet Ali's death, Ibrahim would inherit Egypt and return Syria to the Sultan.¹ Stunned, Ponsonby felt powerless to alter the Porte's decision unless he were supported by the other ambassadors, and lamented to Palmerston that Great Britain's indecisive policy seriously hurt his influence.²

While the Porte was preparing to send the new proposals to Mehemet Ali, Stürmer, by chance, received instructions, on July 27, to prevent direct negotiations. Stürmer immediately drafted an official note to the Porte, which the other four ambassadors signed. Ponsonby sent General Chrzanowski at 5:00 A.M. to outline the nature of the note to Hosrew Pasha. Later in the day, when the note was presented officially to the Porte, the Grand Vizier received it "cheerfully and greatfully," and pledged not to negotiate directly.³

For Ponsonby, the collective note served another important purpose: it would result in the "diminuation of the undue power

¹ F. Pisani to Ponsonby, July 22, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 22, 1839: F.O. 78/357.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 27, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, July 29, 1839, No. 193: ibid.

of Russia" in Turkey. Russia's endorsement of the note afforded "proof...that the power of that Government is not equal to an open opposition to the interest and avowed purposes of those who seek a just arrangement of Eastern Affairs."

Ponsonby, who could not resist boasting, noted: "I was not surprised at the act of the Russian Minister. I have long been convinced that Russia would yield whenever really opposed, and I am persuaded that firm though calm resolution to exact all that is really necessary for the future will be certainly successful as the present measure has been in this particular."¹

Bouteneff signed the Collective Note without instructions, and against the wishes of his government.² But as the Czar could not disavow Bouteneff's action without creating a crisis in Europe, he apparently decided upon sending Baron Brunnow to London to discuss a settlement in the Levant. Nicholas felt that the separation of Great Britain and France to some extent would compensate for the abandonment of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. However, he did not alter his intention of endeavouring to produce direct negotiation, hoping that these negotiations would commence before the Powers had removed the difficulties in the way of a conference of Powers.

After the ambassadors had submitted the Collective Note, Ponsonby declined to take any measure which would hint of negotiations with Mehemet Ali. Stürmer, speaking for Austria and Russia, suggested to Ponsonby that the ambassadors should

¹ Ibid.

² Schiemann, op.cit., p.385.

try to ~~relieve~~ the Turkish fleet, and Roussin requested Cochelet to press Mehemet Ali to return the fleet. This course, Ponsonby feared, would give Mehemet Ali a "loop hole" to escape from his situation, which was "excellent" for the Powers and "not agreeable" to the Pasha. If the Powers opened negotiations with Mehemet Ali to recover the fleet, the Pasha could expand the negotiations. Consequently, Ponsonby pressed Roussin and Stürmer to wait for instructions from their governments. Realizing that Ponsonby was correct, the two ambassadors decided to remain passive.¹

On July 30, the five ambassadors pledged to Nouri Effendi that their governments would defend the Sultan against an attack by Mehemet Ali. Although Roussin's pledge was vague, Ponsonby considered that Stürmer's pledge, which was necessary to remove the Porte's fears that the Powers would abandon the Sultan, more than compensated for Roussin's apparent reluctance.²

The next day, Nouri Effendi and Sarim Effendi reported to Ponsonby that the Porte had learned that Ibrahim was advancing upon Constantinople. Wasting no time, Ponsonby immediately suggested to Roussin that the British and French fleets should be called to Constantinople. Roussin objected, claiming that he had no instructions, and Mehemet Ali had assured him that Ibrahim would not advance. Ponsonby countered by arguing that the French ambassador had instructions to prevent a collision between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, and Ibrahim's advance would cause a collision. While Roussin could not deny this contention, he requested that Stürmer should be consulted before taking this

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 29, 1839, No.194: F.O. 78/357.

² Same to same, July 30, 1839: ibid.

step. When Stürmer supported Ponsonby, Roussin refused to send a request to the French admiral before a conference of ambassadors reviewed the situation.¹

Meanwhile, Bouteneff discovered that Ibrahim had not advanced. While the conference no longer was necessary, Ponsonby felt that he could use it to his advantage, and persuaded the ambassadors that they should meet to discuss measures which would check an advance by the Egyptian army. Ponsonby informed the conference that if Constantinople were threatened by Ibrahim, he would request the British fleet's presence in the Bosphorus. This declaration, Ponsonby calculated, would place the Russian ambassador "under a necessity of admitting that such measures might be taken without the permission of Russia, or of at once exposing the nullity of the adhesion of St. Petersburg to the policy that had adopted the Collective Note." While Stürmer and Roussin promised to aid the Sultan, Bouteneff stated that he did not have instructions to move the Russian fleet.²

Despite the knowledge that Ibrahim was not advancing, the Porte remained uneasy. Mehemet Ali demanded Hosrew Pasha's dismissal, and the Porte feared that the Egyptian Pasha could take measures if it did not respond. On August 5, Nouri Effendi requested the ambassadors' aid in forcing the Pasha to desist from this demand. While the ambassadors agreed that the Pasha presumed to dictate to the Sultan who should serve as his ministers, they declined ~~to send~~ a note to the consuls-general in

¹ Same to same, August 7, 1839: ibid.

² Ibid.

Alexandria.¹

In June, Soult urged Palmerston to instruct Ponsonby to co-operate with Roussin in obtaining permission from the Porte for the passage of the Anglo-French fleet through the Dardanelles in the event that the Sultan requested aid from any other Power.² While Palmerston accepted Soult's suggestion, in his instruction of July 5, he specified that Ponsonby and Roussin should make their representations immediately,³ which did not meet with Soult's approval. Eight days later, Palmerston sent an instruction to complement the instruction of July 5, requesting Ponsonby to tell the Porte that should the Sultan die and the appearance of the Anglo-French fleet be necessary, the joint fleet would be ready to act.⁴ Roussin's instructions differed significantly from Ponsonby's.⁵ When Ponsonby proposed that they immediately communicate the instructions to the Porte, Roussin declined, stating that the Austrian and Russian ambassadors might not support the representation. Thereupon Ponsonby argued that as Mehemet Ali, who undoubtedly had received a copy of the Collective Note, already could have sent Ibrahim orders to advance to panic the Porte into submitting, they should make separate and verbal communications immediately to Hosrew Pasha that the British and French fleets would protect the Sultan. As Roussin again

¹ Same to same, August 8, 1839: ibid.

² Soult to Bourgeney, July 6, 1839: Guizot, op.cit., p.499.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 5, 1839: F.O. 78/353.

⁴ Same to same, July 13, 1839: ibid.

⁵ Bourgeney to Soult, July 9, 1839: Guizot, op.cit., pp.502-503.

declined,¹ Ponsonby apparently did not submit the instruction to the Porte.

While the Collective Note, for a time, disarmed Ponsonby's suspicions of Russia, they were easily reanimated. On August 18, Nouri Effendi informed Ponsonby that the Russians had complained that the British and French fleets were too near the Dardanelles, and the Porte thought that Russia would be made less apprehensive if the fleets retreated. As Ponsonby considered the fleet Great Britain's only effective instrument to show her power in the Levant, he regarded the Russian demand as a scheme to exclude Great Britain from participating in a peace settlement in the Levant. Ponsonby believed that compliance with Russia's demands would give the Turks the impression that Russia commanded Great Britain, France and Austria, which would encourage the Porte to negotiate directly with Mehemet Ali.² Therefore, Ponsonby replied to Nouri Effendi that Russia had the same objective as Great Britain, to protect the Sultan, and the fleets secured the Sultan against an attack by Ibrahim. The ambassador refused to move the British fleet, and obtained from Roussin, who had not received a similar request from the Porte, a promise to refuse when asked.³

After he had made his reply to the Porte, Ponsonby again argued to Palmerston that the British and French fleets should be sent into the Sea of Marmora, pointing out that unless this were done and Russia forced to negotiate in Vienna, Hosrew Pasha would be "overpowered." Russia had not abandoned her

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 6, 1839, August 7, 1839: F.O. 78/357.

² Same to same, August 19, 1839: F.O. 78/358.

³ Same to same, August 18, 1839: ibid.

desire of seizing the Dardanelles, and to accomplish this objective, she could work through Mehemet Ali, whom she secretly supported. As he had been informed by Stopford that the fleet would have difficulty in passing the Dardanelles, Ponsonby requested that Palmerston send steamships to tug the sail of the line through the strong currents in the Strait.¹

When Ponsonby received another request from Nouri Effendi to move the fleet, he answered in a manner "to make him feel" that he knew "his connections with the Russians."² Ponsonby's suspicions may not have been unwarranted. Czar Nicholas still hoped that he could control negotiations upon a Levant settlement by persuading the Turks to insist that the negotiations should be held in Constantinople. Nouri Effendi was deficient in talent, easily duped and intimidated, and Bouteneff knew how to exploit his weaknesses. But Bouteneff now had to face opposition from Stürmer as well as Ponsonby. Having been frustrated by the Czar in his attempts to convene a conference in Vienna, Metternich responded by trying to prevent the Russians from manoeuvring the Porte into resolving upon direct negotiations, or insisting that Constantinople should be the site of a conference of Powers. This terminated the Austro-Russian alliance, which Ponsonby, since the beginning of his term as ambassador, had found so formidable.

Thinking that a division among the ambassadors would weaken the Porte's resolve to oppose negotiations with the Pasha, Ponsonby carefully avoided showing differences

¹ Same to same, August 19, 1839, No. 221: F.O. 78/358.

² Same to same, August 19, 1839, No. 222: ibid.

with Bouteneff, subtly telling the Porte that the governments, and not the ambassadors of the Powers, should determine the conference's site. Stürmer took a more direct approach, suggesting to Hosrew Pasha that the Porte should say that as Mehemet Ali had demanded the partition of the Turkish Empire and Hosrew Pasha's dismissal, the Sultan looked to the Powers to prevent himself from being humiliated by the Pasha. Ponsonby welcomed Stürmer's recommendation, believing that it would turn the tables on Bouteneff.¹

Stürmer, supported by Baron Hazar, his brother-in-law who had been sent by Metternich to aid him, used strong and even "violent" language with Nouri Effendi and Sarim Effendi. The two Austrians succeeded in resurrecting a note to the Powers, rejecting Mehemet Ali's demands and granting him only Egypt, which the Porte had resolved upon, but overcome by fear, soon had decided against. Although Stürmer failed to prevent the Porte from inserting in its letter that negotiations should be held in Constantinople, neither Ponsonby nor Stürmer considered that this insertion would create difficulties. Ponsonby noted to Palmerston that the Powers probably could persuade the Porte to negotiate in Vienna. If the Porte continued to insist upon negotiations in Constantinople, the ambassadors in Vienna could discuss the Turkish question and send instructions to the ambassadors in Constantinople. As Ponsonby was convinced that Nouri Effendi and Sarim Effendi were insisting upon Constantinople as the site only to satisfy their

¹ Same to same, August 19, 1839, No.220: ibid.

vanity, he recognized that he was powerless in inducing the Porte to omit the statement.¹

Ponsonby regarded the resurrection of this note as an important victory, having cut from under the Russians the "best ground they had on which to build a concealed opposition to a settlement."² However, Bouteneff did not relent in his pressure upon Nouri Effendi to negotiate directly, granting the Pasha hereditary rule in Egypt and Syria for life.³ Despite the combined opposition of Ponsonby and Stürmer, Bouteneff still believed that he could attain his end, which was certainly an error in judgment. He used methods of intimidation when conciliation would have been more appropriate, threatening to leave Constantinople should the Sultan call upon the British and French fleets for aid.⁴

When Ponsonby learned about Russia's threat and the extent of the activities of the agents of Russia and Mehemet Ali in undermining Turkish morale, he requested Nouri Effendi to publish a statement by Lord Beauvale, the British ambassador in Vienna, pledging support for the Sultan. When Nouri Effendi equivocated, Ponsonby took action into his own hands. The ambassador instructed Alison, an attaché recently sent by Palmerston to the British embassy, to request that the Turkish Foreign Ministry should translate and publish Beauvale's statement. Alison discovered that the statement had been kept secret from

¹ Same to same, August 22, 1839: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, August 30, 1839: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

many officials, and he could not find an official brave enough to publish it. Eventually a private publisher translated and published Beauvale's statement.¹

The threat to leave Constantinople did not help Bouteneff's prestige. Even the timid Nouri Effendi received Bouteneff's threat rather calmly. Reschid Pasha's return to Constantinople, on September 4, ended Bouteneff's hope of producing direct negotiations between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali. Reschid Pasha found the Russians still pressing Nouri Effendi to give Mehemet Ali Syria for life. At a council convened at the Porte to discuss the Russian proposal, Reschid Pasha spoke against it, and was supported by Halil Pasha. The council rejected the proposal.² On September 10, Reschid Pasha informed Ponsonby that he opposed any concession to Mehemet Ali in Syria, under any title, for the Sultan would be endangered if the Pasha remained in Syria. Reschid Pasha promised that the Porte would remain passive while the Powers resolved the Turkish question, and he condemned Nouri Effendi's policy.³

Within a few days after the council at the Porte, Nouri Effendi and Sarim Effendi were dismissed from office. The new ministry contained four major figures: Reschid Pasha, Hosrew Pasha, Halil Pasha, and Ahmet Fethi Pasha. While outwardly appearing united, the Porte was rent by intrigues. However no serious differences of opinion upon foreign policy existed within the Porte, which followed what Ponsonby called the

¹ Same to same, September 6, 1839: ibid.

² Same to same, September 9, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, September 10, 1839: ibid.

"English Policy."¹ The new ministry promised Ponsonby that the Sultan would never request aid from Russia, and should the Russian fleet be sent to Constantinople, the Sultan would request the British and French fleets to come as well. Both Ponsonby and Roussin pledged their support for the new government,² but Ponsonby was uneasy, because he considered that Hosrew Pasha and Halil Pasha were unreliable.³

As the two fleets were still at anchor near the Dardanelles, the Russian embassy demanded that the new ministry should request the British and French ambassadors to move them. Desiring to remain on friendly terms with the Russians, Reschid Pasha secretly informed Ponsonby that the Porte might have to make this request, but added that the embassies could give the same answer as they previously had given to Nouri Effendi.⁴ At the same time, Reschid Pasha, who felt insecure unless the fleets were near the Dardanelles, suggested that if bad weather during the winter endangered the fleet, it could find adequate shelter near the White Cliffs. While the Porte officially would object to cover itself against Russian reproaches, it would "accept the excuses of necessity."⁵ Ponsonby communicated Reschid Pasha's suggestion to Stopford.⁶ When the Porte requested Ponsonby and Roussin to withdraw the two fleets from

¹ Same to same, September 22, 1839, No. 257: ibid.

² Same to same, September 22, 1839, No. 258: ibid.

³ Same to same, September 22, 1839, No. 257: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, September 23, 1839, No. 260: F.O. 78/359.

⁵ Same to same, September 23, 1839, No. 261: ibid.

⁶ Same to same, September 24, 1839: ibid.

their positions near the Dardanelles, the two ambassadors sent identical notes, stating that as the admirals received their instructions from the ambassadors in Vienna, they did not have the authority to move the fleets.¹

Although the Turkish ministers were united upon foreign policy, a strong faction in the Seraglio, led by the Sultana Validé, the Sultan's mother, favoured direct negotiations with Mehemet Ali. As the young Sultan was inclined to listen to his mother, Reschid Pasha took bold action to outmanoeuvre the Sultana. He told the Sultan that the ministry could not function if he listened to advice from non-ministers, even from his mother. Given a choice between the Porte and the Seraglio, Abdul Medjid promised that he would rely completely upon the Porte's advice.² The Porte's policy now was free from effective opposition from the Seraglio. Reschid Pasha's action indeed proved timely, for suddenly France altered her policy.

¹ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, September 23, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 30, 1839: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 24, 1839: ibid.

CHAPTER VIII: A CHANGE IN FRENCH POLICY

A. France and Direct Negotiations

During the eighteen-thirties's the most delicate and perplexing problem the Tuileries faced was the Turkish question. France had done much in the period after 1826 to supply technical aid to Mehemet Ali, and the French consul-general Mimaut had encouraged the Pasha in his expansionist ambitions. Napoleon's idea of making the Mediterranean a French lake was not abandoned, but transformed to correspond to the limits of French power. As the British were masters of the Mediterranean, the French could extend their power into North Africa only with the consent of Great Britain, as they did in Algiers. However, the Egyptian question was not merely a North African question, but part of a vital European problem, the Turkish question.

Roussin's policy in the crisis following the Turkish defeat at Koniah seriously injured French influence in Alexandria. As the Pasha did not hide the fact that he distrusted France, the French consuls-general in the eighteen-thirties' took pains to assure him that France was sensitive to his interests. However, conscious that they were competing with Great Britain, whose friendship Mehemet Ali believed indispensable to his security, the French tended to be too liberal in their promises of support for the Pasha's objectives. Meanwhile, Roussin carefully emphasized that France would oppose the Pasha's desire for independence and would be true to the Sultan's interests. These irreconcilable policies served France well in time of peace, but were no

longer tenable after the outbreak of war in 1839.

The inability of the Powers, after the Battle of Nezib, to commence discussions upon a permanent peace settlement in the Levant, forced France to choose between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali. The first indication in Constantinople of a change in the policy of the Soult government came at the end of September, when Roussin was recalled.¹ As relations between Roussin and Mehemet Ali never had recovered from the events of 1833, Roussin's removal was requisite to win the Pasha's confidence. In addition to his strained relations with the Pasha, Roussin's impetuous, straightforward personality and his repeated faux pas appeared to be a liability, for France required a man in Constantinople who could use subtle methods to obtain a settlement favourable to Mehemet Ali. Roussin's successor, Pontois, who had served as the first dragoman in the French embassy and had done the shady work, had a reputation as an intriguer.

Pontois made his first attempt to persuade the Porte to conduct direct negotiations in the last week of September. His argument was subtle: European peace was in danger and consequently a reconciliation between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali was imperative. The Powers did not possess sufficient military power to impose a settlement upon the Levant. Disturbed by this change in French attitude, Reschid Pasha, on September 28, requested Ponsonby and Sturmer to write official notes to the Porte, which he could use to defend his policy.² In his note, Ponsonby lauded the Porte's resolution to prevent the partition

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 30, 1839: F.O. 78/359.

² Same to same, October 8, 1839: ibid.

of the Turkish Empire "on the disguise and cloak of a desire to reestablish peace."¹ Stürmer sent a similar note. Reschid Pasha successfully employed the two notes to support in the Divan his policy against direct negotiations.

When Pontois made a second representation, Reschid Pasha immediately placed him on the defensive, demanding an explanation for France's proposal to divide Syria among Mehemet Ali's family, and to give the Pasha Candia until he died. Anxious not to show that France and Great Britain were divided and that France favoured Mehemet Ali, Pontois argued that this was a suggestion, not a proposal, and only minor details divided Great Britain and France. France had made the suggestion because the Powers could not use force without provoking a march by Ibrahim upon Constantinople. As only Russia would benefit from this situation, a solution favourable to Mehemet Ali was indispensable. Pontois' arguments could not shake Reschid Pasha's resolution not to compromise,² and Ponsonby was confident that the Turk could not be influenced by the Frenchman's representations.³

In a subsequent representation, Pontois altered his approach. While he now openly stated that the French government desired to see direct negotiations, he tried carefully not to give Reschid Pasha the impression that France favoured Mehemet Ali. Pontois endeavoured to reduce the Turkish question to a secondary

¹ Official note by Ponsonby to the Porte, October 18, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 8, 1839: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 30, 1839: F.O. 78/359.

³ Ibid.

one by arguing that European peace was the primary question.¹ At the same time, Pontois attempted to obtain Ponsonby's support for direct negotiations by exploiting his Russophobia. The Frenchman indirectly communicated to Ponsonby that his government did not think that the crucial question, how to secure Constantinople against a Russian attack, could be solved before the Porte had negotiated a settlement with Mehemet Ali. After the Egyptian question had been resolved, the Powers could establish a protectorate over the Turkish capital. Easily seeing through Pontois' manoeuvre, Ponsonby told Reschid Pasha to disregard the representations of the French ambassador, assuring the Turk that Great Britain and France supported the Porte's resolution not to negotiate and Pontois probably was not acting upon instructions from his government. As the season was too advanced for Ibrahim to launch an attack, the Porte had nothing to fear.²

On November 3, the Hattisherif of Gulhané, containing extensive reforms securing person and property and eliminating abuses in government, was promulgated. The Hattisherif was designed to show Europe that the Turkish Empire could be regenerated by its present government, and Mehemet Ali was not Turkey's saviour. While many Turkish officials were opposed to these reforms, they did not show their opposition openly, lest Mehemet Ali would be given an opportunity to exploit the division at the Porte. However, this faction worked secretly to frustrate the reforms. Ponsonby regarded the Hattisherif as proof that Turkey could be regenerated, and as a blow against

¹ Same to same, November 13, 1839: F.O. 78/360.

² Ibid.

Mehemet Ali's partisans.¹

As the Hattisherif strengthened his position at the Porte, Reschid Pasha now assumed a stronger tone in his conversations with Pontois. When the latter tried to convince him that the Powers had said that they would accept a French plan giving Mehemet Ali Syria for life, Reschid Pasha forced him to admit that as Great Britain and France were divided upon the question of Syria, the French plan would not be accepted without modifications.² Again, when Pontois suggested that the Porte, with the mediation of the Powers, should use the French plan to negotiate a settlement with Mehemet Ali, Reschid Pasha replied that he would never consent to the partition of the Turkish Empire and would never act without British approval. The Sultan and the Divan approved Reschid Pasha's language with Pontois.³

These repeated failures induced Pontois to make an appeal to Reschid Pasha's personal interests. The French ambassador cautioned the Turk that he should be on his guard not to antagonize Mehemet Ali, for Mehemet Ali could increase his influence in Constantinople, and destroy him. Reschid Pasha replied that his country was more important than his career,⁴ certainly an unusual comment for a Turk. Frustrated in his appeal to Reschid Pasha's personal interests, Pontois, in a subsequent representation stated that Metternich had commented

¹ Same to same, November 5, 1839: ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, December 17, 1839: F.O. 78/360 Pt.II.

that he approved Great Britain's aims, but not her methods, and had suggested to the Russian government that Mehemet Ali should be permitted to negotiate with the Porte; however, if the Pasha's terms were not moderate, the Powers would refuse to recognize any arrangement concluded. These comments disturbed the Reis Effendi, who replied that if the Powers did not support the Sultan, the Porte "must throw itself into the arms of the Russians." As it was evident that Reschid Pasha was beginning to doubt whether Metternich would support coercive measures against Mehemet Ali, Pontois directed that the Turk's answer should be circulated through various channels to undermine Turkish confidence in the Powers.¹

While Stürmer denied that Metternich had made the statement alleged by Pontois, Reschid Pasha was not satisfied, and sent a letter of complaint to Ponsonby. Reschid Pasha maintained in the note that should the Powers accept Metternich's proposition, Halil Pasha, Hosrew Pasha and himself would be weakened in their stand against the party which desired direct negotiations, and the Muslim people would doubt whether they could rely upon the Christian Powers.² Ponsonby could reply only that Metternich's statement probably had been misconstrued by the French government, and Great Britain never would accept the proposal allegedly made by the Austrian government.³ Fortunately, a few days after replying to Reschid Pasha, Ponsonby received Palmerston's instructions dated December 2, 1838,

¹ Same to same, December 18, 1839: ibid.

² Same to same, December 23, 1839: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to F. Pisani, December 21, 1839: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 23, 1839: ibid.

which directed him to prevent the Porte from making concessions.¹ His apprehensions relieved, Reschid Pasha promised Ponsonby that the Porte would be firm.²

Aware that the unity between Ponsonby and Stürmer encouraged Reschid Pasha to remain intransigent, Pontois made a clumsy attempt to divide them by attacking Metternich's vacillating policy.³ Pontois soon followed this with another attempt to exploit Ponsonby's Russophobia, telling Chrzanowski that as Russia never would permit the presence of the British and French fleets in the Sea of Marmora, the Sultan could not be protected by the fleets against an attack by Ibrahim. Ponsonby commented to Palmerston: "Your Lordship will easily detect the yellow clay under the plaster of Paris."⁴

While Ponsonby's relations with Pontois were deteriorating, the British ambassador was growing closer to Bouteneff. Despite his long and bitter struggle for influence with Bouteneff, Ponsonby never had attacked his adversary's personal character. Indeed, he respected Bouteneff for his energy in implementing Russia's policy. As Russia's interests, Ponsonby believed, dictated that Constantinople should belong to Russia, a Russian statesman who did not pursue this end would be a traitor. Ponsonby had attacked Stürmer for being subservient to Bouteneff;

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 2, 1839: F.O. 78/353.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 24, 1839: F.O. 78/360 Pt. II

³ Same to same, November 30, 1839: F.O. 78/360. Pt. I.

⁴ Ibid.

Austria's interests dictated that Austria should oppose Russian aggrandizement in Turkey. He had had unkind words for Roussin when the French ambassador had refused to support him; France's interests dictated that the French and British governments should be allied against the Holy Alliance. Only Bouteneff, Ponsonby thought, had consistently pursued the interests of his country. When he was instructed by Palmerston to co-operate with Bouteneff, Ponsonby made no objections.¹

It was not difficult for Ponsonby to reconcile co-operation with Bouteneff. As Great Britain had made impossible an attempt by Russia to seize Constantinople, either by overt force or under the guise of aiding the Sultan, Russia had no choice but to abandon the policy that she had pursued since the age of Peter the Great, and to co-operate with Great Britain.² So long as the British government continued her present policy, Russia could not deviate from her new policy. A diplomat of the old school, Ponsonby believed that the balance of power dictated alliances and alterations in foreign policy. Although Ponsonby could feel sympathy for the Poles and Circassians, he could conveniently place in the background national movements when the balance of power was endangered. Like Palmerston, Ponsonby believed that the balance of power overrode all considerations in foreign policy. Common views on foreign policy resulted in complete co-operation between Ponsonby and Palmerston to prevent direct negotiations between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, and frustrate French ambitions in the Levant.

¹ Same to same, December 23, 1839: F.O. 78/360 Pt. II.

² Same to same, January 8, 1840: B.P.

By the beginning of January, 1840, Pontois, having exhausted all the arguments he could muster to persuade the Porte to commence direct negotiations, suspended his representations to the Porte. Reschid Pasha turned his attention to implementing his reforms. He also devised new reforms, many of which were unsuitable for the Turkish Empire. His reforms to abolish tax farming and pay governors¹ were necessary, but his plan to determine decisions in the council by a majority vote was a radical break with tradition. While Ponsonby, at first, welcomed Reschid Pasha's reforms, he soon realized that many of them were too far-reaching, and could not be adequately implemented.²

The first major test for the Hattisherif of Gulhané, which came in January and February, ironically directly involved Great Britain, who championed reform in Turkey. The British government instructed Ponsonby to obtain the deposition of the Patriarch of Constantinople, claiming that the Patriarch was involved with a Greek nationalist group, the Philorthodox Society, which had conspired to create a revolution in the Ionian Islands.³ When Reschid Pasha refused to depose the Patriarch, Ponsonby concluded that the Turk was afraid to displease Russia, and tried to convince him that Russia would not interfere.⁴ Ponsonby made a series of representations, but Reschid Pasha refused to yield, telling Ponsonby that he would

¹ Same to same, January 7, 1840: F.O. 78/392.

² Same to same, January 16, 1840: ibid. Same to same, January 17, 1840: B.P.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, November 25, 1839: F.O. 78/353.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 22, 1840: F.O. 78/392.

submit the question to the council. The Edict of Gulhané, Reschid Pasha asserted, gave the Patriarch the right to be tried by the council before he could be deposed.¹

Ponsonby maintained that the Hattisherif of Gulhané could not be invoked in this question, as the Patriarch had interfered in the internal affairs of a country other than Turkey. The ambassador considered Reschid Pasha's arguments "hollow and unsound."² Reschid Pasha denied that he desired to withhold satisfaction from the British government, but continued to insist that the Patriarch should be tried.³ Eventually, the Patriarch was tried by the council, which, finding him guilty, deposed him.

Though he regarded the trial of the Patriarch by the council as a deliberate attempt by Reschid Pasha to demonstrate that the British government had exceeded its rights in dictating the Patriarch's deposition, Ponsonby overlooked the manner of the deposition, and considered that adequate satisfaction had been given by the Porte. However, Reschid Pasha had not concluded his illustration that the Porte was the master in its own house. The new Patriarch was elected in an irregular manner, Reschid Pasha setting a Friday as the day of the election, but holding it the day before. The Archbishop of Nicomedia, a creature of Aristarki, a Russian agent, was elected. Although Ponsonby protested, the new Patriarch was confirmed in his office

¹ Reschid Pasha to Ponsonby, February 2, 1840: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 4, 1840: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 12, 1840: ibid.

³ Reschid Pasha to Ponsonby, February 8, 1840: enclosure ibid.

by the Sultan.¹ Reschid Pasha's manoeuvre was not easily forgotten by the ambassador, who had hoped to see an anti-Russian Patriarch elected, thus preventing the Russians from interfering in Turkish internal affairs through the Patriarch's office. Hereafter, Ponsonby's attitude towards Reschid Pasha hardened.

As winter made impossible an advance by Ibrahim, the Turks, who felt secure, did not bother to ready their defences for a possible attack later in the year. However, Ponsonby, who feared that Mehemet Ali could send the Turco-Egyptian fleet to Constantinople after bribing the garrison at the Dardanelles, did not relax his efforts to secure the Turkish capital. Only the British fleet, the ambassador believed, could give adequate security, but the British admiral lacked instructions which would enable him to deal with a naval coup de main. Consequently, Ponsonby exhorted Palmerston to give the admiral "peremptory and not conditional orders" to prevent such an attack by the Pasha.² Meanwhile, Ponsonby requested Captain Walker, sent by the British government on the Porte's request to instruct the Turkish navy, to suggest measures to the Capudan Pasha which would prevent Mehemet Ali's naval forces from passing through the Dardanelles, or Ibrahim's army from crossing the Straits. Walker submitted his recommendations to the Porte,³ but the Porte did not act upon them.

Palmerston did not send the instructions which Ponsonby had requested for the British admiral. The approach of spring

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 7, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, January 26, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, January 28, 1840: ibid.

turned Ponsonby's thoughts to a possible advance in April by Ibrahim upon Constantinople. As the Egyptian army could reach the Bosphorus within twenty days, the ambassador was anxious to take immediate measures which would check the advance. Ponsonby calculated that the British fleet could play a crucial role in preventing Ibrahim from crossing the Bosphorus, but Stopford did not possess instructions to defend the Strait, and Ponsonby was not confident that the admiral would listen to his requests. Ponsonby urged Palmerston that the British admiral should be given instructions to sail to Constantinople if necessary, pointing out that Roussin possessed this discretionary power.¹

Meanwhile, Ponsonby instructed Chrzanowski to draw up a plan to employ the Turkish army in checking an advance by Ibrahim. Concluding that the Turkish army was too weak to prevent Ibrahim from advancing through Asia Minor, the Pole recommended that the army should be concentrated near the Straits. Chrzanowski submitted the plan immediately to the Porte,² but the Turks hesitated to act upon it.

At the beginning of March, Hosrew Pasha received a bellicose letter from Mehemet Ali, demanding hereditary rule in the territories under his sway. When Pontois was informed about the note, he pressed the Porte to commence direct negotiations. Because of the uncertain state of the negotiations among the Powers, the Porte was afraid to reject the Pasha's pretensions, and decided to send a vague reply. Anxious not to give Mehemet Ali an opportunity to manoeuvre the Porte into direct negotia-

¹ Same to same, March 3, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, March 23, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

tions, Ponsonby urged that Reschid Pasha reject unequivocally the Pasha's pretensions, and refute his absurd arguments that the Turkish Empire would be strengthened by partition and that the Sultan would be stronger if he retained the Turkish fleet. Mehemet Ali's letter, Ponsonby argued, demonstrated that the Pasha really was weak, and could obtain his ends only by intimidating the Porte. Mehemet Ali's army was not strong, and he knew that he would be ruined should Ibrahim march upon Constantinople. While the necessity of maintaining a large army exhausted the Pasha's resources, the Porte was not burdened by large military expenses. The Pasha could not attack before May, and the Porte should not contemplate concessions unless Ibrahim's attack were successful. As a vague reply to Mehemet Ali's letter would show that the Sultan had begun to doubt his own rights, Mehemet Ali's position would be strengthened.¹

Encouraged by Ponsonby's forceful arguments, Reschid Pasha sent a reply to Mehemet Ali embodying these suggestions. As Ponsonby suspected that Pontois and Mehemet Ali had arranged that this note be sent to strengthen Pontois' arguments in favour of direct negotiations, he believed that he had frustrated one more intrigue by France to produce direct negotiations.²

Although Ponsonby did not doubt that Mehemet Ali could be rash enough to order Ibrahim's advance, he kept this fear well screened from Reschid Pasha. Pontois had stated that he would call up the French fleet if Ibrahim attacked Constantinople. Consequently, Ponsonby wrote to Rear-Admiral

¹ Same to same, March 7, 1840: F.O. 78/392.

² Ibid. Same to same, March 23, 1840: B.P.

Louis, who temporarily commanded the British fleet in Turkish waters, that if necessary, he would apply formally to him, requesting the presence of the fleet at Constantinople. Terming Ibrahim's threat a "petty danger," Ponsonby felt that only one warship would be needed to prevent Ibrahim from crossing the Bosphorus.¹

As early as the spring of 1840, Ponsonby's thoughts turned to reducing Mehemet Ali. The ambassador noted to Palmerston that the new Sultan was not suspected, like Mahmoud, of being indifferent to the Mohammedan religion. Nor were Great Britain's intentions suspect, for the Syrians remembered that Great Britain had returned Egypt to the Sultan. If Alexandria were blockaded, cutting Mehemet Ali's communications with Syria, Acre need not be attacked, but would fall as soon as Ibrahim's army lost control of Syria. Great Britain would have either France or Russia as an ally. If France were divided from Great Britain, Russia would gravitate towards the latter; if Russia were hostile towards Great Britain, France would side with her Entente partner. Russia would be free to act against Mehemet Ali, as her secret arrangement with him had been fashioned in a manner permitting her to "disavow and escape from it." After the settlement of the Egyptian question, the Turkish question would be relatively easy to resolve.²

As time passed, Ponsonby became increasingly hostile to Reschid Pasha, although the ambassador veiled his feelings from the Turk. He found fault with Reschid Pasha's reforms, thinking

¹ Same to same, April 9, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

² Same to same, March 23, 1840, April 8, 1840: B.P.

that the programme was moving too quickly. The democratic rights, which Ponsonby previously had welcomed, now drew his ire. Reschid Pasha, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston, had attempted to transform "a Theocratic Despot into a Constitutional Monarch, and the apeing of the forms of Representative Governments may produce worse things than the ridicule it excites here."¹ Ponsonby believed that the Sultan was "everything" in Turkey, as no aristocracy, middle-class, or even people existed. If the Sultan's power were crippled, the dangerous Janissary faction could rise again.² However, the belief that the Porte would not permit Reschid Pasha to go much further with his reforms, eased Ponsonby's apprehensions.³

Although at odds on various internal policies, Reschid Pasha and Ponsonby were united in their opposition to Mehemet Ali's pretensions. The Turk continued to assure Ponsonby that the Porte would not act without Great Britain's concurrence. When Ponsonby informed him that Nouri Effendi had said, in Paris, that force should not be employed against Mehemet Ali, Reschid Pasha replied that " 'a Traitor could not do more' " and promised to recall him. Ponsonby assured Reschid Pasha that the British government would not permit Russian forces to act in Turkey unless Russia were bound by a treaty with the Powers, which relieved the Turk's uneasiness upon Russia's part in a peace settlement.⁴

¹ Same to same, March 16, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

² Same to same, March 18, 1840: B.P.

³ Same to same, April 15, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, April 25, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

As early as March, the Porte was apprehensive that Ibrahim could march upon Constantinople in the spring, but it took no measures before April to prepare defences in Asia Minor. However, as these tardy preparations in April were not conducted with any degree of vigour, Ponsonby exerted strong pressure upon the Porte, trying to frighten it into resolute action by arguing that Ibrahim could reach the Straits in twenty days, and a convention among the Powers could not be signed in time to save the Sultan. While he promised that the British fleet would be employed, Ponsonby maintained that the action of the fleet would be unavailing if the Turkish army did not support it by defending vital positions near the Straits.¹

Moved by these representations, Hosrew Pasha requested Chrzanowski to survey the area adjacent to the Straits for the purpose of determining the best points for defence. Reschid Pasha subsequently accepted a suggestion by Ponsonby for the employment of young Turks educated at Woolwich to prepare the defences.² Though Ponsonby believed that the British fleet, aided by the Turkish army, would be more than a match for Ibrahim, he could not dispell the fear that the British government could abandon the Sultan. Throughout his career as ambassador to Constantinople, Ponsonby had been disappointed by the British government's reluctance to palpably demonstrate that Great Britain would defend the Turks. As he had done many times, Ponsonby warned Palmerston that should Great Britain abandon the Sultan, the Porte would look to Russia, and the Treaty of

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Unkiar Skelessi would be invoked. Ponsonby suggested that should Ibrahim march against Constantinople, a small British squadron should be sent to Syria to raise the population, endangering Ibrahim's rear.¹

In this time of crisis, the Seraskier Pasha, Halil Pasha, concerned more with amassing a personal fortune than with defending the Sultan, showed no energy, and little could be done without his participation to prepare defences. Hosrew Pasha thought that he could accelerate the construction of defences by appointing a general for Asia, having under his control the area around Scutari and Mondania, where Chrzanowski had suggested the defences should be prepared. However, the newly appointed general, Riza Pasha, discovered that he could not obtain troops without Halil Pasha's co-operation.²

As Halil Pasha's removal appeared to be the only solution, Ponsonby extended his aid to Reschid Pasha to place the office of Seraskier Pasha in better hands. Ponsonby maintained to the Porte that as a representative of a Power pledged to defend the Sultan, he had a right to insist that the Porte should mobilize Turkey's resources to defend against an attack upon Constantinople by Ibrahim. Thinking that his message would be reported to the Sultan, Ponsonby added that the eyes of Europe were upon the Porte.³ Halil Pasha was deposed in the second week of May, and replaced by Mustapha Nouri Pasha, Pasha of Iannina, who had an excellent reputation. Ahmed Fethi Pasha served as

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, April 26, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

³ Ibid.

Seraskier Pasha until Mustapha Nouri Pasha arrived in Constantinople.¹

After Halil Pasha's deposition, the Porte informed Ponsonby that it would send eighteen thousand troops to a position between Ismit and Scutari, which was within range of the guns of warships in the Bosphorus, to control the only road Ibrahim could use to reach the Strait. This considerably relieved Ponsonby's anxieties. The ambassador believed that the Turkish troops, who were at least equal in ability to Ibrahim's troops, and required only a good commander,² would be victorious. In order to carry the Turkish position, the ambassador calculated that Ibrahim would have to attack with at least thirty thousand troops, but he could advance with no more than twenty thousand men of "indifferent quality." To Ponsonby, the employment of Turkish troops went beyond military necessity. It showed Europe that the Sultan really had an army, and could defend himself. As the French and Russian fleets would not have to be summoned to defend Constantinople, the pretences "upon which France rests the defense of her inimical policy, will be taken away."³

The Porte continually postponed dispatching the troops to the defensive positions, Reschid Pasha using the festival of Mohammed's birth,⁴ and subsequently other excuses. Ponsonby suspected that Pontois was responsible for the Porte's attitude. He was convinced that if Ibrahim advanced, Pontois would assert that Mehemet Ali was irresistible, and would obtain from the

¹ Same to same, May 12, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

² Same to same, May 13, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, May 15, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Porte the settlement the Pasha desired. If the road to Constantinople remained undefended, Ponsonby calculated that Mehemet Ali would not fail to order his army to advance.¹

Considering the Porte's arguments for delay as unfounded, Ponsonby continued his pressure upon the Porte, but it continued to show no energy. The ambassador soon began to suspect that the Porte completely had abandoned its plans to defend the position, and he had little hope that his arguments would produce results until the new Seraskier Pasha, who was intelligent, and had yet to come under French influence, arrived in Constantinople.²

On May 19, Reschid Pasha assured Ponsonby that the plan to defend Constantinople would be implemented as soon as troops arrived from Roumelia. But Ponsonby did not rely upon Reschid Pasha's promise.³ Disturbed by the increase in the numbers of Reschid Pasha's French advisors, Ponsonby for the first time began to fear that the Reis Effendi who had read the philosophy of 'La Jeune France' and was "really in his head more a Frenchman than anything else," could be persuaded by his French advisors to bow to Pontois' arguments. However, Ponsonby believed that as Reschid Pasha knew that he could destroy him, he would think twice before accepting Pontois' advice.⁴ While he felt that he had little chance to move the intransigent Turks to action at this moment, Ponsonby nevertheless did not relent in his pressure upon the Porte, arguing that if the news

¹ Same to same, May 20, 1840: B.P.

² Same to same, May 26, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

³ Same to same, May 29, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, April 27, 1840: B.P.

of an advance by Ibrahim reached Constantinople before the defences were prepared, a revolt could break out there, which would make the plan more difficult to implement.¹

France's pretensions in the Levant reanimated Ponsonby's Napoleonic War spirit. He wrote to Palmerston: "I would rather, as an Englishman see Russia in possession of Constantinople than see the French in possession of the power they aim to and hope to establish in these parts. I think we should be forced by that into a War for our existence at least such a War as would oblige us to beg of Russia to take Constantinople - and then what would be the fate of Austria?" To obtain her aims, France was using "the flimsy disguise of a wish to save the Sultan from the protection of Russia."² As he believed that the presence of the French fleet at Constantinople would encourage intrigues in the city, Ponsonby was anxious to avoid any situation which would give the French an opportunity of sending their fleet through the Dardanelles. When the ambassador received an agreement signed by the Powers, except France, on April 10, limiting Mehemet Ali's rule to Egypt, he noted to Palmerston that this demonstrated that the Porte would be imprudent to request the presence of the French fleet at the Turkish capital in a time of crisis.³

Believing that France controlled the policy of the Pasha, Ponsonby calculated that Mehemet Ali would order Ibrahim to advance only if France encouraged him. However, while France

¹ Same to same, May 29, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

² Same to same, May 7, 1840: F.O. 78/393.

³ Same to same, May 16, 1840: B.P.

could desire to create a situation which would necessitate the presence of her fleet at Constantinople, she would do nothing the moment she saw that Great Britain was in earnest. Ponsonby exhorted Palmerston to refuse to give Mehemet Ali "one atom" of territory beyond Egypt. The ambassador argued that if the Pasha were given a foothold in Syria, France would be his protector, and Russia Turkey's protector. Eventually, France and Russia would quarrel, and a "catastrophe" would ensue. Meanwhile, Great Britain would have little influence in the Levant.¹ Ponsonby was able to obtain a large number of letters sent by the French embassy to the Porte, which he used to support his evaluation of French policy.

At the beginning of June, Reschid Pasha employed the Hattisherif of Gulhané to depose the corrupt Hosrew Pasha, who was succeeded by Mehemet Emir Raouf Pasha, a supporter of Reschid Pasha. This victory gave Reschid Pasha unchallenged sway over the Porte, ending the struggle for power which had sapped its energy. The deposition of Hosrew Pasha came at a crucial time, for Hosrew Pasha, who now was receiving flattering letters from Mehemet Ali, appeared to favour direct negotiations. While Hosrew Pasha immediately began intriguing to regain his power, Reschid Pasha had little to fear from the old Turk, and finally succeeded in having him exiled from Constantinople.

After deposing Hosrew Pasha, Reschid Pasha immediately demonstrated that the Porte would not make concessions to Mehemet Ali. On June 5, Reschid Pasha convened a conference to discuss Nouri Effendi's report that the Austrian and Russian

¹ Ibid.

ambassadors to Paris had stated that the Porte should make territorial concessions to the Pasha. At the conference, Reschid Pasha successfully argued that the Porte should offer Mehemet Ali only Egypt, and rely upon Great Britain to protect the Sultan.¹

In the middle of June, a revolt, sparked by Ibrahim's attempt to disarm the Christian population and conscript sixteen thousand Musulmans and Christians, broke out on Mount Lebanon and in the hill districts near Jerusalem. As the Egyptian army now was engaged in trying to crush the insurgents, an immediate advance by Ibrahim upon Constantinople was impossible. Upon learning about the revolt, Ponsonby and Stürmer met to decide whether the Porte should take measures to aid the Syrians. Agreeing that the Porte would be justified in aiding the Syrians to resist Mehemet Ali's rule, the two ambassadors resolved upon suggesting measures to the Porte. The Internuncio recommended to Reschid Pasha that the Porte should ask the Powers in what manner it should answer Mehemet Ali's last letter; as four of the five Powers would counsel a negative reply, the Porte's position would be strengthened, and Pontois would be placed in an awkward position. In his turn, Ponsonby suggested to the Turk that the Porte should send agents to Syria to promise the inhabitants "the enjoyment of their ancient franchises, to be guaranteed by England," and exemption from conscription and a large portion of their taxes for a specified period. In return, Ponsonby promised that he would send an agent to Syria and

¹ Same to same, June 9, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

persuade the British admiral to send warships to the Syrian coast for the purpose of encouraging the insurgents. As he believed that it would be necessary to show the Sultan's flag to the Syrians, Ponsonby requested that the Porte send a Turkish frigate with the British warships. Reschid Pasha promised that the Porte would implement the suggestions.¹

Ponsonby urged that Palmerston send warships to the Syrian coast to commence operations against Ibrahim. The ambassador promised that the Porte would send a Turkish warship with the British squadron to show the Sultan's flag.² If Great Britain did not begin operations immediately, France would have the right to maintain that Mehemet Ali's power should not be opposed and the Turks would believe this assertion. Bouteneff, Ponsonby emphasized, held the same opinion.³

The ambassador requested Admiral Louis to send warships to Syria, ostensibly for the protection of British subjects, but really for the encouragement of the insurgents. However, Louis was reluctant to accede to this. As the British government had instructed him to station two or three sail of the line near the Dardanelles, Louis was faced with the prospect of dividing his fleet, which contained only six sail of the line. Louis hesitated to ~~weaken~~ his squadron because he had received a report that Mehemet Ali had sent two divisions of his fleet to Syria. Ponsonby countered by arguing that there was no danger

¹ Same to same, June 23, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

² Same to same, June 22, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 23, 1840: B.P.

⁴ Louis to Ponsonby, June 22, 1840: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 29, 1840: F.O. 78/394.

to Constantinople from Mehemet Ali or Russia. However, if Mehemet Ali sent the Turco-Egyptian fleet to Constantinople, the British warships off Syria could intercept it and return in time to defend Constantinople against Ibrahim's army.¹ This argument relieved Louis' apprehensions, and he sent two warships to the Syrian coast.

Richard Wood,² was dispatched by Ponsonby to Syria to collect information, and encourage the Syrians.³ Previously, Wood had been sent on an assignment by Ponsonby to Syria and Mesopotamia, and had played a major role in arranging the surrender of Ravenduz Bey, the Kurdish leader, to Reschid Pasha in 1836.

As the Porte showed its habitual lethargy after accepting the proposals by the two ambassadors, Ponsonby, whose thoughts more and more each day were dominated by the idea of destroying Mehemet Ali, was understandably impatient for action. On June 29, Ponsonby, writing to Palmerston, stated that the Pasha already could have been defeated had the Turks shown some energy, but "fear predominates" at the Porte.⁴ But the Porte had reason to be afraid, for Chekib Effendi, the Turkish ambassador to London, had sent unfavourable dispatches on the progress of the negotiations among the Powers. Although Reschid Pasha promised that the Divan would continue relying upon the Powers,⁵ Ponsonby, fearing that it could waver, sent an official note to the Porte.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 29, 1840, No.132: ibid.

² Vide supra, p. 8.

³ Same to same, June 29, 1840, No.133: ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Same to same, July 1, 1840: F.O. 78/395.

The note expressed "in the most formal manner" the pleasure Ponsonby felt when he received the Porte's assurances that it would not negotiate directly.¹ Reschid Pasha, as he had done on former occasions, used Ponsonby's note in persuading the more timid ministers at the Porte to rely upon the Powers.

Though several ministers remained uneasy, Reschid Pasha, possessing undisputed control over the Divan, withstood all pressures from the agents of Mehemet Ali and France to commence direct negotiations. Sami Bey, who arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of July ostensibly for the purpose of presenting presents from Mehemet Ali to the Sultan's newborn daughter, carried a large sum of money to bribe the Sultana Validé and other important Turks. But Sami Bey made no progress with Reschid Pasha. When Sami Bey said that Mehemet Ali wished to return the Sultan's fleet, Reschid Pasha replied that the fleet was only a secondary question, and the Sultan would not alter his decision of giving Mehemet Ali only Egypt.²

Quickly turning to Sami Bey's support, Pontois maintained to Reschid Pasha that Sami Bey had come to Constantinople as an act of submission for Mehemet Ali, and the Pasha would return the Sultan's fleet. Reschid Pasha retorted that Sami Bey had not come to submit, the Turkish fleet would be returned sooner or later, and the Porte would rely completely upon the Powers. Mehemet Ali, he noted, should send his proposals directly to the Powers, who would decide upon the terms of peace. Ponsonby

¹ Official note by Ponsonby to the Porte, June 28, 1840: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 12, 1840: ibid.

congratulated Reschid Pasha on his answers to Pontois, and was particularly gratified that Reschid Pasha had not discussed the return of the Turkish fleet.¹ The ambassador believed that should the Porte open discussions upon this question, Mehemet Ali's partisans would increase their intrigues, and, before long, the Porte could find itself negotiating directly with Mehemet Ali.²

B. Great Britain and Mehemet Ali after the Battle of Nezib

After the Euphrates Expedition Firman Affair, Palmerston became increasingly suspicious of Mehemet Ali's intentions. Ponsonby's torrent of letters accusing Russia and the Pasha of collusion did much to influence the Foreign Secretary's feelings towards Mehemet Ali. Palmerston accepted Ponsonby's theory, and increasingly became convinced that only the limitation of Mehemet Ali's power could prevent Russia from exploiting the hostility between the Pasha and the Sultan.³ While Mehemet Ali extended his full support to establish steam communication between Great Britain and India through Suez after the failure of the Euphrates Expedition, Palmerston believed that he was pursuing his course solely for his personal interests. Palmerston also carefully observed the Pasha's penetration towards the Persian

¹ Same to same, July 22, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, July 15, 1840: ibid.

³ When he learned about the Sultan's attack upon Mehemet Ali, Palmerston concluded that Russia had persuaded Mahmoud to attack, and had encouraged the Pasha "to push on, only warning him not to threaten Constantinople, so as to bring on a Crisis which might place Russia in collision with the other Powers of Europe." Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 23, 1839: B.P.

Gulf.

At the beginning of 1839, a British squadron captured Aden. The British government now considered the Persian Gulf within Great Britain's sphere of influence. Palmerston, learning that Mehemet Ali's forces in the Hedjaz were slowly encroaching towards the Persian Gulf, instructed Campbell to demand that the Pasha should order his general in the Hedjaz not to continue his advance.¹ Suspecting that Mehemet Ali was intriguing with the Arab chiefs in the vicinity of Aden, Palmerston warned the Pasha that Great Britain would not view with "indifference" an attempt to "subvert" her rule in Aden.² The British admiral at Aden was instructed to prevent the occupation of the island of Bahrein by Mehemet Ali.³ In September, Palmerston instructed Campbell to demand that Mehemet Ali should withdraw his troops from The Yemen.⁴

Palmerston, desiring a settlement which would preclude further clashes between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, concluded that the desert between Egypt and Syria would best serve this purpose. Campbell, however, recommended that the Pasha should be given hereditary rule in Syria, arguing that should Syria be returned to the Sultan, it would be plagued by anarchy, the Christians and Jews would be poorly protected, and British commerce would be ruined. As Mehemet Ali could supply the force "for the immediate protection of the Empire and ample materials

¹ Palmerston to Campbell, May 11, 1839: F.O. 78/372.

² Same to same, May 14, 1839: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 15, 1839: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, September 13, 1839: ibid.

for the reorganization of the Turkish army on a more improved system," hereditary rule by the Pasha in Syria, "would also tend to strengthen the Ottoman Empire itself."¹ However, improvements in Turkey could not be made so long as Hosrew Pasha controlled the Porte, because the latter had "inherited all the inveterate enmity of Sultan Mahmoud against Mehemet Ali, without any of his virtues."² Palmerston, finding Campbell's views at variance with his own, immediately recalled him.³

The new consul-general, Colonel Hodges, who had distinguished himself as consul in Servia, was vigorous, and possessed a brash manner and an imposing presence. A Russophobe, he was on intimate terms with Ponsonby. When he arrived in Alexandria, at the beginning of January 1840, he immediately took measures to implement Palmerston's instructions. Palmerston had ordered him to survey the sea coast between Caesar's camp and Marabout, and report upon the best place for a landing. However, as Hodges discovered that he was kept under surveillance by Mehemet Ali's agents, he employed an Austrian naval officer, Count Nugent, to do the task.⁴

In his first meeting with Mehemet Ali on January 4, Hodges quickly came to the point, stating that the British government had "positively determined" to continue its course of policy, and had sent "a new agent to enforce it." The bluntness of this statement startled the Pasha. When Mehemet Ali complained

¹ Campbell to Palmerston, August 17, 1839: F.O. 78/375.

² Campbell to Ponsonby, August 6, 1839: enclosure ibid.

³ Palmerston to Campbell, September 11, 1839: F.O. 78/372.

⁴ Hodges to Palmerston, January 10, 1840: F.O. 78/404.

that Ponsonby was biased against him, Hodges replied that the Pasha was mistaken; Ponsonby merely was carrying out the policy of the British government to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire under its existing dynasty. Hodges warned that any opposition by the Pasha against Great Britain's policy would "only entail upon him the most ruinous consequences," for the British had determined "to carry out their policy by measures which could leave no doubt as to the spirit of it, even if they acted alone." Austria would support Great Britain "to its fullest extent." Infuriated by this threat, Mehemet Ali retorted that " 'much words were useless,' " and vowed that he would " 'do anything' " before he would " 'submit to be thus sacrificed.' " ¹

Following his meeting with Hodges, Mehemet Ali summoned a council to discuss the withdrawal of the Egyptian army from the Hedjaz to reinforce the garrison at Alexandria. The council recommended that the troops should be held in readiness to march to Egypt. ² Subsequently, both Medem, the Russian consul-general, and Cochelet made representations to the Pasha. Medem warned him that should he march upon Constantinople, he would be opposed by a Russian army. Cochelet tried to persuade the Pasha to abandon his truculent attitude, asserting that Austria, Russia and Great Britain now were united, and France possibly would join the Three Powers. ³ These representations further disconcerted the Pasha, who declared to his officials that the

¹ Same to same, January 4, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, February 21, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, January 4, 1840: ibid.

Powers " 'must first trample' " on his " 'body' " before they could take away his rights.¹

The tone of the representations by the consuls-general induced Mehemet Ali to prepare for a possible attack by the Powers upon Egypt. Troops were sent from Syria to reinforce the garrisons in Cairo and Alexandria,² and national guards were raised in the two cities.³ Unsure that the Turkish fleet would support him against the Powers, the Pasha told the crews that the Sultan was a prisoner of the Christian Powers, but that he would rescue him.⁴ On January 14, Hodges had his second interview, which ended with Mehemet Ali defying the Powers to attack him,⁵ and induced him to increase his preparations.⁶ However, the Pasha's attempts to fortify Egypt were largely unsuccessful; Hodges noted that the national guard had "dwindled into a force hardly worth naming."⁷ Moreover, the Rear-Admiral of the Turkish fleet refused to accept the new uniform given the Turkish fleet by Mehemet Ali.⁸

As Mehemet Ali expected each day to receive news that the Powers had signed a treaty settling the Egyptian question,⁹ he

¹ Ibid.

² Same to same, January 6, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, January 12, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, January 13, 1840: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, January 14, 1840: ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Same to same, January 17, 1840: ibid.

⁸ Same to same, January 23, 1840: ibid.

⁹ Same to same, January 24, 1840: ibid.

was highly excited, and Hodges' comments never failed to elicit an outburst from him. On February 22, Hodges informed the Pasha that the British government had proof that he still continued his intrigues with the Arab tribes in the vicinity of Aden. Taken by surprise that Hodges should raise this subject, Mehemet Ali denied that he had engaged in intrigues with the Arab tribes. When Hodges mentioned that the British government suspected that he was intriguing with the Shah of Persia, Mehemet Ali flew into a rage, and terminated the meeting.¹

At a subsequent meeting, on March 30, Hodges found the Pasha in a truculent mood. When Hodges asked him what he intended to do with the Turkish fleet, Mehemet Ali answered that he would retain it " 'as a weapon taken from the hand' " of his " 'Enemy,' " until his differences were settled with the Porte. He then would return it to the Sultan. Thereupon, Hodges stated that his government had instructed him to advise the Turkish crew to return the fleet to the Sultan. Mehemet Ali jumped from his divan, and exclaimed: " 'Now you place me in a state of war! I warn you, that the first defection I perceive, I will shoot the offender.' " The next day, Mehemet Ali appointed Ahmet Pasha to command both the Turkish and Egyptian fleets.²

By the end of March, Mehemet Ali had regained his equanimity, refusing to believe that the Powers would combine to reduce him. He boasted that he did not fear Great Britain alone, for he was "invulnerable in Egypt."³ The Pasha had reason to entertain

¹ Same to same, February 22, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, March 31, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, March 27, 1840: ibid.

these ideas. Hodges noted that the consuls-general manifested "disunion, coldness, mutual distrust, and an utter indisposition to co-operate for the attainment of any common object." Medem had "frequent and friendly" talks with Mehemet Ali.¹ The Pasha, while expecting that France would protect him, calculated that even if France did not shield him and the Powers combined to reduce him, they could wrest only Syria from him. As the Powers offered little more than hereditary rule in Egypt in a negotiated settlement, the Pasha thought that he had little to lose if he remained intransigent, for the Powers, finding him invulnerable in Egypt, would give him hereditary rule in Egypt on the conclusion of peace.

As Mehemet Ali was intransigent, Hodges declined to transmit, in the middle of May, Palmerston's instructions protesting against the Pasha's language in defence of retaining the Turkish fleet. Relations with Mehemet Ali, Hodges wrote, already were too delicate, and, "until the means of coercion" were at hand, it would "be more injurious than useful to assume a hostile tone."²

Hodges did not have an interview with Mehemet Ali until June 14, when he found the Pasha, who had learned that Hosrew Pasha had been deposed, in good spirits.³ But in June a revolt broke out in Syria. At first, the Pasha thought that the revolt would not be difficult to crush, but by the beginning of July, he realized that he would be hard-pressed to maintain his grip

¹ Same to same, April 18, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, May 15, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, June 17, 1840: F.O. 78/405.

upon Syria. Hodges noted that Mehemet had lost "his former equanimity."¹ When Hodges saw him on July 7, Mehemet Ali already had learned that Louis had sent two sail of the line to Syria. The Pasha "seemed mortified and amazed," and would not believe that the two ships were intended merely to protect British subjects in Syria; he threatened sending four warships to Syria.² He accused Ponsonby of blocking a friendly settlement with the Porte. Hodges noted to Palmerston: "The rage and bitter hatred of Mehemet Ali towards Lord Ponsonby is ludicrous to witness."³

The French government, fearing a confrontation with the Powers, instructed Cochelet, in April, to persuade Mehemet Ali that he should accept hereditary rule in Egypt and Syria and Arabia for life. Mehemet Ali rejected the proposal.⁴ In July, Eugene Perier arrived in Alexandria on a Special Mission to urge upon the Pasha the proposals which he had rejected two months before. Mehemet Ali declined reconsidering them, and dismissed Perier's assertion that his intransigence could produce a general war in Europe. As Sami Bey was still in Constantinople, Mehemet Ali entertained the hope that the Porte would negotiate upon his terms.⁵ After learning that Sami Bey had reported that the Porte refused making concessions, Perier sought another interview with Mehemet Ali. The Pasha refused to moderate his demands, asserting that he expected that

¹ Same to same, July 5, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, July 7, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, July 24, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Cochelet Thiers, May 6, 1840: J. E. Driault, L'Egypte et l'Europe. La crise de 1839 - 1841, vol. 2, 1930, Cairo, pp.272-275.

⁵ Perier to Thiers, July 15, 1840: ibid., Vol. 3, pp.27-30.

Reschid Pasha soon would be deposed.¹

Perier departed from Alexandria without having accomplished the objective of his mission. However, the Four Powers already had concluded the Convention of July 15, which granted Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt and the Pashalic of St. Jean d'Acre for life. The Pasha's refusals to compromise his demands isolated France from the Powers, and created a crisis in Europe. The reduction of Mehemet Ali by the Four Powers was regarded by the French as a national humiliation, and therefore the Convention of July 15 produced much uneasiness in the capitals of the Four Powers. Palmerston, supported by Ponsonby in Constantinople, worked feverishly to drive Mehemet Ali from Syria before France could go to war in the spring of 1841.

¹ Same to same, July 24, 1840: ibid., pp.60-63.

CHAPTER IX: THE REDUCTION OF MEHEMET ALI

The success of Stürmer and Ponsonby in preventing direct negotiations gave Palmerston valuable time to form the Quadruple Alliance. Bouteneff's failure to secure direct negotiations left Czar Nicholas no alternative but co-operation with the Powers, which had some attraction for the Czar because the destruction of the Anglo-French Entente was the price Palmerston had to pay for an agreement with Russia. As this change in policy required a change in agents, Bouteneff was replaced in 1840 by Titow.

The rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain was welcomed by Metternich, although he certainly did not regard a conference in London without trepidation. At the end of April, 1840, Metternich promised that Austria would maintain sixty thousand troops in readiness to defend Constantinople,¹ but he soon made excuses why Austrian troops could not be spared to defend the Turkish capital.² Although he readily entered into the Four Power Alliance, he continually argued to the British ambassador in Vienna, Lord Beauvale, that without France the Allies could not drive Mehemet Ali from Syria.³ Metternich's vacillation was to prove particularly discomfoting to Ponsonby in the succeeding months.

Six days before concluding the Treaty of July 15, Palmerston wrote to Ponsonby that as the cabinet had authorized him to draft a convention, he should request the Porte immediately to

¹ Beauvale to Palmerston, April 24, 1840: F.O. 7/290.

² Same to same, July 17, 1840: F.O. 7/291A.

³ Vide same to same, April 12, 1840: F.O. 7/290.

make preparations for co-operation with the Powers. The Powers' first step would be cutting off communications between Syria and Egypt, followed by a landing of Turkish troops, and if necessary British marines, on the Syrian coast. The Porte should prepare five or six thousand men to sail to Cyprus, the base from which the landings would be staged, and should promise the Syrians exemption from conscription and local administration to win their support against Ibrahim.¹

Palmerston's instructions were premature, for when Ponsonby communicated them he found Reschid Pasha reluctant to act, the latter arguing that he could not expect support from his colleagues at the Porte. Although Ponsonby promised to assume all responsibility for measures taken, Reschid Pasha would give no answer.² Immediately after the discussions, Ponsonby discovered that none of his colleagues would support the proposed measures, and decided against trying to commit the Porte without the support of the Austrian and Russian ambassadors. After further consideration of Palmerston's instruction, Reschid Pasha requested that Ponsonby write an official note to the Porte pledging British aid against Mehemet Ali, which he could use in persuading his timid colleagues at the Porte to make the required preparations. Ponsonby declined to ~~write~~ an official note, saying that he could not do anything which his colleagues opposed and would remain "wholly inert" until he received new instructions from his government. Disconsolate, Ponsonby complained to Palmerston that only Great Britain

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, July 9, 1840: B.P.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 29, 1840: ibid.

appeared disposed to act.¹

At the beginning of August the Four Ambassadors received the Convention of July 15. Ponsonby, of course, was in high spirits, seeing at last the beginning of his long cherished hope of a campaign to reduce Mehemet Ali. Immediately upon receiving the Convention, the ambassadors discussed with Reschid Pasha measures to implement it. Reschid Pasha consented to appoint an envoy to deliver the Convention to Mehemet Ali, send a frigate and a corvette carrying eight thousand muskets and ammunition to Syria, dispatch five or six thousand troops to Cyprus, and send a translation of the act séparé of the Convention to the people of Syria. The Turk was prepared to go further, recommending that the Porte should appoint governors for the provinces which would be recovered from Mehemet Ali, but as Ponsonby cautioned against this measure, Reschid Pasha said he would shelve it.²

By the time Reschid Pasha and the Four Ambassadors had decided upon the necessary preparations, Mehemet Ali had succeeded in crushing the revolt in Syria. When he learned that the Syrians no longer were in revolt, Stopford advised Ponsonby that as conditions had altered, his instructions from the Admiralty were no longer applicable, and he could not commence operations in Syria. Indeed, the instructions Stopford received discussed only measures to aid the Syrian insurgents and gave him latitude of action.³ Seeing the Convention on the point of ruin, Ponsonby could not control his anger in his reply to

¹ Same to same, August 1, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, August 5, 1840: F.O. 78/395.

³ Palmerston to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, July 16, 1840: Ad. 1/5503.

Stopford, pointing out to the admiral that should he refuse to implement his instructions, he would bring dishonour upon Great Britain, for the French were loudly proclaiming that the British would not be able to take military action against Mehemet Ali.¹ Despite this stinging letter, Stopford still hesitated to act, waiting for further instructions from the Admiralty, which fortunately soon came. Clearly, Stopford was in the wrong, as Palmerston wrote to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that Stopford had taken an "erroneous view" of his government's instructions.²

While Stopford was pondering his instructions, the Convention was a blow to Mehemet Ali's partisans in Constantinople, who now had little hope of inducing the Porte to negotiate directly. Unable to move the Porte, they tried capturing the Sultan's mind. Knowing that the young and inexperienced Sultan could be won over by Mehemet Ali's agents in the Seraglio, Reschid Pasha requested that the Four Ambassadors send official notes to the Porte, which could be used in persuading Abdul Medjid that he had nothing to fear from Mehemet Ali.³ Thereupon, Stürmer drew up an official note stating that as Mehemet Ali had asserted that he would resist the implementation of the Convention of July 15, the Powers would protect the Sultan.⁴ Reschid Pasha used the note, which was signed by the Four Ambassadors, with effect. Ponsonby suggested

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 5, 1840: B.P.

² Palmerston to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, September 7, 1840: Ad. 1/5503.

³ Same to same, August 9, 1840, No. 168: F.O. 78/395.

⁴ Same to same, August 11, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

that the Porte should publish a statement that the Powers did not desire to destroy the Mohammedan faith, but Reschid Pasha apparently believed that this step was not necessary for the moment.¹

The Porte showed unusual energy in making preparations to drive Mehemet Ali from Syria, most of the credit being due to Reschid Pasha. Fifty-five hundred Turkish troops were dispatched to Cyprus and placed under Stopford's orders. Walker was given command over the Turkish fleet, consisting of one sail of the line and one frigate.² Ponsonby was in excellent spirits, all the while hoping that Mehemet Ali would reject the Convention. To expel the Pasha from Syria was not enough; Ponsonby desired his total ruin, believing that Great Britain's command of the Red Sea would guarantee that Mehemet Ali could be ruined in Egypt in an "hour".³

With the Porte vigorously preparing an expedition against Syria, Pontois could see no way to protect Mehemet Ali except by frightening the Porte. Accordingly, Pontois warned Reschid Pasha that if the Pasha were attacked, France would aid him, and also would aid his attempts to raise up the population of Anatolia. These threats had little effect upon Reschid Pasha, but the Capudan Pasha, who was not confident that the British fleet could defeat the French fleet, which was numerically superior, was uneasy.⁴

¹ Same to same, August 9, 1840, No. 169: F.O. 78/395.

² Same to same, August 16, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

³ Same to same, August 12, 1840: B.P.

⁴ Sturmer to Metternich, August 17, 1840: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 17, 1840: F.O. 78/96.

Recognizing that the Capudan Pasha could persuade the Porte to suspend the attack on Syria, Ponsonby argued to the Porte that the British fleet was stronger than the French. To show the Porte that France could not intimidate the Allies, the Four Ambassadors agreed that they should disregard Pontois' threat. However, the ambassadors, desiring to avoid unnecessary risks, accepted Ponsonby's suggestion that while the Turkish troops should leave Constantinople on August 20, as planned, they should not pass the Dardanelles until ordered to do so by Stopford. On August 18, the Four Ambassadors pledged to Reschid Pasha that their countries would carry out the Convention of July 15 regardless of France's threats. Privately, Ponsonby urged Reschid Pasha to fortify the defensive positions near Scutari, for so long as the Sultan had an army in Asia Minor, neither Mehemet Ali nor France could stir up revolts there.¹

Assured by the ambassadors that the Powers would defend the Sultan, the ministers, who were frightened by Pontois' threats, regained their composure. Orders were given to assemble thirty-four thousand troops for the defence of Constantinople and the Straits.² Pontois, seeing that his threats had backfired, disavowed making them. But Reschid Pasha would not permit the French ambassador to escape from his embarrassment, and for two weeks tried forcing him to acknowledge his action. While Ponsonby took particular delight in seeing Pontois red-faced, writing to Palmerston that French

¹ Same to same, August 19, 1840: ibid.

² Ibid.

"vanity has outstripped their cunning,"¹ he asked Reschid Pasha not to pursue the subject, for quibbling would create only bitterness.

The threats by Pontois alarmed not only the Capudan Pasha but Stopford.² Fortunately, before Stopford, who cautiously refused to divide his fleet so long as the possibility of a threat of French intervention existed, could suspend preparations for a landing in Syria, Pontois denied his threats.

To Mehemet Ali, the Convention of July 15 meant a dishonourable end to a long and successful career. Even though he was not confident that France would intervene to protect him, from the moment he learned about the Convention he resolved to resist. He exaggerated his power, thinking that he could raise Anatolia. Hodges, who possessed an unusual ability to handle the wily Pasha, concluded that Mehemet Ali's strength was not in his army "but in his power of doing mischief, of creating as a last resource some general conflagration, whence might spring new interests, new combinations, and new chances in his favour."³

Mehemet Ali could scarcely conceal his burning hatred towards Great Britain,⁴ and Hodges never failed to disturb his composure. Undoubtedly, the Pasha had rarely experienced such trying interviews in his career. It was as if Ponsonby himself were the consul-general. The Pasha refused to pay his tribute or to "yield one foot of territory," and remarked that if Great

¹ Same to same, August 17, 1840: B.P.

² Ibid.

³ Hodges to Palmerston, July 26, 1840: F.O. 78/405.

⁴ Same to same, July 24, 1840: ibid.

Britain did not want him as "the friend of the Porte," she would have him "as its rebel."¹ On learning that the Porte would not permit Ahmet Pasha to return with the Turkish fleet, Mehemet Ali informed Medem that the fact that the Porte was acting under the direction of the Powers, surrendering the Sultan's independence, was adequate reason for him to withdraw his promise to return the fleet. The Pasha added that the Powers only would use the fleet against him.² Alive to a possible invasion of Egypt, the Pasha ordered his army in the Hedjaz to march to Cairo.

While Hodges received the Convention of July 15 from Ponsonby on August 6, he did not communicate it so as to keep the Pasha in suspense until the Sultan's envoy, Rifaat Pasha, officially communicated the Convention to Mehemet Ali.³ The arrival of Rifaat Pasha coincided with that of Count Walewski, sent by the French government on a Special Mission to try to convince Mehemet Ali to make concessions. Immediately, the Pasha manifested his defiance to Rifaat Pasha, apparently personally insulting the Sultan's envoy and only the entreaties of the consuls-general prevented him from immediately departing from Alexandria. Rifaat Pasha promised to remain until the period specified in the Convention had elapsed.⁴

There was little prospect that Mehemet Ali would abandon his defiant attitude, as he refused to discuss the Convention, and indeed told Medem that as he had told Rifaat Pasha that the

¹ Same to same, July 26, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, July 17, 1840: ibid.

³ Hodges to Ponsonby, August 16, 1840: enclosure Hodges to Palmerston, August 19, 1840: ibid.

⁴ Hodges to Palmerston, August 19, 1840: ibid.

Convention was unacceptable, the Turkish envoy need not remain in Alexandria for the ten day period specified in the Convention.¹ The news that the commander of the Allied fleet off the Syrian coast had demanded the surrender of Beirut elicited another bellocise outburst from the Pasha. He demanded that the British consul in Beirut should leave, to which the Four Consuls-General replied that the Convention considered Syria under the Sultan's rule, and the British fleet merely aided the Syrians in showing their loyalty to the Sultan.²

When the first ten day period specified in the Convention had expired on August 26, the Four Consuls-General and Rifaat Pasha officially requested Mehemet Ali to state whether he would abide by the Convention.³ As the representatives expected, Mehemet Ali rejected it. On hearing the Pasha's decision, Walewski, fearing that a clash between the Allies and Mehemet Ali could result in a division between France and the Powers, persuaded Mehemet Ali to inform the consuls-general that he would accept hereditary rule in Egypt and leave to the Sultan the decision upon the fate of Syria. These proposals were rejected without much consideration by the consuls-general and Rifaat Pasha with a simple statement that the Pasha could not add conditions to the Convention. Thereupon Mehemet Ali threw off the mask, promising that he

¹ Minute by Medem on a conversation with Mehemet Ali, August 24, 1840: enclosure Hodges to Palmerston, August 25, 1840: F.O. 78/406.

² Hodges to Palmerston, August 19, 1840: F.O. 78/405.

³ Process Verbal of a conference with Mehemet Ali, August 26, 1840: enclosure Hodges to Palmerston, August 26, 1840: F.O. 78/406.

would resist the implementation of the Convention.¹ Unsuccessful in trying to arrange a compromise between Mehemet Ali and the consuls-general, Walewski departed for Constantinople, as he apparently thought he could persuade the Porte to compromise with the Pasha. Before he left Alexandria, he obtained a promise from Mehemet Ali that he would not order Ibrahim to advance.²

Upon receipt of the reports by the consuls-general that Mehemet Ali, after the first ten day period, had rejected the Convention, Ponsonby and Stürmer drew up recommendations to the Porte which included: 1) new Pashas should be named to fill the newly vacant Pashalics; 2) a firman should be issued appointing the Emir El-Kassim the new Emir Beshir if the Emir Beshir did not return immediately to the Sultan's cause; 3) the consuls-general should be withdrawn from Egypt, avoiding the inconvenience of their being ordered to do so by Mehemet Ali; and 4) Selim Bey, the Turkish commander in Syria, should be instructed to take his orders directly from Sir Charles Smith, the new British commander in Syria. Reschid Pasha accepted the proposals.³

Animated by a desire to see Mehemet Ali reduced, Ponsonby was impatient for the commencement of operations in Syria. He urged Palmerston to give positive orders to the British officers conducting the campaign against the Pasha because he felt that the officers were slack, indecisive and had "a hankering after

¹ Process Verbal of a conference with Mehemet Ali, August 28, 1840: enclosure Hodges to Palmerston, August 30, 1840: ibid.

² Walewski to Thiers, September 3, 1840: Driault, op.cit., vol. 3, p.209.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 1, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

Mehemet Ali."¹ The fulminations in Ponsonby's letters against the Pasha show to what extent passion dominated his thought. Mehemet Ali was no longer merely a danger to the peace of Europe, but the devil incarnate, guilty of innumerable crimes against the inhabitants of Egypt.

Yet Ponsonby was uneasy that Mehemet Ali would save himself by accepting the second proposal. Not only would the Pasha save his position in Egypt but possibly his rule in Syria, for the Pasha would use delay to retain Syria. Unless the Powers used force, they would find it difficult or even impossible to force him to evacuate Syria. Ponsonby believed that the Powers should send an expedition to Syria, whether or not Mehemet Ali had accepted the second proposal, to force him to withdraw his army from Syria, and to "prevent the Great Powers being made the dupes of Mehemet Ali and of French intrigues." As the Pasha would resist an expedition even if he had accepted the second proposal, the attack should be made immediately, for "if delay and trifling be allowed, it will fail."²

However, Mehemet Ali was not as cunning as Ponsonby thought. Confident that the Powers could "never tear" Egypt away from him and that they could not begin operations in Syria before March, Mehemet Ali continued to be defiant, remarking to Hodges: "we shall have a War in March that will fully occupy the Powers of Europe."³ Upon the conclusion of the period specified in the second proposal, September 5, the Four Consuls-General and

¹ Same to same, September 3, 1840: B.P.

² Same to same, September 8, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

³ Hodges to Palmerston, September 2, 1840: F.O. 78/406.

Rifaat Pasha visited Mehemet Ali to obtain his answer, but found that the Pasha was ill. Sami Bey, presenting the Pasha's answer, argued that Mehemet Ali had previously accepted the second proposal when he said that he would accept hereditary rule in Egypt and would petition the Sultan to grant him Syria. Pointing out that the Convention must be literally implemented, the consuls-general and Rifaat Pasha told Sami Bey that they regarded Mehemet Ali's answer as a refusal to accept the second proposal.¹

When the Porte received Rifaat Pasha's report, Reschid Pasha informed Ponsonby that the Sultan considered Mehemet Ali's answer a refusal to accept the Convention, and desired officially to depose the Pasha. Ponsonby replied that he considered the Pasha's deposition not only advisable but necessary, and promised to press the measure on his colleagues. To sway Stürmer, whose support was critical, Ponsonby used an elaborate argument, the crux of which was the fact that if Mehemet Ali were not deposed, as legal governor of Egypt he could order the Egyptians to act against the Sultan. Nor could an effective blockade be established unless the Pasha were deposed. Ponsonby maintained that the article of the Convention, which specified that the Sultan could not depose Mehemet Ali before consulting his Allies, could not bind the Sultan, for the Sultan had the undeniable right to depose a vassal.²

Although he seems to have received no instructions covering

¹ Process Verbal of a conference with Sami Bey, September 5, 1840: enclosure Hodges to Palmerston, September 6, 1840: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 10, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

the rejection of the second proposal, Stürmer yielded to Ponsonby's arguments. Subsequently, Reschid Pasha sent to the ambassadors the draft of a proposed note to the Powers announcing Mehemet Ali's deposition and the establishment of a blockade against the Pasha, which the Four Ambassadors accepted. Ponsonby was relectant to assent to the stipulation in the note that the consuls-general immediately should be withdrawn from Egypt, fearing that British commerce could be injured. However, as he did not want the creation of a division among the Four Ambassadors, he accepted the stipulation.¹

Ponsonby was elated by the news of Mehemet Ali's deposition, concluding with satisfaction that the Pasha, who had risen through ruthless conspiracy and intrigue, had ruined himself by the same means, and was now no longer able to achieve his ends by protracted negotiations.² But Ponsonby's enthusiasm soon subsided. The Allies had yet to strike a blow against Mehemet Ali, and Stopford's indication that he would not long remain off the Syrian coast cast a shadow upon the prospect of an attack on Syria in 1840. Stopford intended leaving the Syrian coast at the end of October, but his letter to Ponsonby was vague, giving the Four Ambassadors the impression that he would leave at the end of September. In a private letter to Palmerston, Ponsonby manifested his frustration, noting in a stinging comment: "It galls me to see how the ablest man & the wisest policy may be baffled by doating imbecility. If You were allowed to settle this question, as you would settle it, Whose

¹ Same to same, September 14, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, September 15, 1840: B.P.

fame would be equal to Yours."¹

Stopford's desire to leave the Syrian coast was not the only matter which disturbed Ponsonby. Reschid Pasha appointed Izzet Pasha to command the Turkish army destined for Syria, a man Ponsonby called the "worst scoundrel" in Turkey. When Ponsonby pressed Reschid Pasha for his replacement, he obstinately refused. Finally, Reschid Pasha promised that he would not permit Izzet Pasha to leave Cyprus,² but did not keep his promise.

On August 31, Palmerston instructed Ponsonby to prevent the Porte from establishing a full blockade of Alexandria before it had communicated with the British government.³ The instruction arrived too late; the Porte had made this request to Ponsonby in the middle of September, and Ponsonby had sent it to Stopford.⁴ This action and the deposition of the Pasha disturbed the more cautious ministers in Melbourne's cabinet. Russell threatened to resign from the cabinet unless "some discreet person" were sent as a replacement for Ponsonby, but he did not demand Ponsonby's withdrawal from Constantinople, thus permitting him to save face. Russell, who was the government leader in the House of Commons, emphasized that he could not defend in the House Ponsonby's reckless policy.⁵

¹ Same to same, September 17, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, September 17, 1840, different from above: ibid.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, August 31, 1840: F.O. 78/390.

⁴ Ponsonby to Stopford, September 17, 1840: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 17, 1840: F.O. 78/396.

⁵ Russell to Palmerston, November 2, 1840: B.P.

In a letter written on November 6 to Russell, Palmerston mustered a host of arguments to defend the ambassador. While Ponsonby, Palmerston argued, had deposed Mehemet Ali without instructions, Lansdowne and others considered Ponsonby's reasons satisfactory, and the Pasha's reinstatement would be a good bargaining point with France. Ponsonby did not act alone when he sanctioned a total blockade of Mehemet Ali; Stürmer requested the Austrian admiral to implement a total blockade. Although Ponsonby constantly had stated that Mehemet Ali should be ruined, the decision whether or not to ruin the Pasha lay with the cabinet, and Ponsonby had the right to express his opinion. Palmerston recalled that Ponsonby had obtained satisfaction during the Churchill Affair, had negotiated a commercial convention with the Porte and had established British influence "more firmly at Constantinople than it ever was Established before." He had induced the Turks to make exertions nobody had thought they could make, and had persuaded the Porte to place the Sultan's fleet and army under the command of British officers, feats no ambassador had ever accomplished. Palmerston noted: "I know not what more the ablest and most active ambassador could possibly have done in furtherance of the Policy adopted by the Treaty of July." To send a Special Mission to Constantinople would be impolitic, because Ponsonby, who was a "man of Spirit," would regard the move as a personal affront, and would either quarrel with the new emissary or immediately depart from Constantinople.¹

¹ Palmerston to Russell, November 6, 1840: ibid.

Strong as Palmerston's arguments were, they would not have been sufficient to sway Russell had not Ponsonby's policy borne fruit at this crucial moment. The day after Palmerston wrote his letter, the British government learned that Turkish troops had landed near Beirut. This stroke of fortune saved Ponsonby's career and perhaps Melbourne's cabinet. Russell consented to remain in the cabinet and not to continue to demand that a Special Mission should be sent to Constantinople. Ponsonby, Russell acknowledged, "however rank his offences" had judged correctly that the "powers of life" still remained in the Turkish Empire, when Metternich and others had abandoned hope that the Empire could be regenerated.¹

The news of the landing near Beirut reached Ponsonby on September 27. On his suggestion, Reschid Pasha gave orders that an additional three thousand troops should be sent to Syria, commanded by Turkish officers trained at Woolwich. In addition, Smith was given full powers to command the Turkish army in Syria, and General Jochmus was appointed Chef d'Etat Major to Izzet Pasha, with authority to direct the latter's activities.² But Reschid Pasha, less than happy with Great Britain's commitments in the Syrian campaign, pressed Ponsonby to request his government to send troops to Syria. Ponsonby declined, saying that the presence of British troops in Syria would give France a pretext to claim that Great Britain was scheming to gain control over Syria. While Reschid Pasha did not impugn Ponsonby's argument, he continued pointing out that British troops were

¹ Russell to Palmerston, November 7, 1840: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 27, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

necessary for the successful conclusion of the Syrian campaign, but Ponsonby still would make no commitments. Although unwilling to employ British troops in Syria, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that rather than leave Syria in Mehemet Ali's possession, he "would agree to the employment of any troops of the Devil himself."¹

Despite the landing near Beirut, Stopford continued asserting that he intended to leave the Syrian coast at the end of October. Ponsonby tried to persuade him not to abandon the Syrian operations, writing to the admiral that his colleagues had urged that the fleet should maintain its position until the British government had sent instructions.² But as Stopford remained firm in his resolve, Ponsonby was hard pressed to find arguments that would sway him. Realizing that no argument could persuade the admiral to expose his ships in the stormy winter season, Ponsonby discussed with Tahir Pasha, the Capudan Pasha at the time of Navarino, possible places along the Syrian coast where the fleet could find shelter in bad weather. Tahir Pasha suggested that the larger warships could seek shelter at Alexandretta, and the smaller ones at Haifa.³ Stopford, however, wrote to Ponsonby, on October 9, that he had been misunderstood, and had never contemplated abandoning the expedition in Syria. While he intended withdrawing his larger ships at the first sign of bad weather, he promised to leave an adequate force of vessels

¹ Same to same, September 30, 1840: B.P.

² Same to same, September 27, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

³ Same to same, October 13, 1840: B.P.

to support the army in Syria.¹

This decision by Stopford strengthened Metternich's position in Austria, as Metternich now, for the first time, could argue to his colleagues that the Syrian campaign would attain its objectives before the French could launch a war in Europe. Metternich previously had been exposed to attacks by Count Kolowrat, who did not like the Convention of July 15, and Baron Eichhof, the Finance Minister, who openly talked about removing Metternich and reversing his system. As these two men were supported by Archduke Louis, their opposition was formidable.² After learning about Stopford's decision, Metternich sent Count Esterhazy to London with assurances that Austria would act in complete conformity with the Convention of July 15,³ and as proof, sent twenty-five scientific officers and a shipment of muskets to Syria.⁴ Talks were held between Austria and Prussia upon the defence of Germany, and by the end of November, definite measures had been agreed upon.⁵ The major German states pledged to aid the two Powers to repel a French attack. With Metternich's supremacy assured, Kolowrat, in the middle of November, decided upon a reconciliation with Metternich, cemented by Eichhof's dismissal from office.⁶ Beauvau reported, on November 14, that Metternich was prepared to see Acre attacked as late as spring,

¹ Stopford to Ponsonby, October 9, 1840: Ad.1/5503.

² Beauvau to Palmerston, October 14, 1840: F.O. 7/291B.

³ Same to same, October 28, 1840, No.159: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, October 28, 1840, No.157: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, December 2, 1840: ibid.

⁶ Same to same, November 11, 1840: ibid.

and considered that the conditions under which Mehemet Ali would be given Egypt would depend upon the circumstances of the moment. Metternich personally favoured terms between hereditary rule and the conditions under which Mehemet Ali now ruled Egypt.¹

The blockade of Alexandria was really no more than a partial blockade, with only the ships of the Allies being excluded from Egyptian ports. Stürmer complained that the blockade had only a limited effect upon Mehemet Ali.² On October 8, Reschid Pasha sent an official note to Ponsonby stating that the commander of the Turkish squadron would subject all warships to the blockade and requested Ponsonby to send similar instructions to the British admiral. The Porte extended the blockade to French steamers, claiming that they were the means used to conduct intrigues at Constantinople.³ While Ponsonby noted to Stopford that he accepted the Porte's argument that steamers were ships of war, he declined officially to request the admiral to extend the blockade, for he did not possess the power. Ponsonby recommended to Stopford that he should use his discretion.⁴ Stopford, however, was acting in perfect accordance with the British government's desire to limit the blockade.⁵

Not until the end of October did Ponsonby receive instructions to request the Porte to implement only a limited blockade. This illustrates that Ponsonby had acted correctly when he

¹ Same to same, November 14, 1840: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 3, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 8, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

⁴ Ponsonby to Stopford, October 8, 1840: enclosure, ibid.

⁵ Palmerston to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, October 6, 1840: Ad.1/5503.

declined officially to order Stopford to implement a total blockade. The Porte reluctantly accepted the advice of the British government.

After the landing near Beirut, the Allied forces made little progress. Ponsonby, who could not tolerate slackness, viciously attacked Stopford and Smith in his private letters. It is obvious that the strain of the hectic two previous years was showing upon the aging ambassador. He could scarcely control his emotions, and the fear that Mehemet Ali could escape ruin spurred Ponsonby to denounce anybody whose slackness could aid the Pasha to escape his fate. Stopford and Smith, he was convinced, were endeavouring to frustrate Commodore Napier's bold measures to drive Ibrahim from Syria. The ambassador noted to Palmerston that Ibrahim was so weak that he could be saved only by the incompetance of the commanders in Syria; Mehemet Ali was "at his last gasp in Alexandria itself, and will only escape destruction by want of moral courage on the part of those who oppose him."¹ Ponsonby desired an immediate attack on Acre, thinking that Alexandria would then capitulate.² But as communications between Constantinople and Syria were irregular, all warships being engaged in operations against Ibrahim, Ponsonby could not intervene to support Napier against Stopford and Smith. Palmerston was moved by Ponsonby's fulminations against Stopford and Smith and discussed their replacement with Melbourne. However, Palmerston succeeded in removing only Smith, whose ill health served as an adequate pretext. Melbourne

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 9, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

² Same to same, October 18, 1840: B.P.

refused to replace Stopford while operations continued in Syria, but promised that after the campaign Stopford would be relieved of command and would be appointed mayor of Plymouth.

Encouraged by the success of the Allies in Syria, Reschid Pasha hoped to obtain Mehemet Ali's total destruction. Walewski, who arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of October, tried to induce Reschid Pasha to negotiate directly with Mehemet Ali, arguing that the Pasha had been persuaded by the French government to cede Adana, Candia and the Holy Cities, and to accept Syria for the lifetime of his children. Reschid Pasha would not hear of talk of direct negotiations,¹ and Walewski returned to Alexandria without a commitment from the Porte.

Ponsonby, like Palmerston, believed that France's threat to intervene was no more than a bluff. The failure of Walewski's mission was of little import to Ponsonby. He ridiculed France in his letters to Palmerston: "Look what a pitiful figure France now makes! She is like a man caught cheating at cards who blusters to hide his shame & would fight if he dared to disguise his own dirt in the blood of others." France's scheme to make the Mediterranean Sea "a French Lake" and to make her will felt in Constantinople would remain only a dream so long as Metternich abandoned his penchant for "half measures" and delay.² Any concession made by the British government to France would be represented by France as springing from fear of France, and the Porte, in future, would be afraid to disobey French commands. As Russia could not tolerate French pre-eminence in Constantinople,

¹ Same to same, October 7, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

² Same to same, October 9, 1840: B.P.

a Franco-Russian war eventually would break out. If the Powers remained firm, Mehemet Ali would be reduced before France could launch a war in the spring.¹

At the end of August, the French fleet in Turkish waters received orders to return to Toulon. Ponsonby feared that Stopford could interpret this French move as a preparation of the fleet for war, but lack of communications with Syria prevented him from urging Stopford to disregard it and continue his operations in Syria. At this point, Ponsonby desired an attack upon Alexandria as well as Acre, thinking that if it failed, Europe would know "that it was only a sea coup de main that had failed."² Certainly, Ponsonby's expectations were unreasonable; in his haste to destroy Mehemet Ali, he did not recognize the difficulties in conducting operations against both places at this advanced time of the season.

Despite the timidity of Stopford and Smith, Napier scored decisive victories over the Egyptian armies, forcing Ibrahim to evacuate important cities on the Syrian coast and concentrate his army near Damascus. In the third week of October, Ponsonby received from Hodges a standard purportedly captured by the Turks on October 10 from Ibrahim's Second Regiment of Guards. Ponsonby, "believing that it may be advantageous to call public attention to this first signal Trophy won by the valour of the Sultan's Troops, from the previously successful army of Mehemet Ali," decided upon seeking an audience to lay the standard at the Sultan's feet.³

¹ Same to same, October 28, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, November 1, 1840: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 19, 1840, October 28, 1840: F.O. 78/397.

A question exists whether the standard which Ponsonby laid at the Sultan's feet actually was captured from the Egyptians. Napier, in his book The War in Syria, maintains that the Turkish troops under his command did not capture the standard, and accuses Ponsonby of dishonesty.¹ When he wrote his book, Napier was on bad terms with Ponsonby and went out of his way to attack the ambassador. Napier's charge is groundless; if there was any deceit involved, the blame may lay with Hodges who sent the standard to Ponsonby.

The Allied commanders were divided upon whether to attack Acre: Smith and Stopford were opposed while Napier and Jochmus favoured an assault. On October 5, Palmerston wrote to Stopford that the British government considered the capture of Acre as an indispensable measure to reduce Mehemet Ali, but noted that should the measure appear to involve too many risks, it should be postponed.² This instruction apparently was used with effect by Napier to persuade the reluctant Stopford quickly to win the Syrian campaign by capturing the fortress. On November 3, Acre was bombarded and reduced in one day. During the bombardment, Napier and Stopford quarrelled. Napier demanded that he himself be court-martialed, but Stopford refused. The British officers sided with Stopford, while Jochmus favoured Napier, thus dividing the Allied command.³ The capture of Acre was the last action by the Allied army in Syria, as the division in the command paralyzed any further operation.

¹ C. Napier, The War in Syria, Vol. I, London, 1842, pp.188-194.

² Palmerston to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, October 5, 1840: Ad.1/5503.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 11, 1840: B.P.

Fortunately for the Allies, Mehemet Ali, after receiving news of the capture of Acre, decided that further resistance in Syria was impossible, and ordered Ibrahim's withdrawal into Syria. The Pasha maintained that he would resist if attacked in Egypt, but sought to avoid an Allied attack upon Egypt by signing with the British admiral an engagement suspending operations. Cochelet and Walewski, trying to save face for France, unsuccessfully exhorted the Pasha to address himself only to France. Unable to obtain a promise from Mehemet Ali that he would not negotiate with the British, Walewski urged that Thiers employ the French fleet in preventing the British fleet from bombarding Alexandria, or the Pasha from coming to an understanding with the British admiral.¹

While Ponsonby regarded the capture of Acre as a singularly important victory, he believed that the war should end only with the capture of Alexandria. However, Ponsonby recognized that only Mehemet Ali's continued recalcitrance could lead to a satisfactory conclusion of the war, because the vacillating Metternich had recommended that the Pasha should be reinstated in Egypt if he immediately submitted.² Ponsonby's fears that Palmerston would give way to Metternich's pressure were realized when he received, in the middle of November, instructions from Palmerston, dated October 15, to proceed with his colleagues when they received their instructions and request the Porte to give Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt, if the Pasha made

¹ Walewski to Thiers, November 11, 1840: Driault, op.cit., Vol. 4, pp. 53-56.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 11, 1840: B.P.

an early submission.¹ After Titow, who now conducted the Russian embassy, and Stürmer received their instructions in the third week of November, the Four Ambassadors met to decide what steps should be taken. Fortunately for Ponsonby, his colleagues were inclined not to implement their instructions until Mehemet Ali had submitted,² giving him an opportunity to try to persuade Palmerston to reverse his decision.

To accomplish this, Ponsonby used a torrent of arguments. The only reason why Mehemet Ali could be reinstated in Egypt, Ponsonby argued, would be because his reinstatement was desired by the Egyptian people, but the Egyptians loathed him. If the Pasha were given hereditary rule in Egypt, he could not be controlled and would abuse his power. As he would resume his intrigues against the Sultan, eventually a new war would break out between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali. The Sultan could rule Egypt well if he divided it into two or three Pashalics and separated the military and fiscal powers of his representatives. So long as Mehemet Ali ruled in Egypt, the Sultan could not implement reforms. The balance of power would guarantee that Egypt never would come under foreign domination.³

However, it was too late for Ponsonby to alter Palmerston's resolution. Napier signed a convention with Boghoz Bey on November 28, pledging Mehemet Ali's submission in return for hereditary rule in Egypt. Upon receiving the Convention on December 6, Ponsonby "took care to defeat" it.⁴ The Porte

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, October 15, 1840: F.O. 78/390.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 20, 1840: F.O. 78/398.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Same to same, December 8, 1840: B.P.

formally refused to recognize the Convention and the Four Ambassadors concurred in the Porte's declaration. Ponsonby wrote to the British officers in Syria to disregard the Convention,¹ but bad communications prevented the officers from receiving the instructions before Ibrahim had evacuated Syria. The officers regarded the Convention as terminating the war.

The Convention was a bitter blow to Ponsonby, and the ambassador stated his feelings plainly in a letter to Napier. Ponsonby maintained that Napier was not authorized in pledging the Sultan's word.² Napier, a man similar in temperament to Ponsonby, replied with an insulting letter defending his actions. He averred that Ponsonby had an erroneous concept of Mehemet Ali's power. Alexandria could not be captured unless a strong force were sent to reduce it, and the season was too advanced for such an expedition. The British government wished to terminate the Egyptian question, but the Pasha could be induced by the French, who were holding out hope of assistance, to prolong the war. The Convention bound the Pasha to evacuate Syria and return the Turkish fleet, the two conditions stipulated by the Powers for his submission.³

Napier's defence failed to move Ponsonby, as the ambassador wrote a series of letters to Palmerston denouncing the Comodore. The quarrel which developed between the two men endured long after the war, as Napier's book on the war in Syria illustrates. Ponsonby now was disliked by all the British officers in Syria

¹ Same to same, December 8, 1840: F.O. 78/399.

² Ibid.

³ Napier to Ponsonby, December 14, 1840: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 16, 1840: ibid.

and only Jochmus, a Hanoverian, was on good terms with the ambassador.

Jochmus, however, was disliked by the British and Turkish officers. After Smith was recalled, Colonel Mitchell was appointed to command the army, but the effective command of the army was in Jochmus' hands. When Mitchell died, Jochmus officially was given supreme command. But the Porte foolishly delayed sending the firman investing him with the command,¹ and the British officers disregarded Jochmus' orders. No operations were conducted by the Turkish army against Ibrahim as he retreated through Syria, although Jochmus followed the Egyptian. However, the Egyptian army was harrassed by the Syrian irregulars, who forced Ibrahim to retreat through the Syrian desert. Although Ponsonby vowed that he would "not eat or sleep so as to relax a moment any efforts to cause a proper attack to be . . . continued against the Army of Ibrahim,"² he could do nothing to prevent Ibrahim's army from escaping from Syria. When he finally obtained the firman investing Jochmus with the command of the army in Syria, he could not find a ship to convey it there. Ibrahim succeeded in extricating part of his army from Syria.

Ponsonby regarded Ibrahim's arrival in Gaza as a bitter personal defeat. He believed that Mehemet Ali could not long survive in Egypt after the annihilation of his army in Syria. But now, with the remnants of his army, the Pasha had the means to maintain himself in power, and from his Egyptian base continue

¹ Vide Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 13, 1840: ibid.

² Same to same, December 9, 1840: B.P.

the intrigues to recover his position in Syria.¹ The ambassador could not accept the fact that Mehemet Ali was prepared to sacrifice his ambitions in Syria in order to secure hereditary tenure for his family in Egypt.

¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER X: THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

A. The Resolution of the Mehemet Ali Question

The refusal of the Powers to recognize Napier's Convention did not change Mehemet Ali's resolution of submitting to the Sultan if he obtained hereditary rule in Egypt. He had gambled upon war to retain Syria but the Powers had shown unexpected energy in wresting the province from him before bad weather made operations difficult. France had blustered but had done nothing to protect him, and she could not be counted upon in preventing the Powers from invading Egypt. French advice to continue resistance seemed dangerous, as he feared that the French would attempt to save face by sacrificing his position in Egypt. Even if France became involved in a European War, he had no desire to become an ally of France, because such an alliance, in his opinion, would invite a British invasion of Egypt.

Mehemet Ali, upon hearing that the Porte had disavowed Napier's action in signing the Convention, hastened to send a letter to the Porte pledging his submission. When Captain Fanshawe, who commanded the British squadron blockading Alexandria, delivered it to Constantinople in the middle of December, the Porte requested that the Four Ambassadors should meet with Reschid Pasha to discuss whether Mehemet Ali had really capitulated. Ponsonby commented to Palmerston upon the letter: "The only thing like real submission in the proceeding is our submission to the will of France and that is very evident."¹

As the Porte previously had signified to the Powers that

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 16, 1840: B.P.

it opposed Mehemet Ali's reinstatement,¹ Ponsonby calculated that Reschid Pasha would reject the letter as an act of submission. Hence, the ambassador decided to be non-committal at the meeting, scheduled for December 20, thus placing the onus for the rejection upon the Porte. When Reschid Pasha asked him whether he thought Mehemet Ali indeed had yielded, Ponsonby replied that he could not express an opinion because his instructions did not cover this matter. Stürmer, instructed by Metternich to terminate the Egyptian question as quickly as possible, maintained that the Pasha was sincere and therefore, the Porte could send an emissary to Alexandria for the purpose of obtaining his formal submission. The Internuncio argued that it would be regrettable if the Porte hesitated, because the objective of the Convention of July, the recovery of Syria, already had been attained. Ponsonby again declined to express an opinion.

Reschid Pasha denied that Mehemet Ali really had submitted, whereupon Stürmer altered his argument, stating that the letter was the first step towards this. The Porte could not expect the Pasha to carry out all the conditions of submission in the "same hour," but it could be sure that he would evacuate Syria and return the Sultan's fleet without delay. Titow and the Prussian ambassador, Koenigsmarck, supported Stürmer. Noting that the Four Ambassadors were divided, Reschid Pasha proposed that the Conference of London should review the letter and decide the question. When Stürmer replied that the ambassadors agreed that the Pasha had yielded, Reschid Pasha changed his approach,

¹ Same to same, December 8, 1840: ibid.

saying that the Porte would require Mehemet Ali to fulfil the conditions of his submission before it would take any step. As Mehemet Ali had rejected the Convention of July, he had no rights. Stürmer replied that the Convention was still in force, whereupon Ponsonby made his only statement, pointing out that the Pasha had no rights, and that the Sultan alone should decide the matter. Before he concluded the meeting, Reschid Pasha asserted that Mehemet Ali's letter was a trick, and the Sultan would reflect upon what the ambassadors had said.¹

After this meeting, Ponsonby wrote to Palmerston that as the British government previously had said that the Powers would offer only counsel and would force no measure upon the Sultan, he had acknowledged the Sultan's right of determining what constituted submission.² Perhaps Ponsonby was sincere in his assertion that the final decision rested with the Sultan, but it cannot be denied that he regarded a refusal by the Porte to reinstate the Pasha as a means of destroying Mehemet Ali.

Ponsonby's strategy at first appeared to be successful. On December 27, Reschid Pasha informed him that the Sultan, to demonstrate his moderation, would give Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt after he had surrendered the Turkish fleet and fulfilled the objects of the protocol framed by the Conference of London on November 14. Walker and Mazloun Bey would be sent as commissioners to receive the fleet and determine whether Mehemet Ali had evacuated Syria.³ Ponsonby made no comment to Reschid

¹ Protocol of a meeting held at Reschid Pasha's house, December 20, 1840; enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 23, 1840: F.O. 78/399.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 23, 1840: ibid.

³ Reschid Pasha to Ponsonby, December 27, 1840; enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 30, 1840: ibid.

Pasha; the ambassador knew that the Ulema opposed Mehemet Ali's reinstatement, and was convinced that the Porte never would tolerate the Pasha in Egypt. The Porte sent no powers with the commissioners to bestow hereditary rule upon the Pasha, only instructions to observe whether he had submitted. Apparently, Ponsonby believed that Reschid Pasha hoped to outmanoeuvre Mehemet Ali, forcing the Pasha to show that he really had no intentions of submitting.

Suspicious of the Porte's policy, Stürmer, immediately after the departure of the commissioners for Alexandria, urged that Reschid Pasha send instructions to Mazloun Bey to offer Mehemet Ali hereditary rule in Egypt should he fulfil the conditions of his submission. Reschid Pasha would not accept Stürmer's suggestion until he had consulted Ponsonby. Consequently, Stürmer wrote to the latter that he was aware of his personal opposition to Mehemet Ali's reinstatement in Egypt, but the Four Powers had decided that the memorandum of November 14 should be the basis of the Pasha's reinstatement, and they considered that an immediate resolution to the Egyptian question was essential for the maintenance of European peace.¹ Ponsonby replied that he had no instructions to support Stürmer's proposals and questioned whether the Internuncio was acting upon orders from Vienna. If the British government had not sent him instructions, Ponsonby averred, "it cannot be for want of time," for his orders would have arrived at the same time as Stürmer's.² To Titow, Ponsonby contended that the Porte alone should determine the conditions

¹ Stürmer to Ponsonby, January 4, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 10, 1841: F.P. 78/430.

² Ponsonby to Stürmer, January 5, 1841: enclosure ibid.

of submission; if the Porte promised Mehemet Ali's reinstatement before he carried out these conditions, it would be acting "in direct opposition" to Palmerston's instructions.¹

To refute Ponsonby's argument that Stürmer's suggestions were in opposition to Palmerston's instructions, Titow argued that the act séparé of the Convention of July and Palmerston's instructions of October 15 specified that Mehemet Ali should be given hereditary rule in Egypt in return for his submission. Metternich had based his instructions to Stürmer upon these documents.² Ponsonby replied that he regretted that the lack of instructions prevented him from supporting his colleagues, adding that he could not understand why Stürmer's proposals were so important and why "such hurried action" was essential.³ Titow maintained his pressure upon Ponsonby, arguing that the Porte only would promise Mehemet Ali heredity if he fulfilled the conditions of his submission,⁴ but Ponsonby, desiring to end the debate on this subject, replied simply that he would not assume responsibility for the ambassador's actions.⁵

In his answer to Reschid Pasha, Ponsonby declared that he did not support Stürmer's proposals, but would not employ any arguments against them. Confused by this answer, Reschid Pasha requested Ponsonby to state clearly why he did not favour the

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- ¹ Ponsonby to Titow, January 7, 1841: enclosure ibid.
 - ² Titow to Ponsonby, January 8, 1841: enclosure ibid.
 - ³ Ponsonby to Titow, January 8, 1841: enclosure ibid.
 - ⁴ Titow to Ponsonby, January 9, 1841: enclosure ibid.
 - ⁵ Ponsonby to Titow, January 9, 1841: enclosure ibid.

proposals.¹ Ponsonby was forced to reveal his differences with his colleagues. He pointed out Reschid Pasha's assertions at the conference of December 20 that the Porte questioned Mehemet Ali's submission.² However, on January 10, Ponsonby received instructions from Palmerston, dated December 12, stating that while the Powers did not consider Napier's convention to be binding, the convention demonstrated that the Pasha would submit. Mehemet Ali's statement that he would not return the Sultan's fleet until he were given hereditary rule should not stand in the way of reinstating him.³ Ponsonby, in conformity with the instructions, advised the Porte to confer hereditary rule on Mehemet Ali.

With the Four Ambassadors now united, the Porte sent Mazloum Bey instructions to promise the Pasha hereditary rule in Egypt, but the instructions were not necessary. Urged by Napier, who had arrived in Alexandria on January 8, Mehemet Ali resolved to surrender the Sultan's fleet on demand by the commissioners. The Pasha was disturbed by the absence of a promise of hereditary tenure in Reschid Pasha's last letter. However, Napier calmed his fears by pointing out that the letter from Palmerston which he conveyed stated that the Powers recommended the extension of hereditary rule.⁴ On January 11, the day after the arrival of the commissioners, Mehemet Ali surrendered the Turkish fleet to Walker.⁵ Upon learning that the fleet had been surrendered and

¹ Reschid Pasha to Ponsonby, January 9, 1841: enclosure ibid.

² Ponsonby to Reschid Pasha, January 10, 1841: enclosure ibid.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 12, 1840: B. P.

⁴ Napier to Stopford, January 11, 1841: Ad. 1/5504.

⁵ Walker to Ponsonby, January 12, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, January 21, 1841: F. O. 78/430.

orders had been given for the evacuation of Syria, the Porte and the Four Ambassadors turned to resolve the terms of hereditary tenure.

Palmerston's instructions of December 17 covering the terms for the Pasha's rule, unfortunately were vague, misleading Ponsonby into believing that the British government desired the severe restriction of Mehemet Ali's power. The Foreign Secretary wrote that the Egyptian people should be protected against the Pasha's "Tyrannical Oppression," the Sultan secured against any attack by him, all Turkish laws should be implemented in Egypt, the Egyptian army should form part of the Sultan's forces and be limited in numbers, no monopolies should be permitted, and only those taxes in force in Turkey should be levied in Egypt. Nothing was said about whether Mehemet Ali should be granted the powers of taxation, a crucial omission by Palmerston.¹ Ponsonby believed that Palmerston desired to deny this right to the Pasha. The Hattisherif of Gulhané, which would apply to Egypt, provided that Pashas could not collect taxes, but were salaried. In this measure Ponsonby saw the means both of crippling the Pasha's power and saving the Egyptian people from his oppression. Ponsonby feared that if Mehemet Ali were permitted to collect taxes "He will be the sole arbiter of rewards and punishments in Egypt, and the world knows by experience how he will treat the people."²

Ponsonby recommended to Stürmer that the Sultan should issue a firman declaring that Mehemet Ali would be granted

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, December 17, 1840: F.O. 78/391.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 1, 1841: F.O. 78/430.

hereditary tenure, and specifying that all Turkish laws applied to Egypt and the Pasha's armed forces formed part of the Sultan's. Later, another firman would be issued stating in detail the conditions of heredity, based upon Palmerston's instructions. The initial firman would be a "Formal termination of the Question by the establishment of the Principle upon which the Empire is to be governed." "The exercise or the enjoyment of these rights," to be expressed in the subsequent firman, would require much thought based "upon the great principles already recognized."¹

The three ambassadors signified that they favoured Ponsonby's recommendations, asking him for his opinion upon the method of selecting Mehemet Ali's successors.² Before he could send a reply that the question should be left for a later time, Ponsonby received a letter from Sturmer stating that the three ambassadors could not accept his proposals, because they would delay a settlement. As he felt that the ambassadors were suspicious of his intentions, Ponsonby defended his views, claiming that he had been misunderstood, and had not rejected the Convention of July. He maintained that the Pasha's rejection of the Convention meant that the Powers were no longer bound by it, but were "free to act as They think proper, and to vary if they please the conditions to be imposed on Mehemet Ali." Knowing that he could not persuade the ambassadors to accept his proposals, Ponsonby withdrew them.³

At a meeting with the Four Ambassadors, on February 4,

¹ Ponsonby to Sturmer, January 28, 1841: enclosure ibid.

² Titow to Ponsonby, January 29, 1841: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Sturmer, January 31, 1841: enclosure ibid.

Reschid Pasha submitted the Porte's conditions of hereditary tenure. Ponsonby stated that he favoured all the terms except the right of the Pasha to collect taxes. After the three ambassadors had signified that they accepted all the conditions, Ponsonby defended his views in an argument which was not sparing in invectives against Mehemet Ali, whom he attacked as the most active slave merchant. Ponsonby argued that the Convention of July now was not binding upon the Porte. The ambassadors, he maintained, should base their advice upon their instructions, and should not suggest measures which would be "impossible to be reconciled one with another, and contradictory, so as that one measure if adopted, shall defeat almost every other measure which we are ordered to recommend." Palmerston's instructions, Ponsonby contended, clearly showed that the British government did not consider that the Convention of July bound the Powers. As the three ambassadors continued to maintain that the Porte must adhere to the Convention, the ambassadors could not give the Porte united counsel, and Reschid Pasha left the meeting confused.¹ Convinced that his opinion was correct, Ponsonby proudly wrote to Palmerston that he was happy that he had not been party to an "act of delivering up Egypt to Mehemet Ali and France."²

Having received divided counsel from the ambassadors, Reschid Pasha decided upon settling the question alone. On February 9, he informed Ponsonby that he had formulated a plan

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 4, 1841: ibid.

² Same to same, February 9, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

which would reconcile the opposing views, promising that he would send him the draft of the firman. When the firman was "definitely settled," he would invite the ambassadors to review it and would ask them what the Powers would do in the event of a rejection by Mehemet Ali.¹ However, Reschid Pasha did not keep his promise. On February 13, he sent Ponsonby the firman in the final form, enclosed in an official note which requested the ambassador to state what his government's plans would be in the case of a rejection by Mehemet Ali. Reschid Pasha told F. Pisani, who received the note, that the firman would be dispatched the next day with Mouhib Effendi, the Minister of Justice, to Alexandria.²

The Porte's conditions of heredity were harsh. The Sultan would retain the right of selecting Mehemet Ali's successors from the Pasha's male children, and if this line became extinct could select a governor. Mehemet Ali would pay one-quarter of the revenue of the government of Egypt as tribute, although a new arrangement could be concluded in five years. The Pasha's army would be limited to eighteen thousand men stationed in Egypt and two thousand in Constantinople, no warship could be built without the Sultan's consent, and Mehemet Ali could not appoint officers above the rank of Colgassi, the rank immediately below Chef de Battalion.³

Harsh as these conditions were, they did not meet with Ponsonby's approval. The ambassador noted to Palmerston: "It is

¹ Same to same, February 14, 1841: ibid.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, February 13, 1841: enclosure ibid.

³ Firman to Mehemet Ali, February 13, 1841: enclosure ibid.

a half measure, it leaves the patronage of Egypt in the hands of the Pasha without any real controul over the abuse of his Power. It is a work shewing how ignorant its authors are of principles of which Despotic as well as Constitutional States are ruled."¹ In his account of the incident, Ponsonby was unable to control his anger and disappointment, accusing Reschid Pasha of falling under the influence of the Frenchmen who surrounded him, and Stürmer, who was eager to end the Egyptian question. Ponsonby was convinced that Reschid Pasha had accepted all of Stürmer's proposals, but the Sultan had modified the firman. At this point, Ponsonby hoped for Reschid Pasha's rapid downfall. This he thought likely because Reschid Pasha's "subservience" to Stürmer angered the anti-Austrian faction at the Porte and also the Sultan, who believed that Metternich had thwarted the intention of the British government to conclude the Egyptian question without using half-measures. Trying to excuse himself for his diplomatic defeat, Ponsonby boasted that he could have frustrated Reschid Pasha's firman, but had not done so because he had no instructions and knew that friction would arise between the British and Austrian governments.²

In his reply to Reschid Pasha's official note, Ponsonby accused the Foreign Minister of breaking his word and disclaimed "all responsibility whatever for the measures detailed in the Firman containing the conditions." In addition, Ponsonby rejected Reschid Pasha's request for Hodges' immediate return to

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 14, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

² Same to same, February 14, 1841: B.P.

Alexandria.¹ Trying to mollify Ponsonby, Reschid Pasha told F. Pisani that he had been unable to send the draft of the firman to Ponsonby because the Sultan had ordered that copies of the firman should be sent to the Four Ambassadors at the same time, and the original be conveyed immediately to Alexandria. The Porte had compromised on the question of tribute.² While Reschid Pasha's arguments had little effect upon Ponsonby, the ambassador decided not to pursue the matter. However, he carefully made sure that Great Britain would not be held responsible for the consequences of the firman.³

Not until the third week of February did Ponsonby learn that he was out of step with the British government. In a dispatch dated January 26, Palmerston stated that the ambassador should have told the conference of December 20 that the instructions of October 15 should be carried out "as soon as the good faith of Mehemet Ali's submission should have been proved by facts."⁴ Ponsonby questioned Palmerston's comments, unable to believe that he had acted incorrectly. The ambassador concluded that Metternich's penchant for half measures had forced Palmerston to modify his original intentions. However, Ponsonby still was convinced that Palmerston desired the limitation of Mehemet Ali's power, preventing him from being a danger to the Sultan.⁵

¹ Ponsonby to Reschid Pasha, February 15, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 16, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

² F. Pisani to Ponsonby, February 18, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 19, 1841: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 19, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, January 26, 1841: F.O. 78/427.

⁵ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 20, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

Hence, Ponsonby continued to believe that in opposing Mehemet Ali's right to collect taxes, he was following the wishes of his government.

Mehemet Ali rejected the Sultan's firman, impugning the provisions on succession, tribute, the application of the Hatt-i-sharif of Gulhané and Turkish laws in Egypt, and the uniforms to be worn by the Egyptian army and navy.¹ Upon learning of the Pasha's rejection, Ponsonby promised Palmerston that he would prevent direct negotiations, for as the Pasha had submitted, he was at the mercy of his sovereign.²

On March 16, the Four Ambassadors held a conference for the purpose of deciding what advice should be given to the Porte. Sturmer suggested that the hereditary succession clause in the firman should be altered. However, Ponsonby strenuously argued against a change, maintaining that the Porte in effect would be entering into negotiations with Mehemet Ali and would not be acting in conformity with the note of the Conference of London to Chekib Effendi on January 30, which forbade negotiations. Stürmer countered by arguing that the ambassadors should act quickly and effectively as he had information that the Conference of London had been, or shortly would be, dissolved. Hence, it would be impossible for the Porte to ask it for advice. This argument failed to sway Ponsonby, who informed his colleagues that he would advise the Porte "to remain passive and to ask its Allies for advice."³

¹ Mehemet Ali to the Grand Vizier, N.D.: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 9, 1841: F.O. 78/432.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 10: 1841: B.P.

³ Same to same, March 17, 1841: F.O. 78/432.

When Reschid Pasha requested his advice, Ponsonby cautioned the Turk against taking any step before consulting the British government. The ambassador pointed out that Mehemet Ali was endeavouring to trap the Porte into negotiations. The Sultan's firman

is an order. No subject can refuse to obey an order, and be said to be submissive to the Sovereign. A subject may petition his Sovereign to change or revoke an order. Has Mehemet A. petitioned for alteration or has he expressed his will to disobey the order?¹

Stürmer, on the other hand, suggested that the Porte should use the note of January 30 as a guide in framing the conditions for hereditary tenure. The concessions to the Pasha should appear to come from the Sultan's will.² However, Stürmer failed in obtaining the support of Titow, who told Reschid Pasha that he could not advise the Porte until he had received instructions. Hence, Reschid Pasha was afraid to expose the Porte to another refusal by Mehemet Ali, and resolved upon temporizing until he had consulted the British government.³

Reschid Pasha, however, was not given an opportunity to conclude the Egyptian question, for on March 29, Ponsonby reported that he had fallen from power. Ponsonby did not hide his satisfaction, venting his rage against the unfortunate Turk. Reschid Pasha, Ponsonby asserted to Palmerston, had a "mania for paper regulations," had "allowed the real principle of the government to lose its power," and had "alarmed & disgusted" the

¹ Ponsonby to Reschid Pasha, March 18, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 27, 1841: ibid.

² Stürmer to Reschid Pasha, March 18, 1841: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 27, 1841: ibid.

Sultan by his "notorious attachment" to France. The reforms which Reschid Pasha had formulated were dangerous: "Fear is the principle, & must be so long as the nation continues uncivilized & constituted as it is, & nothing can alter this state but the operation of commerce, bringing, as it is doing, gradual enlightenment with riches." The French, who had the most to lose by Reschid Pasha's fall, would be infuriated. Undoubtedly, Stürmer would regard his fall as a misfortune for Austrian diplomacy, because he thought he controlled Reschid Pasha, but Stürmer controlled him only for the moment, as he "was always governed for the moment, by whoever told him of his great abilities; & his french [sic] flatterers had a vast advantage over Stürmer in that respect."¹ At first, Ponsonby refused to believe that Reschid Pasha was corrupt, but when evidence of this came to light, the ambassador was unsparing in his attacks. Nevertheless, Ponsonby did not forget that Reschid Pasha had played a vital role in recovering Syria, and to show his gratitude, he employed his influence in shielding the fallen Pasha from the wrath of the new Turkish ministry.

The new ministry, which was reactionary, was dominated by Rifaat Pasha, who appeared intent upon quickly concluding the Egyptian question. Chekib Effendi was instructed to recommend to the Conference of London that the power of choosing a successor in Egypt should be granted to Mehemet Ali's family. The Porte, however, still maintained that Mehemet Ali's tribute should be fixed at one-quarter of the Egyptian government's revenue.²

¹ Same to same, March 29, 1841: B.P.

² Instructions by the Porte to Chekib Effendi, March 30, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 6, 1841: F.O. 78/432.

Before the Porte's instructions could reach London, Ponsonby received Palmerston's instructions of March 11 stating that the Powers considered the Sultan's previous firman as an attempt to set aside Ibrahim, which they could not condone.¹ Instructions, dated March 6, ordered Hodges' return to Alexandria.²

In keeping with his instructions, Ponsonby took measures to "prepare" the Porte to act completely in conformity with the views of the British government. He stated to Rifaat Pasha that the note of the Conference of London to Chekib Effendi, on January 30, treated the questions of succession, tribute and Mehemet Ali's appointment of officers in the Egyptian army as points which could be altered. As the British government had made no recommendations on the size of the Egyptian army, the construction of warships in Egypt, the regulation of conscription, and the implementation of Turkish laws in Egypt, it would leave these to the Sultan's discretion. Because Europe desired the immediate termination of the Egyptian question, the Porte should give the British government "free liberty to settle it."³ Rifaat Pasha promised that the Sultan would do whatever Great Britain recommended.⁴

Ponsonby implemented Palmerston's instructions of March 11 without enthusiasm. He believed that the Porte should take its time in resolving the Egyptian question, for Mehemet Ali was powerless to force his demands upon the Sultan.⁵ But Ponsonby

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 11, 1841: B.P.

² Same to same, March 6, 1841: F.O. 78/427.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 5, 1841: B.P.

⁴ Same to same, April 6, 1841: F.O. 78/433.

⁵ Same to same, March 31, 1841: B.P.

had no chance of retarding a settlement. On April 6, the ambassador received Palmerston's instructions of March 16, ordering him to request the Porte to declare immediately that Ibrahim would be Mehemet Ali's successor, and Mehemet Ali's descendents in the direct male line would succeed Ibrahim.¹ This instruction elicited an outburst of indignation from Ponsonby, who noted: "I suppose people are determined to swallow all things & I for one have only to obey orders." He pointed out that the Powers obviously did not know that the Pasha had refused to implement the Hattisherif of Gulhané, the Commercial Convention and all Turkish laws in Egypt. While he could not decline implementing the instructions, Ponsonby made sure that Palmerston knew his opinions, writing:

To tell you plainly my opinion, it is this.
That the Allies have given up Egypt to M.
Ali in order to placate France & that it
signifies little what are the terms pretended to
be imposed upon him & that all we can do here
is to endeavour to save the dignity of the
Sultan as well as we can. It is our own interest
to save it. 2

Palmerston's instructions were communicated immediately to the Porte. When Stürmer received his instructions he found that Ponsonby already had made representations at the Porte.³ The Porte had no choice but to recognize Ibrahim as Mehemet Ali's successor. It also decided to grant Mehemet Ali the right of appointing officers below the rank of General of Brigade and fixed a sum to be paid by him as tribute.⁴ Rifaat Pasha, after

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 16, 1841: B.P.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 6, 1841: ibid.

³ Stürmer to Ponsonby, April 13, 1841, Ponsonby to Sturmer, April 14, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 14, 1841: F.O.78/433.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 14, 1841: ibid.

framing the firman, asked Ponsonby what the British government would do should Mehemet Ali reject it. When Ponsonby replied that he could give no opinion until he had received instructions, the Porte decided to delay sending the firman until it had received further news from London.¹

Although Ponsonby personally did not like the concessions in the firman, he pressed Rifaat Pasha for its immediate dispatch, saying that it would satisfy the British government because it was based upon the Convention of July, and the note of the Conference of London to Chekib Effendi on January 30.² Titow and Stürmer placed so much pressure upon the Porte that Rifaat Pasha complained to Ponsonby that Austria and Russia "put the knife" to the Porte's throat. The two ambassadors, Rifaat Pasha stated, were telling the Porte that the Allies considered the Egyptian question to be terminated, and therefore, the Porte took upon itself "a great responsibility for every day" it hesitated in sending the firman.³ But the Turks continued to procrastinate.

Stürmer and Titow stressed to Ponsonby that the consuls-general should return immediately to Alexandria. As Palmerston had ordered Hodges' return, Ponsonby could not decline these requests.⁴ However, before the consuls-general could depart, Stürmer received instructions from Metternich, who finally had learned that Mehemet Ali had rejected the previous firman, to

¹ Ponsonby to Rifaat Pasha, April 21, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 21, 1841: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, April 29, 1841: B.P.

³ Same to same, April 28, 1841: F.O. 78/433.

⁴ Same to same, April 29, 1841: B.P.

retain them in Constantinople until the Pasha and the Sultan had resolved their differences. Ponsonby, pleased with Metternich's instructions, proudly observed that he always had opposed their return to Alexandria before settlement of the Egyptian question.¹

Nevertheless, the Powers did not relent in their determination to quickly terminate the Mehemet Ali question. On April 10, Palmerston instructed Ponsonby to tell the Sultan "without delay to modify such parts of his Firmans" as were "open to reasonable objections." The Austrians and Prussians had recommended that the Conference of London should be dissolved to facilitate France's entrance into a Convention, but the British government had succeeded in delaying this, thus preventing Mehemet Ali from receiving the impression that the Four Powers "had abandoned the Sultan at the eleventh hour." But the Conference of London soon would dissolve, hence "the extreme urgency of coming to a final settlement."²

On May 3, Ponsonby suggested to Titow and Stürmer that the Porte should send a firman to Mehemet Ali embodying the concessions of the Sultan upon hereditary succession, tribute, and military appointments. The firman should appear to answer the Pasha's most recent letter, and should state briefly beside each disputacious point why the Sultan had not bowed to his demands. It should observe also that the Allies had advised the Sultan not to accede to the Pasha's dictates. This procedure would demonstrate to Mehemet Ali that the Powers had not concluded their part in resolving the Egyptian question, and would permit

¹ Same to same, May 3, 1841: F.O. 78/433.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, April 10, 1841: F.O. 78/427.

the preservation of the Sultan's dignity.¹

The two ambassadors' reply was vague, and Ponsonby concluded that his colleagues had accepted his proposals. Thereupon, Ponsonby, suspecting that Rifaat Pasha intended delaying the dispatch of the firman until he had received further communication from Chekib Effendi, warned ~~the Pasha~~ that if the Porte continued to delay, he officially would ask the three ambassadors to help him conduct an investigation.² Soon after the communication, Ponsonby learned that Stürmer and Titow had agreed only that the firman should answer Mehemet Ali's last letter. Therefore, he immediately withdrew his proposals. The Four ambassadors resolved upon permitting the Sultan to determine the form and substance of the firman.³

On May 22, Rifaat Pasha read the new firman to the Four Ambassadors. It provided that the hereditary succession would be in the eldest male line,⁴ the tribute one-quarter of Egypt's revenue, calculated at three hundred, twenty thousand purses,⁵ and the Egyptian army would have its own uniforms while the navy would wear the Sultan's. When Rifaat Pasha requested the ambassadors to state their approbation in writing, they declined, because the Powers had not participated in framing the firman. However, the ambassadors consented to write that they could find

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 3, 1841: F.O. 78/433.

² Same to same, May 12, 1841: ibid.

³ Same to same, May 19, 1841: B.P.

⁴ Firman to Mehemet Ali, N.D: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1841: F.O. 78/434.

⁵ Firman to Mehemet Ali, N.D: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 23, 1841: ibid.

no objectionable points in it.¹

Ponsonby personally was unwilling to accede to the Porte's request because the firman did not force Mehemet Ali to implement the Hattisherif of Gulhané and gave him the opportunity of continuing his oppressive financial exactions from the "wretched Egyptians". Ponsonby did not make any observations to Rifaat Pasha on the firman because Palmerston desired to conclude the Egyptian question as quickly as possible, and because the Sultan was "acknowledged to be the proper and only Authority to determine the nature and extent of the restrictions to be imposed upon the powers of the Pasha."²

As the firman was not dispatched immediately, the Four Ambassadors applied strong pressure upon the Porte. Finally, on June 1, the firman was sent to Mehemet Ali.³ Suspecting that Mehemet Ali still maintained his hope for French support and discounted the possibility of an attack by the Powers, Ponsonby doubted whether the Pasha would accept it.⁴ The Sultan, Ponsonby believed, had the military power to force the firman on Mehemet Ali or destroy him; the Sultan's navy, which would be in an effective state by the end of July, could land troops at Damietta.⁵ Mehemet Ali, however, accepted the firman. He petitioned the Sultan to diminish the tribute, but Ponsonby considered this a minor point which could be arranged between the

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, May 22, 1841: ibid.

² Ibid. Also same to same, May 23, 1841: ibid.

³ Same to same, May 26, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 2, 1841: ibid.

⁵ Same to same, May 23, 1841: ibid.

Pasha and the Porte.¹ On July 5, Said Bey arrived in Constantinople to make submission for his father, Mehemet Ali.

B. A Settlement for Syria

During his nine year rule in Syria, Mehemet Ali adopted a policy of dividing the Muslims and Christians to lessen the effectiveness of their opposition to his rule. Upon conquering the country, he placed Christians in important positions of government, antagonizing the Musulmans, who considered the Christians as their inferiors. Although heavy taxation and conscription were the main reasons for the series of revolts in Syria by the Musulman population, the equality granted to the Christians was a contributing factor. Mehemet Ali, indeed, armed the Marionites on Mount Lebanon to aid him in suppressing a revolt of the Druses in 1838. Not until he demanded the return of the weapons and endeavoured to conscript Christians did the Marionites turn against him. Ibrahim's withdrawal left Syria divided, with the Christians and Musulmans vying for control of Mount Lebanon.

Before Mehemet Ali's conquest, the Emir Beshir al-Shihab had established his power in the Mountains of Lebanon, maintaining peace between the Marionites and Druses by a combination of ruthless repression and cautious impartiality in dealing with the two sects. But the Emir Beshir supported Ibrahim during the war, and Wood, unable to obtain a commitment from him that he would change sides, invoked the firman he had received from the Porte.² The Emir Beshir was conveyed to Malta, but subsequently

¹ Same to same, June 16, 1841: ibid.

² Wood to Ponsonby, December 20, 1840: A. Cunningham, The Early Correspondence of Richard Wood. Cambridge, 1966. p. 196.

was permitted to end his long life in Constantinople. Beshir al-Kessim succeeded to the title and the estates of the Emir Beshir. Although he showed energy in harrassing Ibrahim's army in its retreat from Syria, the new Emir Beshir was not a particularly gifted person, and lacked the prestige of his predecessor. The fact that the Emir Beshir had no defined powers augured ill for the future, especially as the Druses were animated by a desire for revenge against the Shihabi family.

In February, 1841, Stürmer raised the subject of a Syrian settlement, suggesting a conference of the Four Ambassadors. Ponsonby was hesitant to discuss a settlement until the ambassadors had obtained information upon the old institutions in Syria and learned whether the Syrians desired their retention. Consequently, he persuaded Stürmer to delay these discussions. From the beginning, Ponsonby recognized that the settlement of Syrian affairs would be difficult, and he had little confidence in the measures which Metternich had outlined to Stürmer.¹

The ambassadors left the Syrian question in abeyance until the middle of March, when Titow received instructions from Nesselrode to advise the Porte to immediately conclude a settlement for the province. Ponsonby persuaded Titow to temporize until correct information had been obtained from Syria, and recognize as temporary any settlement made by the Porte.² As Titow desired that the Porte should honour Wood's promises to the Syrians, Ponsonby requested Wood's return to Constantinople. Wood returned in May, armed with extensive recommendations for

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 25, 1841: F.O. 78/432.

² Same to same, March 17, 1841: ibid.

the settlement of Syrian affairs. The crux of Wood's plans was the establishment of a Divan, composed of the various groups in Lebanon, through which the Emir Beshir would rule.¹ Ponsonby based his settlement for Syria almost entirely upon Wood's recommendations.

On June 4, Ponsonby, Stürmer and Titow began framing a settlement for Syria. They agreed that 1) the Porte should remit all illegal taxes; 2) a governor of Jerusalem should be appointed for the protection of the Christians and the resolution of disputes between the various Christian sects; 3) all government officials in Syria should be ordered not to interfere with the freedom of worship by the Christian sects; 4) the Emir Beshir should be permitted to appoint a Kassou Kahaya² at Constantinople, thus establishing direct communication with the Porte; 5) the Porte should acknowledge the services of the Syrians in the war, and reward them; and 6) the Syrians should be given security for every right they enjoyed. The ambassadors agreed that they should present individually these proposals to the Porte.³

The following day, when Wood submitted them to Rifaat Pasha, the latter accepted all but one, the appointment of a Kassou Kahaya for the Emir Beshir, insisting that he should nominate a Turk to maintain communications with the Emir Beshir. Stürmer, Ponsonby noted, "also acted in perfect concurrence with these

¹ Cunningham, op.cit., p.24.

² A personal representative to communicate directly with the Porte.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 8, 1841: F.O. 78/434.

principles."¹

As the French were attempting to re-establish their influence in Syria, and the Turkish authorities there were "acting in many things with immeasurable folly and great corruption," a settlement was urgent. Nezib Pasha, the governor of Damascus, had reintroduced restrictions upon Christians, preventing them from entering Damascus on horseback, and requiring them to use a mode of salutation to a Turkish functionary expressive of inferiority. He demanded a large sum of money from the Mountains of Lebanon, which the Emir Beshir refused to pay,² and Ponsonby did not trust the governor's loyalty to the Sultan, because he at one time had been employed by Mehemet Ali. Ponsonby found fault with the governor of Gaza, who also had served under the Pasha of Egypt. The ambassador could not forgive Reschid Pasha "who seems on all occasions to have selected the greatest scoundrels in the Empire for employment in offices of trust & power."³

Desiring to remove Nezib Pasha before he could turn the Syrians against the Sultan, Ponsonby made representations to Rifaat Pasha. But the latter would do no more than send a letter to Nezib Pasha saying that complaints had been made against him, and ordering him to be kind towards the Syrians.⁴ Nezib Pasha responded by complaining that the British officers were interfering in Syria, and requested their recall. This reply spurred

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Same to same, May 23, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 8, 1841: ibid.

Ponsonby to increase his pressure upon the Porte, but the Porte remained intransigent. It countered by demanding the recall of the British consul on Candia, whom it claimed had protected some Candiotes during a recent revolt. When Ponsonby refused to remove the consul, the Porte maintained that it would not recall Nezib Pasha.¹ Apparently, the latter's connection by marriage to Rifaat Pasha accounted for the support he received at the Porte.²

Unable to obtain Nezib Pasha's removal, Ponsonby now was more anxious that the Emir Beshir be given a Kassou Kahaya, who could report directly to the Porte upon the excesses of Turkish officials in Syria. After consulting with Wood, Ponsonby decided that a Kassou Kahaya for the Maronite Patriarch also was necessary. On June 5, Ponsonby, Stürmer and Titow drew up a memorandum requesting that Wood's promises to the Syrians should be honoured, all illegal taxes be remitted, oppressive taxes demanded be abolished, and Feriks should be appointed to the governments of Djebail Kodas, Djebail Nablus and Djebail Halil, to reside at Jerusalem for the special protection of the Christians and settlement of the disputes among the sects. The Greek and Armenian Patriarchs and the Latin Church each should appoint a commissioner to accompany the Feriks to Jerusalem. The three commissioners and the Feriks, together with the most respectable citizens of Jerusalem, should form a commission which would examine the titles of the various churches to disputed sanctuaries. The ambassadors also requested that the Emir Beshir

¹ Same to same, June 30, 1841: B.P.

² Ponsonby to Wood, July 10, 1841: Cunningham, op.cit., p. 263.

and Maronite Patriarch should be permitted to appoint Kassou Kahayas.¹

When Wood presented this memorandum, he found that the Porte would not permit the appointments of Kassou Kahayas. Finally, after four hours of representation, Wood persuaded Rifaat Pasha to submit the subject to a council at the Porte.² The council decided in favour of the proposal.

Ponsonby felt that the measures which the Porte had accepted, if properly implemented, would maintain tranquillity in Syria. But he had little hope that the Turkish officials in Syria would implement them. Nor could Ponsonby depend upon Wood's influence in Syria, for Palmerston had signified that he would not appoint Wood as consul-general in Syria. As consul-general, Wood would be "entitled to exercise a general superintendence."³ While Wood recommended that he should be appointed consul in Damascus, Ponsonby was reluctant to request this, because the Porte could not make an appointment "in opposition to the feelings of religious obligation."⁴ Ponsonby was in a quandry, believing that Wood's presence in Syria was "absolutely necessary", but that without a consulate appointment, Wood's influence and authority would be "extremely" limited.⁵ Finally, Ponsonby resolved upon dispatching Wood to Syria, and exhorted Palmerston to appoint him consul-general in Syria.

¹ Memorandum signed by Ponsonby, Stürmer and Titow, June 5, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 21, 1841: F.O. 78/435.

² Wood to Ponsonby, June 14, 1841: enclosure ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 21, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Ponsonby to Wood, June 28, 1841: Cunningham, op.cit., p. 260.

⁵ Same to same, July 6, 1841: ibid., p. 261.

However, the ambassador soon had a change of heart, delaying Wood's departure until he could obtain authority for him in Syria. Ponsonby requested the Porte to recognize Wood as consul in Damascus, but, as expected, the Porte refused because it was a Holy City.¹ As Wood's residence in Damascus was essential, Ponsonby requested the Porte to issue a Vizirial letter authorizing this, and permitting Wood to supervise the implementation of the Porte's orders. Two letters were issued by the Porte, one to take the place of a Berat and the other to help him exercise "a certain degree of inspection desired of him by the Porte over proceedings in Syria."² Wood was requested to communicate directly with the Porte.

Yet Ponsonby still hoped that before Wood's departure the British embassy would receive a communication appointing Wood as consul-general for Syria.³ But Colonel Rose, the commander of the British officers in Syria, whose recommendations that the British government should establish ties with the Druse were favourably received by Palmerston, received the appointment. Ponsonby deprecated both Rose's appointment and the policy he proposed to follow, which was "as mischievous" as it was "foolish." The ambassador thought that should Great Britain attempt to establish "agreements with any portion of the Turkish Subjects, the Turks must suspect" her. "The Other Powers will have derived from us a right each to seek to establish connection with some other portion of the Subjects of the Porte and the confusion

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 27, 1841: F.O. 78/436.

² Same to same, August 3, 1841: F.O. 78/437.

³ Ponsonby to Wood, August 5, 1841: Cunningham, op.cit., p. 267.

that will ensue may be great and serious." Believing that Rose's proposals would permit the French to act as the protectors of the Marionites, Ponsonby caustically commented to Wood: "Nothing can be more foolish in my opinion than the conduct of Lord Palmerston in these matters, it is that of an Old Woman or a Hypocrite...."¹ Palmerston had decided against the appointment of Wood as consul-general because he had shown that he was a zealous Roman Catholic, who was "opposed to the Druses."²

Wood departed for Syria before Ponsonby received intelligence of Rose's appointment. On September 2, at a meeting of the notables of Mount Lebanon, Wood presented his proposals, including the establishment of a Divan. As the Druses and the Christians could not agree upon representation, the proposal for a Divan was not accepted. Wood could obtain only a promise that the Emir Beshir would be given a revenue of two thousand, two hundred purses per annum. After the meeting, the Druses, who hated the Emir Beshir and previously had requested his deposition, demanded to Rose that they also should be given a Kassou Kahaya. Soon after, news of Rose's appointment as consul-general reached Syria. This appointment was not well received by the Marionites, who suspected that Rose was pro-Druse.³

Lebanon now was in turmoil, with the French openly supporting the cause of the Catholics, declaring that they had the right of protecting Catholic priests.⁴ Ponsonby did not apply

¹ Ibid., p. 268.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, August 19, 1841: F.O. 78/429.

³ Cunningham, op.cit., pp. 31-33.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 15, 1841: F.O. 78/437.

to the Porte for a Berat for Rose until Wood had finished his work in Syria, fearing that Wood's influence would be diminished.¹ Wood failed in his attempt to establish harmony between the Marionites and Druses. Soon after Rose was appointed consul-general, the Whig government fell, and Aberdeen, the new Foreign Minister, resolved to be impartial between the Marionite and Druse. However, Rose was not removed, and he failed to handle the situation in Syria. When Ponsonby departed from Constantinople in September, Lebanon was on the brink of civil war.

C. The Reorganization of the Turkish Army

The amelioration of the Turkish army had been dominant in Ponsonby's thinking since the beginning of 1833, and in 1841 he believed that reorganization was as important or even more so than in the early part of his embassy. If the army were not strengthened, the Ottoman Empire would "crumble to pieces ere long."² The British officers in Syria presented an unflattering picture of the Turkish army. Rose reported that the officers were uneducated, and the Serakier in Syria could write only his name. The Turks knew "next to nothing" about brigade-movements, and the officers spent most of the day smoking and were often intoxicated. Turkish artillery was too old, clumsy and heavy, and the army was "almost entirely deficient in Staff, Commissariat & Medical Officers." However, the Turkish soldier was brave and docile, good material to be commanded by competent officers.³

¹ Ponsonby to Aberdeen, October 6, 1841: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 8, 1841: F.O. 78/434.

³ Rose to Ponsonby, February 20, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 21, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

Soon after Rifaat Pasha's accession to power, Ponsonby recognized that the new government was reactionary and could attempt to reintroduce the old system of government, which could cripple the army's effectiveness in resisting Turkey's enemies. Ponsonby tactfully told Rifaat Pasha that the policies of the Porte "must be defeated if the Country is not strengthened by an Army good enough to protect it."¹ Remembering that Great Britain in 1837 had failed to improve the Turkish army because she had insisted upon employing numerous British officers and non-commissioned officers, Ponsonby was more cautious in his approach. He noted to Palmerston: "It appears to me, that things can be done, little by little, and will not be done by other means; The wedge has already been entered thanks to circumstances and it may be driven home by well-regulated strokes. We have Jochmus virtually at the head of the Army with the honest consent of the Turks - Walker at the head of the Fleet - these are great advantages, which must work well, if not disturbed by precipitation and the display of our influence."

Ponsonby decided that the Porte should establish a commission, headed by Jochmus and containing two British officers who were "not bigotted to British methods," to determine measures for the reorganization of the army.² After reading a report by Rose, Palmerston recommended that the commission should contain three British and three Turkish officers.³

At the beginning of March, Palmerston instructed that Ponsonby suggest to the Porte the employment of British artillery

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, June 8, 1841: F.O. 78/434.

² Same to same, February 21, 1841: F.O. 78/431.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 23, 1841: F.O. 78/427.

officers for improving the artillery.¹ However, Ponsonby, anticipating Palmerston's instructions, already had recommended to the Porte the employment of Captain Williams and non-commissioned officers for this purpose, but had received a polite refusal from Reschid Pasha.² However, Ponsonby persisted, and in the middle of March he was optimistic.³ Finally, the Porte granted permission for Williams and his non-commissioned officers to instruct, on a limited scale, naval gunnery.

However, Ponsonby, recognizing that the reorganization of the Turkish army was a more delicate and complicated problem, moved cautiously. Jochmus was recalled to present his recommendations to the Porte. Although Ponsonby suggested to the Porte that Jochmus should be employed in reorganizing the army, he carefully refrained from recommending particular British officers to aid him. At the beginning of June, Ponsonby abandoned his plan of creating a commission containing British officers, because he recognized that the Turks would reject proposals which were "in contradiction to their pride & prejudice."⁴

When Rifaat Pasha, on June 25, visited Ponsonby to thank him, in the Sultan's name, for the aid the Four Ambassadors had extended in the reduction of Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby raised the subject of the amelioration of the Turkish army. Rifaat Pasha, noting that the Porte did not know how to accomplish this,

¹ Same to same, March 4, 1841: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 3, 1841: F.O. 78/432.

³ Same to same, March 17, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Same to same, June 8, 1841: F.O. 78/434.

requested Ponsonby's suggestions. As his "object was to obtain an official authorization to bring the matter before The Porte instead of obtruding it uncalled for," Ponsonby readily agreed. The plan which Ponsonby submitted, based upon recommendations by Williams and Jochmus, provided that only Turks educated in Great Britain, France and Germany, with the exception of Jochmus, should be employed in the reorganization of the army. This plan, Ponsonby believed, would not wound "the self love of the Turks," and would not give the other Powers a pretext to demand that their officers should be employed.¹

The initial reaction at the Porte was favourable. Jochmus, was informed by Mustafa Pasha, the Seraskier Pasha, that within eight days a firman would be issued ordering the implementation of the plan.² But the Seraskier Pasha, who secretly opposed the plan, tried to undermine it. While Ponsonby felt confident that the Porte, despite this opposition, would accept the plan, he decided to delay his departure from Constantinople, to employ his influence in deposing Mustafa Pasha.³

Ponsonby's plans went beyond merely reforming the Turkish army. During the summer of 1841, he requested Williams to draw up a plan for defending the Straits and Constantinople, and protecting the Sultan against revolutions in his capital. Williams suggested that three citadels should be constructed which would store arms and light artillery;⁴ one outside the

¹ Same to same, July 2, 1841: F.O. 78/436.

² Jochmus to Ponsonby, July 29, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, July 3, 1841: ibid.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 2, 1841: F.O. 78/437.

⁴ Williams to Ponsonby, May 12, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 2, 1841: ibid.

great wall of Constantinople, a second on the heights of Pera, and a third above Scutari. The plan was essentially the same as that which had been presented to Sultan Mahmoud immediately before his death. To this plan, Ponsonby added a recommendation that the Sultan should establish a steamship flotilla, and submitted them to the Porte at the beginning of September.¹

Although Ponsonby failed to depose the Seraskier Pasha, he did receive a Bourld from the Porte "virtually appointing" Jochmus as chief of staff of the Turkish army.² Tahir Pasha, the Capudan Pasha, informed Ponsonby that the Sultan had requested him to obtain at least ten steamships of war, but Tahir Pasha signified that he would temporize until he had determined their cost.³ Apparently the plan soon was abandoned by the Porte. Williams, given more latitude by the Porte to reform the artillery, made extensive progress, receiving full co-operation from Mahomet Ali Pasha of Tophana, who commanded the artillery. New guns were cast, the Turkish gunners were instructed by the British non-commissioned officers, and a new artillery school was founded.⁴

However, the efforts at medical reform were unsuccessful. Dr. Davy was sent by Palmerston to Constantinople to improve the medical department in the Turkish army and establish a school of medicine which would instruct civilian as well as military surgeons.⁵ The doctor encountered opposition from the Hekim

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, August 28, 1841: ibid.

² Ponsonby to Aberdeen, October 6, 1841: ibid.

³ Same to same, October 8, 1841: ibid.

⁴ Williams to Ponsonby, September 28, 1841: enclosure Ponsonby to Aberdeen, September 29, 1841: ibid.

⁵ Palmerston to Ponsonby, January 25, 1841: F.O. 78/427.

Pasha, the head of the physicians and a chief Ulema, who feared his criticism.¹ Upon the Porte's request, Dr. Davy visited Turkish hospitals and reported upon their deficiencies. After Dr. Davy submitted his report, Rifaat Pasha informed Ponsonby that the Porte would consider the recommendations, and meanwhile, the doctor could return to Great Britain.² This was a polite refusal to permit the reform by British doctors of the medical department in the Turkish army.

When Ponsonby left Constantinople, at the end of September, he rightfully could take pride in his accomplishments. The Turkish artillery already had shown significant improvement, and the foundations had been laid for the reorganization of the Turkish army. The army which faced the Russians in 1853 was far superior to the rabble which broke ranks at the first cannonade of the battle of Nezib.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 20, 1841: F.O. 78/437.

² Rifaat Pasha to Ponsonby, September 11, 1841: enclosure ibid.

CHAPTER XI: CONCLUSION

Ponsonby manifested two essential qualities in dealing successfully with the Turks: a grand manner and a forceful, aggressive personality. His manner was impressive and to some degree attractive to the Turkish officials, many of whom had been raised by the Sultan from humble origins to wealth and power. These officials shunned bourgeois values, and regarded themselves as aristocrats, although no aristocracy officially existed in Turkey. Wealth was to be acquired as quickly as possible without regard to means, and once acquired used to support aristocratic pretensions. Ponsonby suited the Turkish officials' idea of a great Lord; that is a man like they pretended or hoped to be. The British government long had recognized the need to send as ambassadors to Turkey aristocrats who were related to ministers in the cabinet and had aggressive and forceful personalities. Stratford Canning and Robert Gordon, Ponsonby's predecessors, had impressed the Turks, and Ponsonby did the same. The latter's errors in judgement were less important than his ability to personify the power and the influence of Great Britain in a manner which was comprehensible to the Turks.

Soon after he arrived in Constantinople, Ponsonby concluded that the Turks' determination to resist Russia had been undermined by their recent defeats, and driven by instincts of self preservation, they were groping for a policy to preserve their Empire. Consequently, the Turks were impressionable, and Ponsonby adopted an imperious manner which suited his personality and proved very effective. By the time Ponsonby reached Constantinople, the Sultan had been driven to rely on Russian power, which Pon-

sonby concluded was an act of desperation. But Ponsonby recognized that the presence of the Russian Black Sea fleet at Constantinople would not fail to leave a lasting impression of Russian power on the Turks. The ease with which the Russians sent the expedition to the Bosphorus struck terror into the hearts of many Turks, who knew that the Russians one day could return as the Sultan's enemies. The Turks had seen British power at Navarino, but not even British seamanship could penetrate the Dardanelles in winter, when blustery northerly winds combined with the strong current to endanger any ship entering the Strait. Equally important were the doubts the Turks had about Great Britain's determination, and consequently Ponsonby placed continuous pressure on Palmerston and Grey to obtain material support for Turkey to make impossible Russia's return to Constantinople.

Ponsonby came to the Levant with the fixed idea that Russia was determined to possess Constantinople. This opinion, which he never abandoned, dominated his thought during his term as ambassador, and determined his attitude towards various questions he had to face, giving his arguments a consistent theme and a clarity which made his personal influence more effective. He at first concluded that Russia could be prevented from seizing the Turkish capital only if the Powers secured Turkey by treaty or by a demonstration of British naval power in the Straits. However, Ponsonby followed a policy of "non-action" while the Russians remained in the Bosphorus, fearing that any measure hostile to Russia would give Czar Nicholas a pretext to continue the stay of the Russian forces. In the autumn of 1834, Ponsonby concluded that the Russians were too weak to seize Constantinople, and thought that he could frustrate Russia's future plans by

outmanoeuvring her ambassador and persuading the Sultan to undertake military reforms and accept aid from the British government which would make the Turkish Empire more defensible against Russia.

When Ponsonby was appointed ambassador, he could not decide whether the Sultan or Mehemet Ali should receive British support. Mahmoud's request for Russian aid and the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi convinced Ponsonby of the Sultan's incapacity, and the British ambassador regarded Mahmoud as a Russian puppet, making futile any attempt to negotiate with him. In Ponsonby's view, only Mehemet Ali could maintain the Turkish Empire against Russia, and he believed that the Pasha had both the intention and the power to launch an attack on Constantinople in late autumn. Mehemet Ali's expected attack posed a danger to European peace, for the Russians would intervene, and Ponsonby felt powerless to do more than request the British government to make preparations for a naval demonstration as a means of persuading the Russians to remain passive.

By November, 1833, Ponsonby was convinced that Mehemet Ali would not attack, and noticing the decline in the Pasha's influence in Constantinople, concluded that the Sultan was securely on his throne, and that it would be necessary to acquire personal influence with Mahmoud. Ponsonby made contact with the Sultan and sought to persuade him that Great Britain would protect him against Russia and, therefore, he could terminate his dependence on Russia. But the Sultan's primary concern was with Mehemet Ali, and he was not prepared to renounce his Russian support without tangible evidence that Great Britain would support him against the Pasha. Mahmoud requested that the British government should

persuade Mehemet Ali to cede Candia as proof of her sincerity. However, the British government failed to obtain Candia for the Sultan, and Ponsonby's first efforts to win Mahmoud failed.

After Ponsonby had reached the Sultan, his attitude towards Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali changed. Mehemet Ali, whom Ponsonby had once regarded as the possible saviour of the Turkish Empire, now was considered the principle source of Turkey's weakness, while Mahmoud despite his follies, seemed to offer the best means of reforming and strengthening the Turkish Empire.

Although Ponsonby made little impression on the Sultan in 1834, his position was strengthened by the forcefulness of Russian foreign policy. The Russians compelled the Turks to sign the Treaty of St. Petersburg, refused to liquidate the Turkish war debt, and in the latter half of 1834 prevented the Sultan from attacking Mehemet Ali. From this the Sultan concluded that the Russians were determined to keep the Turkish Empire weak and divided, but felt unable to offer open opposition without a guarantee of support from Great Britain. Understanding this, Ponsonby engaged in a contest with Bouteneff to demonstrate Great Britain's determination to resist Russia. Ponsonby first raised the question about the meaning of the Treaty of Unklar Skelessi, and although he received no satisfactory answer, the Turks were impressed by this gesture against Russian influence. The second question that he raised was the Euphrates Expedition firman, scoring a notable victory over Bouteneff. Immediately after this success, the Sultan, with Ponsonby's knowledge, sent a secret agent to London to obtain an agreement to crush Mehemet Ali. At this point, the Russians sought to restore their declining influence in Constantinople and pacify Russophobe

feeling in Great Britain by liquidating the Turkish war debt.

Ponsonby's assault on Russian influence reached a climax in May, 1836, when he tried to depose Akif Effendi and Ahmet Pasha, whom he was convinced were in Russian pay. The ambassador held these Turkish ministers responsible for the maltreatment of Churchill, a British subject, and startled but impressed the Sultan by the boldness of his demands for satisfaction. Ponsonby deposed Akif Effendi with the aid of Pertev Pasha, and Mahmoud probably would have removed Ahmet Pasha had the British government supported Ponsonby. Ponsonby's humiliation enabled Bouteneff to endanger Pertev Pasha's position, who sought security by promising not to oppose Russian interests.

This defeat left Ponsonby with little influence at the Porte, and therefore, he was particularly embarrassed by the presence of Urquhart in Constantinople, and had doubts about the feasibility of concluding a Commercial Convention at this time. This was at the root of the quarrel between Urquhart and Ponsonby and was in conjunction with the "Vixen" affair, the reason for Urquhart's recall. Ponsonby took no active part in the "Vixen" incident, but did nothing to dissuade J. Bell from sending the "Vixen" to Circassia. The weakness of Ponsonby's influence in 1837 can be measured by his failure to obtain positions for the British officers sent by Palmerston to seek employment in the Turkish army and his inability to make headway with the projected Commercial Convention. So convinced was he of his own want of influence that he doubted his ability to persuade the Porte to accept more than a tariff, which did not specify the abolition of monopolies.

The appointment of Reschid Pasha, a western trained reformer,

as foreign minister in 1838 improved Ponsonby's position as Reschid Pasha's influence induced the Sultan to take a more favourable view of Great Britain and France and to accept the Commercial Convention. Cleverly exploiting Reschid Pasha's leaning towards the two Powers, the ambassador was careful never to give the impression that Great Britain considered that she had the right of restraining the Sultan from attacking Mehemet Ali.

When in the spring of 1838 the Powers rejected Mehemet Ali's request that he be allowed to declare his independence, he abandoned his insistence on immediate independence, but reserved the right to raise the question again. Mahmoud, convinced that the Pasha was determined to declare his independence, resolved upon crushing him, but hesitated in acting without British aid. On instructions from Palmerston, Ponsonby asked the Porte whether it would request a treaty from Great Britain guaranteeing British support against Mehemet Ali in the event that he should declare his independence, but neglected to stress the fact that the aid would be given only if the Pasha declared his independence. The Sultan accepted the Commercial Convention after being assured by Reschid Pasha that it would increase Turkey's revenue, and sent him to London to secure unconditional support against Mehemet Ali.

After Reschid Pasha failed to obtain an offensive alliance against Mehemet Ali, Mahmoud resolved to attack the Pasha without British aid. Ponsonby now was under the impression that Russia had altered her policy, and was encouraging the Sultan to attack Mehemet Ali. He was further convinced that Czar Nicholas wished to send his forces to Constantinople to obtain the renewal of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. As the Sultan's plans to attack Mehemet Ali appeared to him as part of a Russian design, he made

a final and unsuccessful effort to restrain the Sultan. Mahmoud's death, which followed the disaster at Nezib, placed on the throne an inexperienced youth, whose power was exercised by Hosrew Pasha. With Sturmer's aid, Ponsonby was able to prevent direct negotiations with Mehemet Ali, and found his position further strengthened at the beginning of September when Reschid Pasha returned to Constantinople and replaced the weak Acting Foreign Minister, Nouri Effendi. Although Ponsonby had an exaggerated idea of Russia's designs, there was in fact Russian pressure to negotiate directly with Mehemet Ali. With the aid of Ponsonby, Reschid Pasha was successful in resisting this pressure, and by the end of 1839 Ponsonby began to believe that he had forced Russia to renounce her right to exclusive influence in Constantinople and that Russia had no choice but to co-operate with the other Powers in maintaining Ottoman integrity .

This sense of security vanished with the sudden change in French policy, which henceforth was directed towards inducing the Porte to negotiate directly with the Pasha. Faced with this new turn of events, Ponsonby urged Reschid Pasha to resist French demands, and with the ambassador's support the Porte remained firm. The success of Ponsonby at this point permitted the Four Powers to conclude the Treaty of July 15. When he was informed about the treaty, Ponsonby pressed his advantage by urging the Turks to make adequate preparations for the campaign in Syria. The ambassador hoped to make the defeat of Mehemet Ali final, exhorting Palmerston to destroy the Pasha by striking a blow at Alexandria. But Metternich's insistence upon a compromise policy, which gave hereditary rights to the Pasha in Egypt, and the military difficulties involved in an Egyptian campaign, convinced Palmerston

that Ponsonby's proposal was unrealistic. Ponsonby still hoped that Mehemet Ali would force the Powers to attack Egypt itself by remaining intransigent, but was disappointed by Mehemet Ali's submission. After this, he still endeavoured to undermine the Pasha's power by denying him the right to collect revenue. This too was unsuccessful, and he also failed to obtain a satisfactory settlement for Syria. Yet Ponsonby hardly could be blamed for being unable to control the complex forces in the Syrian campaign, and deserves credit for starting reforms in the Turkish army.

Ponsonby has been overshadowed by the more spectacular figure of Stratford de Redcliffe, if only because the Crimean War was more important than the Mehemet Ali crisis. While the pre-eminence accorded to Stratford is understandable, his achievements in some respects are less impressive than Ponsonby's.

When Ponsonby arrived in Constantinople, British influence was negligible, and the survival of the Turkish Empire was in doubt. Yet by the time of his departure Great Britain was the most influential Power at the Porte, and the Turkish state had successfully weathered the Mehemet Ali crisis. Palmerston himself acknowledged that Ponsonby had established British influence "more firmly at Constantinople than it ever was ~~E~~stablished before." Ponsonby's successors, including Stratford, were able to maintain until the end of the century what Ponsonby had established. The elimination of Mehemet Ali as an internal threat to the Turkish Empire, left Mahmoud's successors free to give undivided attention to Russian pressure and to face the problem of internal reform. Had it not been for Ponsonby's persistent efforts during these crucial years, Mehemet Ali's ambitions might have changed the history of the Near East by ~~detach~~ing Syria from the Turkish

Empire.

In this sense Ponsonby shaped the course of history and it may be doubted whether Stratford, who was unable to prevent the Turks from going to war against the Russians in 1853, exercised a greater influence. While it would be impossible to claim for Ponsonby the pre-eminence accorded to Stratford without a separate study of the latter's career, the claims which could be advanced on Ponsonby's behalf cannot be dismissed. He is not the indolent aristocrat portrayed by Temperley or the incompetant and irresponsible ambassador portrayed by Bolsover. He deserves his place along side Stratford de Redcliffe, and perhaps a little above the 'Great Elchi.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

Various unpublished manuscripts were employed in the preparation of this thesis, but, unfortunately, Ponsonby's private correspondence has not survived. However, there are numerous letters by him in three private collections, the Broadlands Papers, the Grey Papers and the Urquhart Papers.

The Broadlands Papers, deposited at the Historical Manuscripts Commission, Quality House, London, are the most important private papers for the purpose of this thesis. Ponsonby was reserved in his letters to Palmerston until September, 1833, but after he gained confidence in the Foreign Secretary, he was unreserved in expressing his ideas, and at times criticized the Turkish policy of the British government. Palmerston found Ponsonby's letters stimulating and informative, and encouraged him to make recommendations on Turkish policy. The Ponsonby-Palmerston correspondence shows Ponsonby's attitude towards the Turks, the British government and the domestic situation in

Great Britain. Palmerston's correspondence with Grey, Melbourne, King William IV and Sir H. Taylor gives a valuable picture of the opinion of the ministers in the Whig government and the Crown towards Ponsonby's colourful style of conducting diplomacy in Constantinople.

Lord Grey was Ponsonby's brother-in-law, and the two men were on intimate terms. The Grey-Ponsonby correspondence in the Grey Papers, which are deposited at the University of Durham, Durham, is the most valuable source for Ponsonby's opinions during his first year in Constantinople, when he was hesitant to express these to Palmerston. The letters to Grey are the only extant source for Ponsonby's financial and personal affairs. Unfortunately, the volume of correspondence between the two men sharply decreased after Grey retired as Prime Minister in 1834. But the few letters written by Ponsonby to Grey between 1834 and 1838 are indispensable.

The Urquhart Papers, deposited at Balliol College, Oxford University, are classified under various headings in four boxes. The first box contains the Ponsonby-Urquhart correspondence, and Urquhart's private communications with Palmerston, employees of the Foreign Office and his friends in the period before 1840. The Ponsonby-Urquhart correspondence is particularly important for Ponsonby's attitude towards his government and the Urquhart-Ponsonby quarrel.

The Foreign Office Papers, deposited at the Public Records Office, London, provides the bulk of the material upon which this thesis is based, and the most important of these papers is the F.O. 78, Turkey, series. This series is divided into three sections: the correspondence between the ambassadors to Turkey

and the Foreign Office; the correspondence between the various consuls in Turkey and the Foreign Office; and the domestic papers relating to Turkey. Ponsonby's dispatches to the Foreign Office are long and detailed, as he was an enterprising ambassador. The dispatches by the Foreign Office to the embassy in Constantinople do not contain enclosures, but these enclosures are contained in F.O. 195, the records of the British embassy in Constantinople.

F.O. 7, Austria, F.O. 27, France, and F.O. 65, Russia, were employed primarily to ascertain the nature of the instructions sent by the three Powers to their ambassadors to Turkey. The relations between the three countries and Great Britain were not ignored, but detailed examination would have been superfluous, as C. K. Webster has covered the subject in his work, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830 - 1841.

In the F.O. Series, there are subjects unrelated to specific countries. F.O. 97/409 is Urquhart's defence after he was recalled from Turkey in 1837. This source supplies valuable information upon the Ponsonby-Urquhart quarrel. Although Urquhart colours the accounts of his activities in Constantinople, they are relatively reliable, as Urquhart tends to hurt rather than aid his case with his embellishments. Urquhart believed that his policy had been sanctioned by the Foreign Office, but had been sacrificed to soothe relations with Russia. F.O. 366/569 contains a number of memoranda prepared by employees of the Foreign Office to reform the embassy service in Constantinople. F.O. 352 is the private correspondence of Sir Stratford Canning. Volumes 19 to 25 were employed, primarily to discover Canning's

mode of conducting diplomacy, his secret contacts in the Turkish government, and the attitude of the Sultan and the Turkish ministers towards Great Britain before 1833.

The Admiralty Papers covering the period 1833 - 1839 are Admiralty 1/458-466, but the instructions from the Admiralty to the Commander of the Fleet in the Mediterranean apparently have not been preserved. For this period, the major instructions to the Mediterranean Fleet are found enclosed in Palmerston's instructions to Ponsonby in F.O. 195. Admiralty 1/5503-5504, covering the campaign in Syria in 1840 - 1841, contain communications both to and from the Admiralty.

The Customs Papers employed were Customs 4 and Customs 8. Until 1841, trade with Greece was included with trade with Turkey.

Ponsonby appears in secondary sources as an elusive figure. The Dictionary of National Biography has little to say about his career and personal life, and the only work which deals directly with him is L. Herrera's La mission Ponsonby, a study of his career in Latin America. Although Ponsonby is mentioned and discussed in various major works on the Near East in the eighteenth-thirties', these works are more useful for background than for the light they throw upon Ponsonby's role.

In his The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830 - 1841, C. K. Webster devotes the whole of volume 2 and seventy-eight pages in volume 1 to the Near Eastern Crisis, and here Ponsonby is presented with a good deal of sympathy and understanding. But Webster primarily is concerned with Palmerston and either does not perceive or attach sufficient importance to Ponsonby's want of diligence in implementing Palmerston's instructions.

Moreover, he makes no effort to analyze Ponsonby's motives and ideas, and sees the ambassador from the point of view of the Foreign Secretary. He discusses the Churchill Affair without explaining its origin in detail, says little about the ambassador's efforts in preventing direct negotiations after the Battle of Nezib, and is silent upon his role in the resolution of the Mehemet Ali question in 1841.

In addition to this work, Webster has written an article published in the English Historical Review, entitled "Urquhart, Ponsonby and Palmerston," which in part is a refutation of some assertions made by G. H. Bolsover in his article in the Slavonic Review, "Lord Ponsonby and the Eastern Question, 1833 - 1839." Bolsover is negative in his attitude towards the ambassador, and does not appreciate his achievements or the means he used in achieving his ends. He dismisses Ponsonby as a reckless Russophobe, who attempted to "embroil" Great Britain with Russia, and encouraged Sultan Mahmoud to attack Mehemet Ali in 1839, but cites no sources which prove his contentions. Webster refutes Bolsover's assertion that Ponsonby was involved directly in the "Vixen" incident. However, Webster clearly shows a bias in favour of the ambassador in his quarrel with David Urquhart. He does not mention that Urquhart, when he returned to Constantinople in 1836, received a cold reception from Ponsonby, who subsequently refused him access to the archives of the embassy, and ordered him not to visit his Turkish acquaintances and remain inactive. Nor it is true that Urquhart had commenced negotiations with the Porte upon a Commercial Convention as Webster states.

H. W. V. Temperley, in England and the Near East: The Crimea,

gives Ponsonby little attention, devoting much of his discussion of the Mehemet Ali question to the British campaign in Syria in 1840. Ponsonby is a shadowy figure in Temperley's work, an indolent aristocrat. The author confesses that he cannot understand how so indolent an ambassador could persuade Sultan Mahmoud to accept the British Commercial Convention.

F. S. Rodkey's The Turco-Egyptian Question in the Relations of England, France and Russia, 1832 - 1834, is a detailed study of the Mehemet Ali question, but its value is limited because the author did not directly consult original material. He has drawn upon Major J. Hall's England and the Orleans Monarchy, which despite its early date of publication, is an informative study of relations between Great Britain and France. Rodkey's article "Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1830 - 41," in the Journal of Modern History, is a credible investigation of Palmerston's attempts to reform Turkey. Rodkey, however, erroneously believes that Ponsonby did not desire to prevent the Sultan from attacking Mehemet Ali. F. E. Bailey's British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement, 1826 - 1853, is inferior to Rodkey's article, placing perhaps too much emphasis upon economics. P. E. Mosely, in Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Eastern Question in 1838 and 1839 has used the Russian archives to examine Russia's attitude towards the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, correcting S. Goriainov's discussion of the subject in Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles, a work which has reproduced much material from the Russian archives. Mosely also has shown the reaction of the Russian government during the Persian Crisis in 1838. In his books, England, Russia and the

Straits Question, 1844 - 1856, and International Economics and the Diplomacy of the Near East. A study of British Commercial Policy in the Levant, 1834 - 1853, V. J. Puryear treats the eighteen-thirties' merely as background for the period immediately preceding the Crimean War.

The two major biographies of Palmerston written in the nineteenth century, E. Ashley's, The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, and H. Lytton Bulwer's The Life of John Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston, reproduce some correspondence upon the Near East. Ashley's biography is the better of the two, and Bulwer must be read with caution as he is careless. J. C. Bell's Palmerston, and P. Guadella's Palmerston, 1784 - 1865 have little upon Ponsonby and the Near East.

Mehemet Ali has been treated kindly by historians. The French historians, who obtained access to the Egyptian archives in the nineteen-twenties' and nineteen-thirties', romanticize Mehemet Ali, and manifest a bias against Great Britain. J. E. Driault in L'Egypte et Europe. La crise de 1839 - 1841, portrays Mehemet Ali as the Napoleon of the East, victimized by British Imperialism. G. Douin's La première guerre de Syrie, is less hostile to Great Britain, and gives a more balanced evaluation of the Pasha's personality and ambitions. The above two works contain extensive documents from the archives in Paris and Alexandria, which are particularly valuable in understanding relations between Ponsonby and the French representatives in Constantinople.

The best study upon Mehemet Ali's personality and system of government is H. D. Dodwell's The Founder of Modern Egypt. As Dodwell obtained much of his information from a report by Dr. Bowring in 1838, which is a well balanced survey of Egypt in the eighteen-thirties', his disregard of the Pasha's faults could not have been unintentional. Dodwell portrays Mehemet Ali as an enlightened despot.

A. Original Sources

I. Manuscript material

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- F.O. 7 (Austria) : Correspondence between the Foreign Office and the embassy in Vienna.
- F.O. 27 (France) : Correspondence between the Foreign Office and the embassy in Paris.
- F.O. 65 (Russia) : Correspondence between the Foreign Office and the embassy in St. Petersburg.
- F.O. 78 (Turkey) : Correspondence between the Foreign Office and the embassy and consulates in Turkey.
- F.O. 96: Palmerston's minutes, memoranda etc. 1833-1841.
- F.O. 97/409: David Urquhart's defence.
- F.O. 195: Records of the embassy in Constantinople.
- F.O. 366/569: Measures to reform the embassy in Constantinople.

Admiralty Papers:

Admiralty 1/458-466, 5503-5504: Reports to the Admiralty by the Commander of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, 1833-1839, and the campaign in Syria in 1840-1841.

Customs and Excise Papers:

Customs 4: British exports to Turkey.

Customs 8: Turkish exports to Great Britain.

British Museum, London:

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Private Papers:

The Broadlands Papers: Lord Palmerston's correspondence. Deposited at the Historical Manuscripts Commission, Quality House, London.

The Grey Papers: The Correspondence of the Second Earl Grey. Deposited at the University of Durham, Durham.

The Stratford Canning Papers: Stratford Canning's Correspondence. Deposited at the Public Records Office and listed as F.O. 352. Volumes 19 to 25 cover the period 1830-1832.

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APPENDIX A

Turkish spelling recently has been standardized. In the body of this thesis, the spellings employed for Turkish names, titles, positions of office and places were those which were found in the sources of the period. Below are these words and their modern Turkish equivalents.

Names

Abdey Bey	Abdi Bey
Abdullah Pasha	Abdullah Paşa
Abdul Medjid	Abdülmeçid
Ahmet Fethi Pasha	Ahmed Fethi Paşa
Ahmet Pasha	Ahmed Paşa
Akif Effendi	Akif Efendi
Artin Bey	Artin Bey
Boghoz Bey	Boghos Bey
Chekib Effendi	Shékib Efendi
Emir Beshir al-Shihab	Amir Bashir al-Shihāb
Hafiz Pasha	Hafiz Paşa
Hosrew Pasha	Husrev Paşa
Houloosi Pasha	Hulusi Paşa
Hussein Pasha	Hüseyn Paşa
Ibrahim	Ibrahim
Izzet Pasha	Izzet Paşa
Mahmoud II	Mahmud II
Mahomet Ali	Mehmed Ali

Mazloun Bey

Mehemet Ali

Mouhib Effendi

Mustafa Bey

Mustafa Pasha

Mustapha Kianee Bey

Mustapha Nouri Pasha

Namic Pasha

Nezib Pasha

Nouri Effendi

Omar

Osman Bey

Pertev Pasha

Raouf Pasha

Ravenduz Bey

Reschid Pasha

Rifaat Pasha

Riza Pasha

Said Bey

Sami Bey

Sarim Effendi

Selim III

Selim Bey

Suleiman

Sultana Valide

Mazlum Bey

Mehmed Ali

Mühîb Efendi

Mustafa Bey

Mustafa Paşa

Mustafa Kianee Bey

Mustafa Nuri Paşa

Namık Paşa

Nezib Paşa

Nuri Efendi

Ömer

Osman Bey

Pertev Paşa

Ra'uf Paşa

Ravandîz Bey

Resid Paşa

Rifat Paşa

Riza Paşa

Said Bey

Sami Bey

Sarım Efendi

Selim III

Selim Bey

Süleyman

Valide Sultan

Tahir Bey
Tahir Pasha
Vassaf Effendi

Tahir Bey
Tahir Paşa
Vassaf Efendi

Titles, Positions of Office and Technical Terms

Amedgi Effendi

Amedci Efendi

Berat

Berat

Bey

Bey

Bourld

Büyürüldü

Caimacan Pasha

Kaymakam Pasa

Capudan Pasha

Kapûdân Paşa

Cha'ush-bashi

Çâvûş Bâsi

Colgassi

Kol Ağasi

Defterdar

Defterdar

Divan

Divan

Effendi

Efendi

Emir Beshir

Al-Amir Bashir

Ferik

Ferik

Firman

Firman

Grand Vizier

Vezir

Hattisherif

Hatt-ı Serif

Kassou Kahaya

Hass Kiahyası

Kiahaya Bey

Kiahya Bey

Mouhassil

Muhassil

Pasha

Paşa

Pashalic

Paşalık

Porte

Porte

Reis Effendi

Re'is Efendi

Riala Bey
 Seraskier Pasha
 Sublime Porte
 Ulema
 Vizirial Letter

Piyale Bey
 Serasker
 Sublime Porte
 Ulema
 Vizirial

Geographical Locations

Acre
 Adrianople
 Aintab
 Ak-Shehr
 Alaya
 Aleppo
 Bosphorus
 Bussora
 Damascus
 Dardanelles
 Diarbekir
 Djebail Halil
 Djebail Kodas
 Djebail Nablus
 Gulf of Saros
 Hamah
 Hedjaz
 Itcheli
 Kadi Koy
 Koniah
 Kutaya

Acre
 Adrianople
 Aintab (modern Gaziantep)
 Aksehir
 Alanya
 Aleppo
 Bosphorus
 Basra
 Damascus
 Dardanelles
 Diyarbakir
 Jabal Khalil
 Jabal al-Quds
 Jabal Nablus
 Gulf of Saros
 Hamāh
 Hejaz
 İceli
 Kadiköy
 Konya
 Kütahya

Malatia	Malatya
Mondania	Mudanya
Mytilene	Mytilene or Mitilíni
Naplouse	Nāblus
Naupla	Nauplia (modern Návplion)
Nezib	Nizip
Orfa	Urfa
Pera	Pera
Rustchuk	Ruschuk (modern Ruse)
Samos	Samos
Schumla	Shumla (modern Kolarovgrad)
Scutari	Üsküdar
Sea of Marmora	Sea of Marmara
Selefkeh	Silifke
Silestria	Silistria (modern Silistra)
Smyrna	Smyrna or Izmir
Tenedos Bay	Tenedos Bay (modern Bozca Ada)
Therapia	Trabya
Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi	Treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi
Tripoli	Tripoli