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**BRITISH EMPLOYEES OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT: THE PAŞAS
HOBART AND WOODS**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine the roles of Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden (Hobart Paşa) and Henry Felix Woods (Woods Paşa) as employees of the Ottoman Government between 1867-1909. Chapter one describes the origins of the thesis and analyses current literature. Chapter two provides an outline of Ottoman reform efforts in the nineteenth century, some challenges it faced, some brief remarks on Anglo-Ottoman relations and finally summarizes the careers of Hobart and Woods. Chapter three looks at their roles within the Ottoman Navy between 1867-1878 and outlines their efforts to help reform that institution and argues that they were given naval responsibilities that went beyond the reason for their initial employment. Chapter four covers the period 1878-1886 and shows how their roles began to change from only working in the Ottoman Navy to functions related to being Aide-de-camp to the Sultan. These included supporting the Sultan and his empire in print and being used as part of his personal diplomacy. This chapter largely concentrates on the work of Hobart. Chapter five covers the period 1886-1909 and argues that Woods took over Hobart's functions after his death. Both Hobart and Woods performed useful work for their employer, the Ottoman Government, in all areas in which they were used.

CONTENTS

<u>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>DEDICATION.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>CHAPTER TWO. BACKGROUND</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>CHAPTER THREE. HOBART AND WOODS: 1867-1878</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>CHAPTER FOUR. HOBART AND WOODS: 1878-1886</u>	<u>135</u>
<u>CHAPTER 5. WOODS PAŞA 1886-1909</u>	<u>217</u>
<u>CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION</u>	<u>300</u>
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	<u>305</u>

List of Illustrations and Tables

Fig. I: Hobart Pasha; Engraved by G. I. Stewart from a Photograph	p. 37
Fig. II: Admiral Sir Henry Woods Pasha	p. 55
Fig. III: Black Sea Antique Engraved Hand-Coloured Map, drawn & engraved by J. Rapkin. (Publisher: London H. Wrinkles, J. Rapkin. 1851).	p.110
Fig. IV: Russo-Turkish War. Hobart Pasha, Commander of the Turkish naval forces, descending the Danube, in April, in a despatch boat, to inspect the Russian fortifications.	p.114
Fig. V: Hobart's diagram showing defence against torpedoes: Diagram printed in an article by Hobart entitled 'The Torpedo Scare' in Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine	p.122
Fig. VI: Imperial Order of the Osmanié, 2nd class awarded to Algernon Borthwick	p.150
Fig. VII: Synoptical table the population of those parts of Asia Minor where the Armenians of both sexes are more numerous than elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire according to the last census	p.279

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father Ali Yusuf Osman 1950-2010.

Hard working, generous and kind, he encouraged me to follow my desires wherever they may lead in the pursuit of happiness. There have been occasions Baba where working on my PhD has fallen short of that, but I hope you'll agree, it was worth it in the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a large number of people without whom this thesis would not have been possible. Professor Benjamin Fortna, my supervisor, has been a consistent source of encouragement and support. During the dark days when I lost faith in myself, he continued to believe in my ability to complete. He has read and commented on drafts of this thesis and I am very grateful for his feedback. Doctor Kathleen Taylor, Doctor Eleanor Paremain and Jessica Tearney-Pearce all assisted me in accessing archival and printed sources. I am blind and without them I would not have been able to find let alone read many of the documents I have used. Without Disabled Students Allowance I would not have been able to pay for their assistance. Without the assistance of Doctor Candan Badem and Edip Golbaşı I would not have been able to access the Ottoman Archives. My Ottoman Turkish is non-existent and there is no way of reading documents in this language in Braille or through synthetic speech. They provided me with English translations of relevant documents which have been used throughout this thesis. Thanks to them my research is fuller than it would otherwise have been and I can lay claim to be an Ottoman historian. I'd like to extend thanks to Dr Feroze Yasamee for allowing me to use his own translations of documents from the Ottoman Archives. I'd like to express my thanks to Dr Ebru Akcsu for providing me with summary English translations of three books in Turkish. Sinan Kuneralp (owner of The Isis Press) was generous enough to make an electronic version of one of his books available to me free of charge and for that I am truly grateful. Thanks should also go to Dr Kathleen Taylor who translated a number of items in French into English, and also to Kathleen Taylor, Jessica Tearney-Pearce, Jo Macey and Catherine Turner for proof reading various drafts of this thesis.

The Disability Support Office at SOAS have ensured that I've been able to get the support I needed without which this PhD would have been impossible. Angie Akson and Zoe Davis deserve special mention in this respect. The EE Wiley Scholarship, the Snowdon Trust and the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust all provided me with grants which have supported me in paying tuition fees. Without which I would not have been able to complete this research. I am very grateful too all those who kindly donated through my Go Fund Me page.

I have used documents contained in a variety of archives. I would like to thank the staff of the Prime Ministry Archives, The Museum of the Sea and the Yıldız Palace Archives, in Turkey, The National Archives in the United Kingdom, the British Library, the West Sussex local archive, the Baring Archive, Lambeth Palace Archives, Oxford University Library Archives, Cambridge University Library Archives and the University of Leeds Library Archive.

I would like to thank Her Majesty the Queen for permission to quote from documents contained within the Royal Archives. I would also like to thank the sixth Marquis of Salisbury for permission to quote from the papers of the fourth Marquis.

I'd like to thank Doctor Stefano Taglia for his assistance in contacting the successor to the Whitehead torpedo Company and thank them for providing me with a copy of *WASS: 133 years of history*, the official history of the Company and its successor.

All endeavours in the discovery of knowledge are based on what has come before. It will become abundantly clear that I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all those Ottoman and non-Ottoman historians whose work I have made use of in my research. Any errors or omissions are of course my own.

Yusuf Ali Osman

August 2018

ABBREVIATIONS and REFERENCES

The following abbreviations have been used in footnotes.

Başbakanlık Arsivi (Prime Ministry Archives) BBA

Deniz Müzey Arsivi (Museum of the Sea Archive) DMA

Yıldız Esas Evraki (Yıldız Palace Archives) YEE

The British Library BL

The National Archives of the United Kingdom TNA

The Salisbury Papers SP

References

Some of the materials used in this thesis were accessed online. In order to save space in footnotes the use of internet links have been kept to an absolute minimum. The bibliography includes URLs in all cases where information can be accessed on the internet.

In references to newspaper articles, page and column numbers have been given wherever possible, however there were occasions when these were illegible and have therefore been indicated as such.

In references to documents from the Ottoman Archives, there are occasions where the date according to the Islamic calendar is not included. This was because I had asked for the dates to be provided in the Gregorian calendar and I was therefore not given that information.

Chapter One. Introduction

This thesis has its origins in a final year undergraduate course entitled ‘Documents on the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (R. 1876-1909)’ undertaken at the University of Manchester. The course provided students with Ottoman documents in translation to encourage us to think of the Ottoman Government as an actor in its own right albeit one with more limited options than other international actors for example, Britain, but nonetheless a player on the stage of international politics. It sparked my interest in the Sultan, but also introduced me to Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden (Hobart Paşa). At the time his name meant little to me and I promptly forgot it.

During my MPhil research I looked at the ways in which Abdülhamid was portrayed in the British media. I wanted to compare these portrayals to impressions of individuals who had met the Sultan and left their views in writing. This introduced me to Henry Felix Woods (Woods Paşa) and re-introduced me to Hobart. Although, I didn’t make the connection with the course I had taken some years before at that time. Having read the memoirs of both I began to think about their roles within the Ottoman Empire. Woods wrote an entertaining memoir, a large part of which was concerned with his time there. Hobart’s memoirs whilst shorter gave enigmatic hints as to his work for the Ottoman Government. This provided the impetus for my PhD.

Initially I wanted to look at a number of British employees of the Ottoman Government. There was no shortage of them. In addition to Hobart and Woods in the navy there were Baldwin Walker and Sir Adolphus Slade. Valentine Baker and George Borthwick were employed in the Gendarmerie. The former served in the Ottoman military during the 1877-1878 war. In addition to these, there were others like General Charles Fenwick Williams, who commanded Ottoman troops during the Crimean War. My intention was to see what their impact was on the Ottoman Empire, how they saw it and

how they affected Anglo-Ottoman relations. Two problems soon became apparent. First it became clear that it would be difficult to tie so many individuals from across the nineteenth century together to create a clear narrative. Second it became apparent that finding sources would present a problem. Some of the individuals did not publish at all, whilst others published a great deal. For some locating any unpublished sources proved impossible. Eventually I came to the conclusion that it was necessary to select a few individuals who could be easily connected.

Once the above was decided it was possible to select three individuals. Hobart and Woods, plus Valentine Baker. The benefits were that they all shared roughly the same period, there were both published and unpublished sources and they all dealt in the sphere of naval/military reforms. However, it became clear that Baker's position was too different from Hobart's and Woods'. Baker was a military man not a naval one and this made comparisons more difficult than direct comparisons between Hobart and Woods. More importantly however, was the fact that Baker had left Ottoman service and entered that of the *Khedive*. This suggested a slightly more distant relationship with his employer than Hobart's or Woods'. Once this conclusion had been reached it was easy to drop Baker. This then left me with Hobart and Woods, the two who have been studied in this thesis.

This thesis looks at the roles of Hobart and Woods within the Ottoman Empire. It seeks to explain why the Ottoman Government employed them in the Ottoman Navy and to describe the skills they brought to their employer. Chapter two outlines their careers up to the point where they entered Ottoman service. It also provides some background information on the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Further explanatory material will be provided throughout in order to help understand what Hobart and Woods did and wrote. Chapter three outlines their careers in the Ottoman Empire from 1867-1878. It shows that although they were initially employed in positions which did not require active naval command, this situation rapidly altered. Chapter four covers the period 1878-1886. This

represents the beginning of a shift in emphasis from their roles as naval officers to other functions. In this period Hobart was appointed to the position of Aide-de-camp to the Sultan and this role included supporting the Ottoman Government publicly. 1886 was the year that Hobart died and after this Woods begins to inherit Hobart's role. Chapter five covers the period 1886-1909 and deals with his promotion to Aide-de-camp and will largely cover the tasks he fulfilled in that capacity with only a brief mention of the Ottoman Navy.

This is largely a traditional history: it looks at naval history, diplomatic relations and public opinion. But it tries to understand how Hobart and Woods identified themselves. It aims to add to the field of Ottoman history, and particularly follows the works of historians like the late Roderic Davison, Feroze Yasamee and Benjamin Fortna. Their histories all placed the Ottoman Empire at the centre of their work by examining Ottoman sources in an effort to understand the perspective of the empire's servants. This work has attempted to do likewise.

It adds further evidence to the view that the Ottoman Empire continued to reform in an effort to defend itself against both internal groups aspiring to independence and external encroachment. Specifically it shows that the Ottoman Navy played a role in the late nineteenth century and that Hobart and Woods were a part of this. It builds on the argument that Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign continued to see reforms and that the Sultan followed a coherent policy. In particular this thesis seeks to build on the work of both Fatmagül Demirel and Selim Deringil on public relations and the Sultan's press policy by examining Hobart's and Woods' role in this area.¹ It also argues that they

¹ Fatmagül Demirel, *II Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür* (Istanbul: Bağlam, 2007) and Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

were used by the Sultan as part of his personal diplomacy and in that respect builds on Yasamee's work.²

Reference should be made here to my use of translators. Most of the academics referred to so far, and most used in this thesis have written in English. I have however made use of a few works in both Turkish and French. Translators have been used to provide summaries to allow me to access these titles. Where this is the case it is obvious.

The Ottoman Archives presented a frustration that I did not expect. I was hoping to find more relevant documents than was the case. This requires confronting. One of the major reasons for this thesis was my belief that the roles that Hobart and Woods had were significant. Given the paucity of documents in the Ottoman Archives this could be seen to challenge my assumptions. To put it another way, perhaps both men overestimated their importance within the Ottoman world. I do not believe this to be the case and my thesis demonstrates this. The lack of sources found in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul may be explained in two ways. First, the Ottoman Archives have still not yet been completely examined. This means there are documents which have not yet been indexed and so cannot easily be found. Second, it appears that at least some things were not written down at all. This certainly seems to be the case for the Hamidian era.³ All the documents from the Ottoman Archives have been translated into English for my use.

The research relies heavily on the published works of both Hobart and Woods. Taking Hobart first. He wrote a memoir during 1886 when he was living in Milan, it was published posthumously in the same

² Feroze Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996).

³ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 36.

year.⁴ This was not however the version used in this thesis as will be explained in chapter two. His memoirs have been translated into Turkish with some commentary.⁵ It was decided to make use of the English version for obvious reasons. Throughout his nineteen years of service it is possible to identify over three dozen letters to *The Times*, one to *The Standard*, three longer letters in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, and two in *The Nineteenth Century*. The majority of these date from 1876-1886 and fit into the reign of Abdülhamid II. Although there were letters by Hobart prior to 1876, they were less frequent and some of them had nothing to do with the Ottoman Empire at all. One example is a letter to *The Times* from 1871 on the subject of the laws pertaining to private property both at sea and on land during wartime.⁶ This leads one to the conclusion that Hobart was willing to participate in the public debates of his time.

Woods' memoir was published in 1924 after his retirement from Ottoman service and also after the end of the empire itself.⁷ A version of his memoir has been published in Turkish.⁸ The English version has been made use of in this thesis. He did not write as much publicly during his career. In forty years of Ottoman service, he wrote less than a dozen letters to *The Times*, two to *The Morning Post*, two pamphlets and one longer letter in *The Nineteenth Century*.⁹ Most fit into the period 1883-1894, with the largest number coming after the death of Hobart in 1886. We might conclude that Woods did not participate as willingly in the debates of his time.

⁴ Hobart-Hampden, Augustus, *Sketches of my Life* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1886).

⁵ Derin Türkömer and Kansu Şarman, *Hobart Paşanın Anıları* (Istanbul: T. İş Bankası, 2010).

⁶ *The Times*, February 4 1871, p. 10 Column 6, "Letter From Hobart Pasha, The Conduct of the War, Hobart, 6, South Eaton Place Feb. 3".

⁷ Henry F. Woods, *Spunyarn: From the Strands of a Sailor's Life Afloat and Ashore Forty-Seven Years Under the Ensigns of Great Britain and Turkey 2V* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1924).

⁸ Henry F. Woods (trans) Fahri Coker, *Türkiye Anıları: Osmanlı Bahriyesinde 40 Yıl 1869-1909* (Milliyet Yayınları, 1976).

⁹ I concentrated on letters and articles in the British press, there is at least one article by Hobart in an American journal. Due to differences in archiving, there may have been letters missed.

The benefit of published sources is that they are relatively easy to access. Hobart's memoir is still available to buy, and was written whilst he was ill. He cannot have known that he was about to die and therefore his memoir may well reflect a desire to maintain his ties with the Ottoman Empire. Chapter two also demonstrates how it can be proven that at least for the early part of Hobart's memoir there are inaccuracies. In the case of Woods, his memoir is harder to find, but unlike Hobart he was definitely not writing with his ties to the Ottoman Empire in mind. Descriptions of events in their memoirs have wherever possible been compared to contemporary accounts, either published in newspapers or referred to in private letters or archival sources.

Brief remarks should be made here on two books published contemporaneously. The first was *Torpedoes and Torpedo Warfare* by Charles Sleeman in 1880.¹⁰ Although this work dealt with the Russo-Ottoman war in so far as torpedoes were concerned, neither Hobart nor Woods were referred to by name. Given that Sleeman was an active participant in Ottoman service this is slightly surprising. The second was entitled *Ironclads in Action* and looked at naval warfare between 1855-1895.¹¹ This book did refer to Hobart but was only based on his memoirs. It did not refer to Woods at all. This thesis has made little use of either of these books preferring to use accounts of the Russo-Ottoman War published in newspapers.

Throughout his time in the Ottoman Empire, Hobart wrote letters to a variety of politicians, diplomats, financiers and others including the British royal family. It must be said that Hobart's handwriting is in places almost impossible to read, even at its best his inconsistent use of punctuation reflects his lack

¹⁰ Charles Sleeman, *Torpedoes and Torpedo Warfare* (Portsmouth: Griffin & Co., 1880).

¹¹ Herbert Wilson, *Ironclads in Action: A Sketch of Naval Warfare From 1855 To 1895* 2V (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1896).

of education. Woods seems to have written fewer letters, although it may be equally accurate to state that fewer letters have been found.

There is little academic literature which examines the careers of either Hobart or Woods. The one major published work in English on the Ottoman Navy in the nineteenth century entitled, *The Ottoman Steam Navy 1828-1923* edited and translated by James Cooper provides no references and although it refers to both men it may not be entirely accurate.¹² Chapter three provides one example of this. It would also appear that the authors either did not know about or chose to ignore some of the work done by Hobart and Woods when working within the Ottoman Navy. They were obviously not concerned with their positions as Aides-de-camp of the Sultan. A translation by Peter Gillespie of the late Daniel Panzac's work *La Marine Ottoman* is currently in preparation.¹³ One of my research assistants consulted the original and, although there are references to both Hobart and Woods and both of their memoirs are referenced, little use was made of either Ottoman or British Archival sources. Finally the work by Edwin Gray, *The Devil's Device: Robert Whitehead and the History of the Torpedo* refers to Hobart's denial of the sinking of an Ottoman ship by a torpedo towards the end of the 1877-1878 war (chapter three).¹⁴

Two unpublished theses have referred to Hobart and Woods' naval careers. Bektaş's thesis made use of both memoirs and suggested that due to many of the English officers working hard to fit into the Ottoman world, the transmission of new ideas was made easier.¹⁵ Yener's MA Thesis referred to

12 Bernd Langensiepen and Ahmet Güleriyüz, *The Ottoman Steam Navy 1828-1923*, translated and edited by James Cooper (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1995).

¹³ Daniel Panzac, *The Ottoman Navy from the Height of Empire to Dissolution, 1572-1923*, translated by Peter Gillespie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹⁴ Edwin Gray, *The Devil's Device: Robert Whitehead and the History of the Torpedo* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991) pp. 113-114.

¹⁵ M. Bektaş, *The British Technological Crusade to Post-Crimean Turkey: Electric Telegraphy, Railways, Naval Shipbuilding and Armament Technologies* (Unpublished PhD Thesis: The University of Kent, 1995), pp. 161-162.

Woods' long-term service under Abdülhamid, describing it as "surprising".¹⁶ It will have become clear from the foregoing that what material has been written has been limited.

There are other areas in which secondary literature is currently lacking, at least in English. There has been no work written examining the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman War. This is surprising given its impact on the late Ottoman Empire. Certainly it is referred to in numerous works but few of these provide a detailed analysis of the war, examining Ottoman strategy. There is nothing which is comparable to the recent work of Professor Candan Badem on the Crimean War.¹⁷ Another gap in the secondary literature concerns the foreign policy of Sultan Abdülhamid II after the period covered by Yasamee's *Ottoman Diplomacy*. This thesis will help to fill some of these gaps and perhaps encourage others with greater linguistic skills to go further.

There are however a number of works which deal with aspects of Ottoman reforms and foreign involvement in them. Mika Suonpaa's article looks at the Ottoman Customs Service and the role of Sir Richard Crawford in its reforms between 1906-1911.¹⁸ The article by Chris Rooney examined the various British Naval missions between 1908-1914.¹⁹ The work by Handan Nezir-Akmese includes an analysis of German military missions beginning in the 1880s.²⁰ Only one of the above deals with the navy and that from after the time when Hobart and Woods were employed in that area. The other two dealt with different aspects of Ottoman reform. Tuncay Zorlu's book on naval reform deals with

¹⁶ Emre Yener *Iron Ships and Iron Men: Naval Modernization in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, China and Japan From a Comparative Perspective 1830-1905* (Unpublished MA Thesis: Boğaziçi, 2009), pp. 117-118.

¹⁷ Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War 1853-1856* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010).

¹⁸ Mika Suonpaa, "Foreign Advisors and Modernisation The First World War: British Diplomacy, Sir Richard Crawford and the Reform of the Ottoman Empire's Customs Service 1906-11", *The International History Review* (February 21 2014), pp. 1-19.

¹⁹ Chris Rooney, "The International Significance of British Naval Missions to the Ottoman Empire, 1908-14", *Middle Eastern Studies* 34: 1 (January 1998), pp. 1-29.

²⁰ Handan Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: the Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

a period long before Hobart's employment.²¹ There is nothing dealing with the period under investigation in this thesis.

A Note on Usage

When writing on a subject in a language different from that used by those under investigation, problems are clearly going to arise. These problems are compounded when the case is that of the history of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Turkish language was written in the Arabic script and had considerable Arabic and Persian loan words. During the early years of the Turkish Republic changes were made which led to the Turkish language being written in the Latin script and the removal of many of those Arabic and Persian words. Another complication is caused by nineteenth century English attempts to write Ottoman Turkish words. Decisions have to be made concerning whether to use Ottoman Turkish words, contemporary English transpositions of the Ottoman words, modern Turkish versions of those words, and this is just to list the most obvious options. I have tried to use contemporary Turkish usage, including using specific Turkish characters, where they are familiar in English. For example, 'Abdülhamid' rather than any other variation, 'Murad' rather than 'Murat' and 'Paşa' rather than 'Pasha'. The only variation to this is when quoting from nineteenth century sources. In those cases a variety of spellings will be noted. I have however, adopted modern usage for English words. Also, bearing in mind Hobart's writing style punctuation has been inserted to aid in comprehension.

Another problem which needed to be dealt with concerned which terms to use. At the outset it was important to decide how to refer to the Ottoman Empire. Historians are not always consistent here. I

²¹ Tuncay Zorlu, *Innovation And Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008).

have attempted to avoid using such terms as the Turkish Empire or the Turkish Government. Given that Turkey did not come into being until 1923 such terms are clearly anachronistic. Also, such terms would appear to me to remove at worst, or devalue at best, any non-Turkish elements within the Ottoman elite and this is clearly inaccurate. At its best the Ottoman Empire managed to mould different peoples from different backgrounds into a group with an Ottoman view of the world. I therefore refer to the 1877-1878 war between the Russian and Ottoman empires as the Russo-Ottoman War, rather than its more common name of Russo-Turkish War.²² I must admit however that I am guilty of not being entirely consistent in this regard. I chose to use Constantinople as the name of the Ottoman capital. The reason for this was that in English this was the commonly known name during the period under investigation. It was felt that to see 'Constantinople' in quotes and then 'Istanbul' in the main body of the text might lead to some confusion. The name was officially changed to its contemporary form in 1930. There is some evidence that the Ottomans also used this name. With other place names I have tried to provide a contemporary version and its location where the place is not necessarily familiar to readers.

²² Dr Yasamee's work *Ottoman Diplomacy* used the same term.

Chapter Two. Background

This chapter has two purposes. First, it provides an introduction to the Ottoman Empire and its relations with Britain during the nineteenth century. Second, it will describe the two Englishmen under investigation, outlining their careers up to the point when they entered Ottoman service to show what skills they brought to their employers. It will conclude by briefly outlining their career paths in Ottoman service.

I. The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century was a state under threat. Its legitimacy was questioned by some of its inhabitants as well as various European Great Powers. Added to this was the manifest weakening of Ottoman power as demonstrated through the defeats to Russia (1812, 1829 and 1878); and to the Sultan's ostensible vassal Muhammad Ali, (Mehmed Ali) Paşa of Egypt in the 1830s. The above indicated the necessity for reform and the nineteenth century witnessed consistent efforts to reorganise the empire.

Separating internal and external factors can be extremely difficult with the Ottoman Empire. In his work *Ottoman Diplomacy*, Yasamee is clear that the two were intimately connected and meant that the Ottoman Empire was not a truly independent state.¹ Bearing that in mind, it is necessary for the sake of clarity to try and make distinctions. One area, which affected both internal and external Ottoman affairs, was that of the military and the navy. Clearly the armed forces were on the front line when it came to defending the external borders of the empire from the threat of Russia. Additionally,

¹ Feroze Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996), p. IX.

they were used internally against groups that either sought to gain independence from the empire or opposed the growing centralisation. It is therefore to the military including the Ottoman Navy that we shall turn first.

The famous Janissary corps, which had been the backbone of the Ottoman Army in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had by the nineteenth century become a significant part of the problem. The corps had for many years resisted reforms to improve its training and make it more efficient, and it had gone so far as to participate in the removal of a number of Sultans, Selim III (R. 1789-1807) being the most recent example. Sultan Mahmud II (R.1808-1839) worked assiduously to destroy the power of the Janissaries and in 1826 was able to eliminate the corps completely in what has become known as the “Auspicious Occasion”.² With the end of the Janissaries a new military system had to be put in place. This new army was called “the Trained Triumphant Soldiers of Muhammad”.³ The use of ‘trained’ as part of the title cannot have been accidental given the Janissaries opposition to training.

During the 1830s the Ottoman military began to use conscription as a method for raising soldiers. This was complicated by a lack of knowledge concerning the Ottoman population, but a count was attempted in 1831, which was designed to enumerate those who were eligible for conscription. It was the military that was responsible for this count. In 1846 the conscription law was further developed, allowing for selection on the basis of the drawing of lots.⁴ This law also recognised certain groups as being exempt including students in the *Medrese*, or religious schools, which had the unintended

² Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson Education, 2007), pp.306-342.

³ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars* p. 321.

⁴ *ibid*, pp. 409-410.

consequence of increasing the numbers of students attending these schools.⁵ These exemptions must have been based on pre-existing practices.

Areas which appear to have been exempt included the Arab-inhabited provinces of the empire. When conscription was attempted in Aleppo in 1851, for example, an outbreak of rebellion resulted, leading to the practice being suspended.⁶ It was reintroduced in 1861, Damascus having it imposed a year earlier. Even in the 1870s it has been estimated by Aksan that around a quarter of the Muslim population were still exempt.⁷ According to Yapp these exemptions applied to provinces, which were defined as “*müstesna*”, provinces with special or exceptional status.⁸ The island of Crete and provinces in Eastern Asia Minor were examples of these. The 1886 conscription law repeated the claim that all Muslims were to be eligible for conscription, the fact it needed repeating makes it clear how unsuccessful previous attempts had been.⁹

So far we have examined conscription and the impact on the Muslim population of the empire. It should be noted that some non-Muslims had served in the Ottoman Military for centuries. However, generally, non-Muslims paid what was known as the *Cizye* or Poll Tax and were not expected to fight. One area in which they had been used was that of the navy. Here Greek Orthodox Christians had predominated but after the Greek Revolution this changed as they were no longer seen as trustworthy.¹⁰ In 1835 there is evidence to suggest that Armenians were conscripted into the Ottoman

⁵ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 412.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 418-419.

⁷ Ibid., p. 479.

⁸ M. Yapp, “The Modernisation of Middle Eastern Armies in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative View” in V Parry and M Yapp (eds), *War Technology and Society in the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 351.

⁹ Handan Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005) p. 23.

¹⁰ Ufuk Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerinin Askerlik Serüveni* (Istanbul: Simurg, 2000) p. 29.

Navy from Van.¹¹ The same work gives examples of attempts to recruit non-Muslims to both the army and Navy and shows that in 1847 and 1851 the numbers aimed for were not achieved.¹² Gülsoy gives a couple of different reasons for the lack of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Military across the period 1835-1909. Some non-Muslims fled in order to avoid conscription.¹³ Part of the reason for this was down to the ill-treatment received by non-Muslims at the hands of recruiting officers.¹⁴ We can assume that conscription of non-Muslims was thought by many to be an illegitimate imposition. Another reason given by Gülsoy was that non-Muslims preferred to continue in their traditional economic activities.¹⁵

There were debates within the elite of the empire around whether non-Muslims should be conscripted. One problem which was discussed in 1847 concerned religious observance. This affected both army and navy. In the latter's case the debates revolved around whether religious leaders should be present on board ships.¹⁶ It was decided that when the ships were in port they could, but that when the ships departed they could not, as it was thought that this was equivalent to the construction of a new church and therefore forbidden. In the same year it was decided to use non-Muslims on land.¹⁷ Other difficulties concerning the conscription of non-Muslims were also discussed. These included interreligious disputes among the men and the difference in treatment if non-Muslims were not permitted to have religious leaders and Muslims were.¹⁸ Others argued that it would be better not to use non-Muslims in the Navy at all, as this would increase the numbers of Muslims with experience of

¹¹ Ufuk Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerinin Askerlik Serüveni* (Istanbul: Simurg, 2000)

¹² Ibid., pp. 40-41 and p. 49.

¹³ Ibid. p. 31.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 42-45.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁸ Gülsoy, *Osmanlı*, p. 46.

sea life. On the conclusion of their naval careers they would then be able to transfer to merchant shipping.¹⁹ There were those who expressed distrust of non-Muslims on Ottoman battleships.²⁰

During the Crimean War the *Cizye* tax was withdrawn but quickly replaced with the *Bedel-i askeriye* or military exemption tax.²¹ Theoretically this meant equality in military conscription with the new tax being applicable to both Muslims and non-Muslims. However, it would be fair to assume that the problems listed earlier probably meant that non-Muslims continued to pay a tax and Muslims continued to serve. Additionally Muslims did not wish to serve under non-Muslim officers.²² Finally, the new tax brought in considerable income which further provided a disincentive to conscript non-Muslims.²³

It has already been shown that one of the reasons the Janissaries were failing as a military corps was their unwillingness to adopt modern techniques. For this reason training and education were fundamental parts of the military reforms. Training establishments for the artillery corps and navy predated the War College established in 1834.²⁴ But clearly it took time to create a curriculum, get recruits and pass them through the War College. One of the main problems was the lack of an empire-wide education system meaning that the War College had to deal with a poor standard of education among new entrants. To support the lack of trained officers the Ottoman Government employed foreign military advisors. This was not new, but the nineteenth century saw an increase in this practice. To give two examples, the Prussian von Moltke was employed during the reign of Mahmud II in the

¹⁹ Gülsoy, *Osmanli*, p.46

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars* p. 412.

²² Ibid., pp. 479-480.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 327.

first half of the century and the German von der Goltz was one among many during the reign of Abdülhamid II in the final third of it.

During his reign, military secondary schools were established for the first time. These were designed to provide a feeder system for the War College from children across the empire. These schools were free to everyone, which meant that even the poorest could now enter the military and rise through the ranks.²⁵ Shortly afterwards, military secondary schools were extended from two to three years and the education at the War College was reformed. Although the proportion of War College trained officers (*Mektepli*) to those promoted through the ranks (*Alaylı*) changed slowly throughout the nineteenth century, in the last two decades it increased more rapidly. In 1884 there was just ten per cent *Mektepli*. This rose to fifteen per cent in 1894 and then to just over twenty-five per cent in 1899.²⁶

Conflict between the *Mektepli* and *Alaylı* was perhaps inevitable as the one began to replace the other. Partly however, this was due to Abdülhamid favouring the *Alaylı* over the *Mektepli*.²⁷ He saw the *Alaylı* as being more reliable and loyal than the *Mektepli* and therefore promoted them meaning that the *Mektepli* were often blocked. This would lead at least in part to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and Abdülhamid's deposition in 1909. The Sultan's concerns over the military's loyalty seem to have led him to prohibit military manoeuvres and the use of live ammunition in drills and require the storage of modern weapons in the capital rather than in the frontier establishments where they would have been of more use.²⁸

²⁵ Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth*, p. 20.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth*, p. 23.

Given the military changes outlined above it is perhaps surprising that the army was able to achieve anything at all. In fact during the middle part of the century the military helped to bring greater control to many of the provinces than had perhaps ever been the case previously. During the first year of the Crimean War, Ömer Paşa was able to successfully defend the Danube from Russian attack. In the 1877-1878 War, Osman Paşa was able to organise a defence of the city of Plevna (Pleven, Bulgaria). Yapp argues that this showed that the Ottoman Army was not at a disadvantage compared to European armies when it came to a defensive war.²⁹ The war with Greece in 1897 showed that, given the right circumstances, the Ottoman military were able to fight an aggressive campaign and win.

One problem which the Ottomans faced was the issue of using the army for internal security. Other countries were in the process of creating separate organisations for this in the mid-nineteenth century. The Ottomans were never able to do this.³⁰ This meant that the Ottomans had to use irregulars, particularly when the military was defending the external borders of the empire. One example of this is that of Bulgaria in 1876 (more will be said on this later). A second example is that of the Hamidiye Cavalry (established in 1891 and named after Sultan Abdülhamid II) from amongst Kurdish tribes.

As important as the numbers of soldiers, the structure of the army and tactics, were the weapons used. In the latter case, the Ottomans seemed to have no difficulty in getting the latest weapons from Europe, albeit after a short time lag. As part of Abdülhamid II's policy of using German military advisors he also purchased Mauser rifles, Krupp guns and other military hardware from Germany. The Ottoman Navy moved from sailing ships to steam powered ships and then ironclad vessels. In the 1870s and

²⁹ Yapp, "Modernisation", p. 349.

³⁰ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 479.

1880s it began to adopt torpedoes and torpedo boats. More will be written about this in the next chapter. The adoption of new technology placed a strain on Ottoman finances.

As with the army, the navy suffered from a lack of trained officers and foreign instructors were consequently used here as well. Sir Adolphus Slade had been advisor to the Ottoman Navy for forty years. His term covered the Crimean War. It is likely that during the last two decades of the century, there was an increase of trained officers in the navy, similar to the increase of *Mektepli* in the army, leading to similar opposition to the Sultan's regime's in the navy.

Reforming the military was designed to protect the empire from both external and internal threats. Bureaucratic reform can be seen as another tool to do the same thing. The era of the *Tanzimat* Reforms began with the "*Tanzimat Firman*" – the Rescript of the Rose Chamber in 1839.³¹ This edict, issued at the beginning of Sultan Abdülmecid's reign, sought to decrease the arbitrary government of the Sultan and his governors by the re-emphasis of Sheriat, (religious law) and Kanun, (Sultan law). Alongside this was the desire to transfer power to the Sublime Porte, or Grand Vizier and his colleagues.³² The first of these was uncontroversial. The second caused a bitter conflict as it struck at one of the foundations of the empire – the power of the Sultan. Between 1839 and 1856, when a second major edict was issued, this conflict was unresolved. After 1856, and particularly under the leadership of the Paşas Ali and Fuad, the bureaucracy dominated the palace. This again changed after Ali's death in 1871 when the palace regained control and, but for a brief time between 1876 and 1878, power remained in the palace until the deposition of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1909.

³¹ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 402.

³² Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Sultan and the Bureaucracy" in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 22 (August, 1990), pp. 257-258.

Returning to the edict of 1856, called the “*Hatt-ı Hümayun*”, this had far higher aims than that of 1839. This document sought nothing less than the removal of all barriers between the various religious communities within the empire. It meant to substitute loyalty from the traditional religious community or *Millet* and replace it with a new sense of Ottoman nationality or Ottomanism. This struck at the traditional view that the Muslim community was superior to the other communities of the empire because of Islam and that meant although non-Muslims were worthy of legal protections, equality was out of the question. This second edict was different from the first because of the involvement of the Ottoman Empire’s Crimean War allies France and Britain in its preparation.³³ This led to considerable opposition to it both from non-Muslims who were interested in national self-determination or had an interest in the existing *Millet* system, and Muslims who resented the removal of their privileged status. This was a dichotomy which the *Tanzimat* reformers never really solved. After the loss of the majority of the European provinces in the Russo-Ottoman war, Ottomanism was replaced by an emphasis on the Islamic nature of the empire and the Sultan’s position of Caliph. Given that after 1878 the empire’s population was now predominately Muslim, this is hardly surprising.

One final element of the *Tanzimat* reforms, which should be mentioned here, is that of centralisation. Like the dichotomies of Sultan verses Sublime Porte and Ottomanism verses *Millet*, previously discussed, the reforms demonstrated the tension between those who favoured a more centralised empire and those who wished for a decentralised one. With the contraction of the empire as a result of the 1877-1878 war and the adoption and increased use of technology – like telegraphs and railways – those who supported centralisation won the battle. This allowed for the unprecedented control that Abdülhamid exercised during his reign.

³³ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 57.

It will have become clear that the Ottoman Government was becoming more involved with the lives of its subjects. Conscription for the Ottoman military is just one aspect of this, albeit a very significant one. In order to have conscription it is necessary to have an understanding of the population. The nineteenth century witnessed increased efforts to find out how many people lived within the Ottoman frontiers. This was not done through a census, as the Ottoman Empire did not possess the means to carry out a count of all of its people at the same time. It did however seek to register its inhabitants at various times and these are the bases of what some have called Ottoman census figures.³⁴ The attempted count of 1831 has already been mentioned. It was only designed to count those who might be suitable for conscription. Obviously this did not include women or children, but it did include non-Muslims for the purposes of calculating the *Cizye*.³⁵ Subsequent to this, various attempts to count the population and create regulations and a bureaucracy to support this were made. By 1874 a new Census Bureau was created with employees of its own. Like the previous efforts, women were still not counted, although greater effort was made to count non-Muslims due to increased pressure to conscript them into the army.³⁶ Another possible reason was the need to increase the government's income and a better understanding of the non-Muslim population could lead to increased taxes. However the count that was attempted, beginning in 1874, was abandoned in 1875 due to crises that will be described in the next chapter.

The next attempt to count the Ottoman population began in 1883. It was run under the regulations just mentioned, which were reissued in 1878 with some alterations. Links with conscription were maintained but there was now a recognition of the importance of knowing the population for the needs of the economy. This led to women and children being included in the count for the first time.³⁷

³⁴ Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), p. 164.

³⁵ Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman Census System and Population 1831-1914", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9, 3, (October 1978) pp. 325-338.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

The final figures were not released until 1893. It must be pointed out that all Ottoman efforts at counting the population undercounted for a number of reasons. We have already seen that conscription was unwanted and some fled in order to avoid it. Counting women and children was new and must have appeared to many as an unwarranted interference on the part of the central government. Those regions in which nomads and semi-nomads were based were not as regulated by the central government as other provinces closer to the capital. It is also obviously harder to count nomadic groups; as in contemporary censuses it is hard to count the homeless. Bearing this in mind, and the fact that the Ottoman Government was the only authority capable of counting the population, the figures are therefore likely to be the most accurate possible.³⁸ McCarthy has used formulae to correct the undercounting of the population and estimated that in 1895-1896 there were 14,111,945 Muslims (74.08 per cent) of the population, and 4,938,362 non-Muslims (25.92 per cent).³⁹ An alternative perspective on Ottoman population figures is represented by Dündar who argues that the Ottoman Government deliberately underrepresented non-Muslims to prevent them being properly represented in local and national councils.⁴⁰ This argument is not entirely convincing. It would appear to be more important to ensure that accurate population figures are known for the purposes of taxation and military conscription.

One of the most controversial aspects of Ottoman population figures concerns the Armenian inhabited provinces. The majority of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian subjects lived in Eastern Asia Minor. One of the most debated issues was the campaign to improve conditions in these areas due to the perception that Armenians were a majority. Ottoman figures however, present a different perspective. According to Karpas, who provides figures from the census produced in 1893, across the

³⁸ McCarthy, *Muslims*, p. 3.

³⁹ McCarthy *Muslims*, p. 163. Appendix 2 discusses this issue further and makes an argument for why the Ottoman Government did not manipulate the sources.

⁴⁰ Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question 1878-1918* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010) p. 3.

six provinces of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbekir, Erzurum, Sivas and Haleb (Aleppo) there were 2,422,762 Muslims. Karpāt included a seventh province when providing figures for the Armenian population, that of Ma'mûret-ül-azîz, and gave a figure of 551,677.⁴¹ Dundar provided the Armenian Patriarch's figures for the Armenian population in 1880.⁴² According to these figures there were 780,800 Armenians out of a total population of 1,831,300. These figures covered the same seven provinces as given above. Clearly there is a difference in the years of the Patriarchate's figures and the Ottoman Government's figures, but despite this there is still a considerable difference in the proportions of the populations.

What is less controversial is that the balance of Muslims to non-Muslims was increasing in favour of the Muslim population. Russian policies towards the Muslim populations of the Caucasus led to an estimated 1.2 million Circassians and Abkhazians emigrating from Russian territory in the 1860s.⁴³ Karpāt gives an estimated figure of approximately 5-7 million migrants entering the Ottoman Empire between 1860-1914.⁴⁴ Chapter three will describe the roles Hobart and Woods played in this movement of people. These refugees must have placed considerable burdens both on the Ottoman authorities and the communities in which they were settled, perhaps contributing to the religious tensions which periodically led to outbreaks of violence over the final third of the nineteenth century. These tensions in turn gave other powers an excuse to interfere in Ottoman affairs.

The desire to reform is one thing. The ability to do so is wholly dependent on having the money. In the field of finance, the Ottoman Government faced a number of problems. One major source of funding is, obviously, direct taxation. The Ottoman Government was forced into using tax farming to

⁴¹ Kemal Karpāt, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 122-147 and Table 1.8A.

⁴² Dundar, *Crime of Numbers*, p. 23.

⁴³ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London: DS Arnold, 2001) p. 68.

⁴⁴ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 482, Note 42.

collect taxes, as it did not have sufficient numbers of officials to implement direct taxation. Tax farming is neither an efficient method nor a fair method of collecting taxes. The government surrenders some of its taxes, corruption takes place in the sale of the right to collect the taxes and those who collect them tend to squeeze the populace for as much as they can get in order to increase their profits.⁴⁵ Another factor that limited the income of the government was the nature of the economy. Throughout the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire remained a largely pre-industrial agrarian state. Most people lived at the subsistence level.⁴⁶ Finally, parts of the empire were exempt from taxation either completely or partially. The Ottoman capital was an example of this and much of the wealth of the empire was concentrated there.⁴⁷ A further problem was the tax privileged nature both of foreigners living within the empire and of those Ottoman subjects who also had protection under one of the embassies.⁴⁸

A second source of money available to the government was import and export duties. Not only could this raise funds, but judicious use of tariffs could have been used to encourage indigenous industries. This was however not possible as the treaty signed with Britain in 1838, and later extended to the other Powers, fixed tariffs. Changing these tariffs was very difficult as they became bound up with the capitulations, which required agreement from all the powers.⁴⁹ This meant that it was cheaper to import finished products from Europe and made the empire an exporter of raw materials. During the nineteenth century the general trend was for deflation in agricultural prices except for the periods of the Crimean War and the American Civil War.⁵⁰ The Ottoman Empire suffered from this trend.

⁴⁵ Sina Akşin, "Financial Aspects of the Tanzimat" in *Essays in Ottoman Turkish Political History* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), p. 89.

⁴⁶ Christopher Clay, *Gold for the Sultan: Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance 1856-1881 A Contribution to Ottoman and to International Financial History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000) p. 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 111.

⁵⁰ Donald Quataert "Overview of the Nineteenth century" in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *A Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 771

The Ottoman Government began to use borrowing as a source of income. The first foreign loan was in 1854 to help finance the empire's involvement in the Crimean War. This initial loan had six per cent interest on it. Between 1854 and 1875, when the Ottoman Government suspended half the interest repayments, there were fifteen loans. In many ways the Ottoman Government had no choice but to take out foreign loans. Its necessary expenditure ran well beyond its income. Interest on the loans increased over the period largely due to the Empire's need for credit and its lack of resources with which to make the repayments, not, as has been suggested, as a result of either innumeracy on the part of Ottoman ministers, or foreign pressure.⁵¹ This meant that loans were used not for investment projects but to pay off previous loans. Clay gives the proportion of ten per cent of money gained through loans being spent on projects which resulted in tangible things.⁵² One of these tangible results was a railway project funded from a loan taken out between 1870 and 1872.⁵³

Separate to the mounting cost of the bureaucracy (brought about through the *Tanzimat* reforms) and the military (brought about through the increased size of the conscript army and the new technology purchased), was expenditure from the imperial dynasty. Aksan describes the expenditure of the palace as '...profligate...'.⁵⁴ The construction of the *Dolmabahçe* Palace, completed in 1853, whilst perhaps not in itself extravagant was very visible. Despite the fact that the imperial family was assigned a grant from the treasury this sum was regularly exceeded.⁵⁵ All this in addition to the general international financial collapse in the early 1870s, and the outbreak of famine following crop failures in Anatolia in 1873 and 1874, led to the partial bankruptcy of 1875, which became total in 1876. Clay wrote that

⁵¹ Clay, *Gold*, p. 11.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 409.

⁵⁵ Akşin, "Financial," p. 92.

bankruptcy probably became unavoidable as a result of the first loan of 1865.⁵⁶ Financial stability was only restored in 1881 when an agreement was reached which created the Public Debt Administration. This assigned certain Ottoman income for the specific use of paying off the empire's debts.

It is largely down to this financial settlement that the Ottoman Government was able to undertake some major projects. Approximately ten thousand schools were built during the Hamidian era.⁵⁷ Telegraphs continued to be constructed and they meant that parts of the empire which had been traditionally loosely governed were now brought under tighter control. The number of railways also continued to grow with the Hejaz and Baghdad lines the most famous of these. They helped the central Government send troops to the outlying provinces as well as encouraging trade.

We should now make some brief comments on Anglo-Ottoman relations. The Ottoman Empire and Britain had what might be described as mixed relations over the nineteenth century. In 1807, during the Napoleonic Wars a British naval squadron approached the Ottoman capital without permission.⁵⁸ During the conflict which ended in the establishment of the Greek state, a British naval squadron participated in the destruction of an Ottoman fleet at Navarino in 1827.⁵⁹ The British Prime Minister (the Duke of Wellington) described it as an '...untoward event...'.⁶⁰ His concern was based on his fears around Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire and environs.⁶¹ This concern developed in to a fear of potential Russian threats to British possessions and particularly India. To protect her Indian possessions Britain supported a chain of buffer states, including the Ottoman Empire, which had the

⁵⁶ Clay, *Gold*, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, The State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp. 98-99.

⁵⁸ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p. 243.

⁵⁹ Roderick Davison, "Britain, The International Spectrum, and the Eastern Question 1827-1841" in *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999) p. 156.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ M. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1970), p. 69.

dual benefit to Britain of blocking Russian expansion and of being useful for launching attacks on Russia through the Bosphorus, as was done during the Crimean War. It was largely for strategic reasons that Britain fought with the Ottoman Empire against Russia in the 1850s.

Strategic interest is not necessarily the basis for a long-term relationship let alone friendship. The legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire was questioned by some in Britain. This cannot have been because of military weakness. Prussia, Austria and Russia had all lost to Napoleon during the Napoleonic wars, but their right to exist had not been questioned. France had been defeated by Prussia in 1871 but again she was still considered one of the European Great Powers. Intercommunal violence was often used to show that the Ottoman Government was incapable of protecting its Christian subjects and had therefore lost the right to rule them. A pamphlet published during the Greek revolution made this argument.⁶² Another example of this was during the violence in Lebanon and Syria in the early 1860s. The inability of the Ottoman Government to prevent the troubles was used as a reason for foreign intervention.⁶³ Foreign intervention could itself lead to the weakness that concerned foreign governments. Between 1850 and 1853 both France and Russia pressured the Ottoman Government in their efforts to ensure that their local protégés would be dominant in the Holy Land.⁶⁴ Austria and Russia applied joint pressure in 1853 concerning the governorship of Bosnia forcing the Ottoman Government to remove the incumbent.⁶⁵ Anderson argues that it was this that led the Russian Government to believe that the Ottomans would accept any terms.⁶⁶ The consequence of their mistake was the Crimean War.

⁶² Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815-1914* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 74-75.

⁶³ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*: pp. 102-103.

⁶⁴ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp. 116-117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

The legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire cannot have been questioned due to its multi-ethnic multi-religious nature as both Russia and Austria, not to mention Britain herself were equally diverse imperial powers. A possible explanation is that it was considered intolerable that Muslims should rule Christians. Linked to this was the Ottoman Sultan's possession of many Christian holy sites. The growth of missionary movements in the nineteenth century may have increased the belief that Muslim rule over Christian holy places (Jerusalem, the sites significant to the life of St Paul and, of course, Constantinople itself), was illegitimate. We will see this argument demonstrated in the press in chapter five.

A second factor affecting attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire was the growth of philhellenism. The nineteenth century saw the growth in the importance of a classical education and the belief that much of western culture was based on classical Greece. Boyar has suggested that when travellers visited the Ottoman lands during the nineteenth century they saw only what they wanted to see based on their classical education.⁶⁷ This was a land without the Muslim inhabitants. Perhaps the best example of philhellenism at work was the poetry of Lord Byron.

⁶⁷ Ebru Boyar, 'British Archaeological Travellers In Nineteenth Century Anatolia: Anatolia Without the Turks', in *Eurasian Studies 1*: (June 2002), pp. 97-113.



Fig. I: Hobart Pasha; Engraved by G. I. Stewart from a Photograph

II. The Paşas Hobart and Woods

Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden was born on the first of April 1822 and describes himself in his book *Sketches from My Life*, as coming from ‘...respectable parents.’⁶⁸ He was in fact the third son of the Earl of Buckinghamshire and a descendant of the Civil War Parliamentarian John Hampden whose statue stands in the Palace of Westminster. After an undistinguished three years at school he entered the Royal Navy aged thirteen as a result of a nomination from his cousin Sir Charles Eden. The experiences Hobart had on his first ship, *Rover*, had a great influence on his character. He described the tyranny of the captain in two stories of events which took place shortly after his arrival on the ship. The first relates to the whipping of the Captain’s boat crew for keeping him waiting on the pier. The second involved Hobart himself. He wrote that he must have done something to ‘...vex the tyrant...’ and was ordered to the top of the masthead as punishment.⁶⁹ According to the memoirs, this took place before the young seaman had the opportunity to gain his sea legs.

A few remarks on Hobart’s memoirs are necessary at this point. The version used in this thesis was published in 1915 and contains various annotations from the editor. Hobart’s original version hid some names of people and ships. The 1915 edited version includes these details.⁷⁰ It also refers to an anonymous critique of the memoirs which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* from January 1887. That article may well have been written by Captain Colomb R.N. as there is a request in the Admiralty files at the National Archives from him for access to the logs of four of the ships Hobart served on during the early part of his Royal Naval career.⁷¹ Whoever wrote the review, he accused Hobart of mixing fact

⁶⁸ Horace Kephart, (Ed.) *Hobart Pasha* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1915), p. 19.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9. Sir William M is identified as Admiral Sir William Martin. (See below p.39)

⁷¹ TNA, ADM1/6842, Cap C 41, 11 November 1886, Captain Colomb to the Secretary to the Admiralty.

and fiction.⁷² On the two stories described above, and other examples from the early part of Hobart's career, the author says the following:

If the reader is horrified at the wretched picture of Hobart's first ship and the cruel injustice of her captain as painted by his own hand, let him console himself by reflecting that he is not called on to believe it to be a true one.⁷³

Hobart's memoirs although not the only source for his career, are of considerable importance. The critique of the anonymous reviewer presents a significant problem. There is further evidence that Hobart was prone to exaggeration. A piece appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1885 written by Arthur Nicolson under the pseudonym of Philo-Turk.⁷⁴ In it he described Hobart as being by his own account both "...the confidential advisor of the Sultan..." and advisor to the British Government.⁷⁵ The author also leaves us with the impression that Hobart had a tendency to boast and could become a bore when discussing politics.⁷⁶ If he did exaggerate in this part of his memoirs could there be a reason for doing so?

Let us deal first with the generalities with reference to the above stories. Hobart was describing the captain's complete authority over his ship and how in his view this led to the use of arbitrary punishment. We will see shortly that Henry Woods describes similar events. Furthermore another reviewer of Hobart's memoirs in *The Saturday Review* reminded readers that Sir William Martin, mentioned later in Hobart's memoirs, flogged the last man down from the mast after performing manoeuvres.⁷⁷ It could therefore be concluded that the general point Hobart was seeking to make is valid.

⁷² Anonymous, "Sketches from My Life by The Late Hobart Pasha", *Edinburgh Review* 165: 337, (London: January 1887), pp. 150-181.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 150-151.

⁷⁴ Philo-Turk "Men and Manners in Constantinople" *The Fortnightly Review*, 38: CCXXVI (1885) pp. 491-505.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 495.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Kephaet, *Hobart*, p. 9.

On the specific cases described it would appear that they definitely did not take place. The anonymous Reviewer is clear that according to the records the captain's boat crew were never whipped and Hobart was never sent to the masthead.⁷⁸ How can we explain this? Did Hobart make up the events? The Captain concerned, Sir Charles Eden, was the cousin who had got Hobart his position in the navy and it is clear that Hobart developed a dislike for him. It is arguable that if, as the reviewer says, these two events and others did not take place, Hobart was trying to describe the general atmosphere of the navy and recalled incidents he had either seen directly or had described to him. The memoirs were written in 1886 during Hobart's illness just prior to his death. This was some fifty years after the events described. It is hardly surprising that events should become confused.

The impact of Hobart's tour on *Rover* on him is clear however, even if not all the events described took place. He wrote that the experiences got him thinking about '...how to oppose tyranny in every shape.' As a consequence of this Hobart tells us that his superiors often described him as a '...troublesome character...' and a '...sea-lawyer...'.⁷⁹ Later he described himself as being somewhat insubordinate and that certainly cannot have helped his naval career. He certainly was not very diplomatic if his recollection of his retort to being offered a place in his cousin's carriage, after the ship had been paid off, was accurate. According to his memoirs Hobart responded that 'I would rather crawl home on my hands and knees than go in his carriage.'⁸⁰ This is only the first example of Hobart's inability to swallow his pride.

⁷⁸ Anonymous, "Sketches", p. 156.

⁷⁹ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 26.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

After the three years Hobart was posted to *Rover*, he tells us that he spent some time in Spain as part of the British force supporting the Queen. According to the *Edinburgh Review* this is completely untrue. However, it is worth mentioning because Hobart described how he fell down in fright during his first experience of gunfire. He wrote that the commander in charge, General John Hey, gave him a kick and ordered him to get up. The lesson Hobart took from this was to be understanding to men experiencing their first battle.⁸¹ He then proceeded to his second ship, *Rose*, in 1838. He spent most of the time on the Atlantic coast of South America. On this ship Hobart was under the command of a man who whilst enforcing discipline was also fair and it was whilst serving on this ship that Hobart wrote that he learned that you could have both. He described a number of entertaining events, including falling in love and a story concerning the King of France, Louis Philippe's, birthday celebration and the naval salute. It is in this chapter that Hobart first made reference to his passion for hunting.

According to the *Edinburgh Review* it was on *Rose* that Hobart began confronting the slave trade. According to Hobart's own account, it was his third ship, *Dolphin*, on which he began dealing with the slave trade. His view was that those who campaigned to ban the trade were wrong because it had the benefit of taking the 'savage' out of their own country, civilising them and giving them religion, and teaching them '...that to kill and eat each other was not to be considered as the principle pastime among human beings.'⁸² Like many at the time, Hobart believed that black people were meant to be the servants of the white man.⁸³ He told a number of stories concerned with capturing slaver ships that may or may not be accurate as far as his own participation in them is concerned. Although Hobart clearly did not believe in the suppression of the slave trade, he did enjoy the chase and the danger. He also needed the prize money gained by the captures even if he did not get the renown he craved. Another aspect of Hobart's character is demonstrated here – his loyalty. The captain of his vessel, in

⁸¹ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 38.

⁸² Ibid., p. 60.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 55.

trusting a Midshipman (Hobart's rank) to take an active role in the task of slaver hunting encouraged Hobart to be more 'zealous' in conducting the work in order to reward the captain's trust.⁸⁴ Hobart would later show considerable loyalty to the Ottoman Government.

Hobart's next posting was to the Queen's yacht, *Victoria and Albert*. He described escorting the monarch and her consort on various visits. This cannot have offered the young Hobart much of a challenge, which perhaps explains how he got himself into trouble with the Queen. The yacht's passengers included Alderney cows, which provided fresh milk and butter for those on board. For some reason Hobart decided to paint their horns and their ears blue. The Queen was not amused and Hobart had to keep a low profile until he was forgiven through the intervention of the Prince Consort.⁸⁵ We can now add a sense of humour to Hobart's character, even if on this occasion it was not shown at the most appropriate of times.

In 1845 Hobart was promoted to lieutenant and sent to the Mediterranean, first on *Battler* and then *Bulldog*. He described the complex situation in Italy with the conflict between the French and Garibaldi, with the Pope trapped between them until he escaped from Rome. However it is unlikely that much of this part of the memoirs is accurate.

During the Crimean War, Hobart was sent to the Baltic as First Lieutenant of the *Bulldog*, a steam powered gunboat. He noted everyone's excitement at war being declared after so much time doing nothing, allowing them to defend the honour of their country.⁸⁶ Hobart complained in his memoirs about the lack of fight shown by the Admiral of the fleet who would not allow them to attack the

⁸⁴ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 63.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

fortress at Kronstadt in 1854. Hobart was, however, present at the surrender of the forts at Bomarsund for which his ship, *Driver*, to which he was acting commander, got mentioned in despatches twice.⁸⁷ He was mentioned personally when participating in the reconnaissance at Abo.⁸⁸ In the following year, 1855, Hobart got his promotion to the rank of Commander during his command of the mortar boats at the attack on the fort at Sweaburg.⁸⁹ Hobart attributed the delay to his promotion to his rather freely expressed opinions.⁹⁰ Although he didn't know it at the time, this was to be Hobart's last experience of action in the Royal Navy.

At the end of the war Hobart spent three years at a coastguard station at Dingle and then another year and a half in the guard boat stationed at Malta.⁹¹ Hobart was given command of the gunboat *Foxhound* in autumn 1861 where he was under the overall command of Admiral Sir William Martin. According to Hobart they had very different ideas on discipline. The *Edinburgh Reviewer* whilst deploring Hobart's comments on the admiral, accepted they were completely different characters. The following is Hobart's account of an inspection of the *Foxhound* by Admiral Martin and demonstrates both Hobart's enjoyable writing style and his tendency to insubordination. The Admiral had ordered all gunboats to have water casks lashed to their sides, because he believed they could be used in getting boats that had gone aground afloat again. During an inspection he discovered that Hobart had put them to other uses. The visit had not begun well when the Admiral's hat was stolen by a monkey and dropped into the sea.

...he commenced to walk round the deck. I remarked with pleasure his countenance change when he saw how neatly his pet water-casks were painted and lashed to the inner gunnel of the ship. He said quite graciously, "I am glad to see, Captain Hobart, that you pay such attention to my orders." I began to think I was mistaken in my idea of the man; but, alas for my exuberance of spirits and satisfaction, while the admiral was closely

⁸⁷ Anonymous, "Sketches", p. 173.

⁸⁸ TNA, ADM196/16/167, Record of Service, Augustus C. Hobart-Hampden.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 97.

⁹¹ Anonymous, "Sketches", p. 157.

examining one of his pet casks, his face came almost in contact with the opening of the barrel, when, to his and my horror, a pretty little spaniel put out his head and licked the great man on the nose.

I shall never forget the admiral's countenance; he turned blue with anger, drew himself up, ordered his boat to be manned, and walked over the side not saying a word to anyone.

The facts which led to this untoward occurrence were that, seeing the necessity of having my decks crowded with what I considered useless lumber, in the form of water-casks, I had utilised them by making them into dog-kennels. The admiral hated dogs, hated sport of all kind, and, after what occurred, I fancy hated me. Well, I didn't love him; I never saw him again.⁹²

Hobart was promoted to captain on 25 March 1863 and then retired on half pay.⁹³ This was normal as there were not enough suitable ships for the number of captains available and it was necessary to wait in line for a post. What is interesting is that it took Hobart twenty-eight years to rise to that rank. The reviewer in the *Edinburgh Review* stated that Hobart's slowness in promotion was partly down to his own failures.⁹⁴ There were failures of character, as already demonstrated, but also perhaps failures due to a lack of education that may well have made it harder for him to pass his exams. To balance this, some at least of Hobart's time in the navy was spent when there was little conflict – the years 1844-1854 would be a good example of this. Finally, bad luck that did not place him in positions where his bravery would have allowed itself to be shown such as Burma in 1852 or the Opium War of 1857-8.

Given that Hobart needed action and challenges, and incidentally needed to augment his half pay, he determined, along with three other fellow captains, to command ships running the North's blockade of the South's ports in the American Civil War. As far as Hobart was concerned, this was ideal work. He had his own command with no superiors to interfere with his decisions. He had excitement and challenges to overcome. Hobart's experiences during the American Civil War were first published in

⁹² Kephert, *Hobart*, pp. 101-103.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, "Sketches", pp. 152-154.

1867 under the *nom de plume* of Captain Roberts and entitled *Never Caught*.⁹⁵ The version that appeared in his memoirs was a reprint of the original. According to the *Edinburgh Reviewer*, this was considered to be largely accurate by an informed American source.⁹⁶

According to Hobart he successfully broke the blockade on Wilmington some twelve times, that is making six round trips, between 1863 and 1864, the majority of which were achieved with the twin screwed steamship *Don*. For Hobart, blockade running was a game of cat and mouse. He never intended to fight any of the blockading vessels as he would have seen that as piracy.⁹⁷ The object was to get goods for sale into Charleston, and getting the cotton to Nassau. The blockade-runners were designed to be very fast, used smokeless coal, were low in the water and blew the steam from the engines under water to avoid making noise. In fact everything was designed to make them as hard as possible to locate. So much of the time was spent dodging the blockaders, rather than confronting them.

Hobart described a number of exciting events concerning blockade running. Two will illustrate his development into a daring commander. During one run into Wilmington he was ordered to stop by a blockading vessel. This was some distance from Wilmington itself. The two ships being barely eighty yards apart, Hobart obeyed the order, and just as the ships' boats approached his vessel, he ordered full steam and he was able to escape, the blockader having to perhaps wait to pick up its boats and crews and Hobart using the opportunity to vanish into the darkness.⁹⁸ On another occasion Hobart was making the run out of Wilmington laden with cotton, which slowed his ship. He was chased by a blockader who was gaining ground and periodically firing. Hobart was able to enter the Gulf Stream

⁹⁵ Captain Roberts, *Never Caught* (London: John Camden 1867).

⁹⁶ Anonymous, "Sketches", p. 174.

⁹⁷ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 105.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

which allowed him to increase the distance and at nightfall he came to a complete stop, allowing his pursuer to pass him in the dark.⁹⁹

Hobart's ability to respond well under pressure was again demonstrated when, just after leaving the British port of Nassau on another attempt to break the blockade, he saw one of the fastest blockaders approaching *Don*. Hobart determined to remain in British waters, and on the blockader firing across his bows, came to a stop and flew the British flag. When the captain came on board and saw obvious signs that *Don* was a blockade-runner and showed signs of wanting to impound the vessel Hobart blithely told him that he was in British waters and could not be taken.¹⁰⁰

Excitement and adventure are all very well but Hobart was clear that blockade running was all about what you could make for yourself. On one occasion his own profit came from the sale of 500 Cockle's Pills (indigestion tablets), toothbrushes and 1000 stays (corsets). The last named item was purchased by Hobart in Glasgow for the princely sum of 1 shilling and 1 pence per pair and sold in Wilmington for 12 shillings a pair.¹⁰¹ On the day that Hobart arrived back in Southampton he read in the papers that *Don* had been captured. He admitted that good luck played a part in his successes and wrote on the fate of his successor '...for success in blockade-running as in everything else, is a virtue, where as bad luck, even though accompanied with the pluck of a hero, is always more or less a crime, not to be forgiven.'¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-123.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

Hobart returned to blockade running and made one more successful round trip. During his second attempt, Yellow Fever broke out on his new ship which forced him back to Halifax where Hobart himself fell ill. On recovering he determined to stop, presumably on the grounds that his luck was running out and the Civil War was nearly over. Hobart made one successful journey through the land blockade of the south, for no other reason than, as he put it, 'a spirit of enterprise'.¹⁰³

Following Hobart's adventures in the Civil War he travelled throughout Europe and arrived in the Ottoman capital towards the end of 1867. The reason for his travels was that he was still not eligible for a command in the Royal Navy. According to Hobart's account, he met with Fuad Paşa, the Ottoman Grand Vizier, because he had introductions to that statesman. It is probable that these introductions came from his brother who was a director of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. During their conversation the subject of the insurrection in Crete was brought up and Hobart told Fuad, 'accidentally', that he thought the blockade running could be put an end to. At a second interview a few days later Hobart was offered the position of naval advisor.¹⁰⁴

An alternative version of this story is told in Woods' memoirs. According to Woods, Hobart's brother thought that it was likely that Hobart would join the blockade-runners and, in order to prevent him from doing so, got him the meeting with the Grand Vizier, although Woods says it was Ali Paşa rather than Fuad.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that both accounts are true. Ali and Fuad Paşas regularly alternated the Grand Vizierate and Foreign Ministry between them. In the last few months of 1867 Ali was the Grand Vizier, but he was not in the Ottoman capital but on Crete. Given his experiences in the Civil War Hobart would have been ideal for the Greek blockade-runners. For Hobart the benefits, from his

¹⁰³ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

¹⁰⁵ Henry Woods, *Spun yarn: From the Strands of a Sailor's Life Afloat and Ashore Forty-Seven Years Under the Ensigns of Great Britain and Turkey* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1924), 2 vols. V2 pp. 150-151.

perspective, of joining the blockade-runners are clear. On the other hand, Hobart would have benefited from a permanent official posting with the Ottoman Government, particularly if it were sanctioned by the British Government.

There is a further possibility as to the beginning of Hobart's employment. The book *The Ottoman Steam Navy* states that Hobart was in command of the Ottoman steam ship *Izzeddin* when it captured the blockade-runner *Arkadion* in August 1867.¹⁰⁶ It has not been possible to corroborate this claim. No newspaper accounts nor consular records have been found to support this version. It is therefore my opinion that Hobart was not involved in this event.

Whatever Hobart's motivations may have been, a contract between him and Fuad Paşa representing the Ottoman Government was signed on 30 November 1867.¹⁰⁷ He was appointed to supervise Ottoman Naval affairs. The contract was five years in duration. He was given one thousand pounds at once to help with settling costs, his pay was to be one hundred pounds a month, and at the end of the five years a payment of three thousand pounds would be made. The most interesting part of the contract concerns secrecy. Both sides agreed that Hobart's appointment would remain confidential unless he requested an official position and the political situation was favourable. Presumably this secrecy clause was included to try to avoid the British Government's declaration of neutrality between the Ottoman Government and Cretan revolutionaries. A question had been asked in the House of Commons earlier that year respecting the employment of Sir William Wiseman as advisor to the Ottoman Government. The reply was that while the conflict continued he could not take up the post.¹⁰⁸ It was this position that Hobart was now to occupy. It would have meant that Hobart would

106 Bernd Langensiepen and Ahmet Güleriyüz, James Cooper (trans. and ed.) *The Ottoman Steam Navy 1828-1923* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1995), p. 5.

107 BBA, HR.TO. 474/6, November 30 1867, Hobart's contract.

108 Hansard, HC Deb 22 July 1867, vol 188, col 1873.

have been able to benefit from incomes from both the Ottoman and British Governments at the same time if secrecy was maintained.

The British Government found out about it within weeks and acted accordingly. The Foreign Office had received a complaint from the Greek Government in December 1867 where Hobart was named.¹⁰⁹ It would appear that Hobart had visited Crete at the time. Hobart made no reference to this; however the British consul Charles Dickson wrote that Captain Hobart had arrived on an imperial steamer on 17 December.¹¹⁰ Woods, in his memoirs, described an incident in which Hobart provided support to Ali Paşa in dealing with a French vessel attempting to breach the blockade.¹¹¹ It has not been possible to confirm this story, however Ali Paşa had arrived in Crete on 3 October to implement reforms.¹¹² The Grand Vizier remained on the island until February 1868 and it is therefore very possible that Hobart met with him there.

During January 1868 there were three communications from the British Ambassador in the Ottoman capital, Sir Henry Elliot, which included references to people who had been on Crete recently. Given the anonymity of these reports, they may all have come from the same source. It is very probable that Hobart is responsible for at least some of the things reported. The first from 17 January quotes from an individual described as 'well qualified' to have a view. This individual held the Russians responsible for the continuation of the rebellion.¹¹³ Extracts from two newspapers published in the Ottoman capital, *the Levant Herald* and *the Turquie* appeared in reports from January 5 and 7. Both of these contained letters by Englishmen who had been to Crete and were commenting on the situation.¹¹⁴ If

¹⁰⁹ No.1. November 26, 1867, Mr Hammond to the secretary to the Admiralty, In *Correspondence Respecting Removal From H.M. Navy of Captain Hobart and His Reinstatement* Turkey No.10, 1877, C.1716, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1877), p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Enclosure1 in No.27, November 17 1867, Consul Dickson to Mr Erskine, in *Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete 1867-68* Crete, 3965-II, 1867-68, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1868) p. 24.

¹¹¹ Woods, *Spun yarn*, V2, p. 51.

¹¹² No.271. October 5 1867, Consul Dickson to Lord Stanley, *Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete*, p. 278.

¹¹³ No.37. January 4 1868, Elliot to Stanley, in *Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete*, p. 35.

¹¹⁴ Nos.38-39. in *Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete*, pp. 35-39.

some or all of the reports were from Hobart it is hardly surprising that the Admiralty heard what he was up to. Hobart was warned in early 1868 that if he accepted a position with the Ottoman Government he would lose his Royal Naval position.¹¹⁵ The consequence was Hobart's removal from the Royal Navy on 19 March 1868.¹¹⁶ The stated reason was that Hobart had breached Britain's neutrality and could therefore not remain an officer of the Royal Navy.

Hobart believed it was because he had taken a position that the Admiralty had intended for another, whom he left unnamed.¹¹⁷ The British Government's declaration of neutrality made Hobart's removal inevitable. He was restored in 1874 and again removed in 1877 and finally restored in 1885 with the honorary rank of vice admiral.

Hobart wrote to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 1868 to request that his position be made formal. In this letter he was clear that the reason for this was that the British authorities were asking what he was doing in the Ottoman capital. He also referred to newspaper articles which mentioned his presence there. Despite recognising that he was likely to lose his British Naval position, Hobart outlined his idea of what his role should be.¹¹⁸ He proposed acting as a Naval Counsellor to the Ministry of the Navy and supervisor of the Naval school and navy yard. The latter must have referred to the imperial docks where ships were constructed. He also offered to go wherever required. Did this open the possibility to active command or merely inspection? This letter also included pay and settling costs. Hobart requested a thousand pounds to help with settling in the Ottoman capital. He asked that his monthly salary be two hundred pounds, double what the unofficial contract offered and referred

¹¹⁵ No.18. February 15 1868, The Secretary To the Admiralty to Captain Hobart R.N. In *correspondence Respecting Removal* p. 6.

¹¹⁶ No.23, March 19 1868, the Secretary to the Admiralty to the Hon. A. Hobart, in *Correspondence Respecting Removal*, p. 8.

¹¹⁷ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 203.

¹¹⁸ BBA, HR.TO. 450/13, January 1 1868, Hobart to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

to the three thousand pounds to be paid him after five years of service. This letter also contained reference to delays in payment and a request to inform him if this was likely to happen. It would appear that, given Hobart was about to lose regular payments from the British Government, he needed both an increased salary from the Ottoman Government and assurance of regular pay.

It is not known if Hobart received a response to this letter, but given that there exists a second letter dated 12 January in the Ottoman Archives, one might assume not. This second letter was slightly different to the first. Here Hobart seemed to be more positive about the possibility of getting approval from the British Government to serve in the position of Naval Advisor, which he wrote that Fuad was good enough to offer him. Until then he proposed to remain on half pay and act in a private capacity. He listed his functions as attending the Admiralty to offer advice, inspecting ships, schools etc. as and when requested, and visiting anywhere when needed. This letter concluded with a request that Fuad Paşa confirm his appointment as soon as possible.¹¹⁹

In February Hobart was appointed to the Naval Command Council and a month later given the rank of *Mirliva* (commodore).¹²⁰ On the first of these positions Hobart wrote in a letter to the Secretary to the Admiralty that he had been appointed as 'member of the Board of the Admiralty and Director-General of Naval Schools.'¹²¹ Presumably they are one and the same position and the difference in terminology is down to translation. A document from the Ministry of the Navy indicated that it was thought that the rank of commodore was considered to be the most appropriate given his previous rank of post

¹¹⁹ BBA, HR.TO.450/14, January 12 1868, Hobart to Fuad Paşa.

¹²⁰ BBA, BOA, DUIT. 185/94, February 24 1868, Sultan's decree.

¹²¹ Enclosure in No.16. January 24 1868, Captain Hobart R.N. to the Secretary to the Admiralty in *Correspondence Respecting Removal*, P.6.

captain.¹²² Hobart's appointment to the Commission doesn't seem to have been publicly known until 1870 when an article appeared in the *Morning Post* announcing it.¹²³

In November 1868 the Grand Vizier wrote to the Navy Ministry requesting their view on the desirability of appointing Hobart to the "*Liman Muriyeti*" (also called the "*Liman Reisliği*" – both names appear in the file). This was the authority responsible for the management of Ottoman ports.¹²⁴ No response has been found. The appointment seems to have been made, as a document from March 1869 stated that according to the Sultan's order Hobart was appointed head of the "*Liman Nezareti*" (Ministry of Ports). The same document referred to the newly created Navy Reform Commission "*Kavanin ve Islahat-ı Bahriye Komisyonu riyaseti*" and Hobart's appointment to chair it.¹²⁵ In 1870 Hobart was replaced as head of the Ministry of Ports by Edhem Paşa, but was made supervisor of the training ship.¹²⁶ The same document referred to his continued chairmanship of the Naval Reform Commission. It is unknown when this appointment or that of the supervisor of the training ship came to an end. The next chapter will show how far any of these appointments made any difference to the running of the Ottoman Navy, or indeed to the amount of work Hobart was required to do.

Despite the lack of orders, we know that Hobart was appointed to command the blockade of Crete in December 1868. A document in the Ottoman Archives referred to the appointment of a "Cypher Telegraphist" originally "Barnesban effendi" (Sic.) although in a second document in the same file "Monsieur Harde" was appointed instead.¹²⁷ Whether either of these gentlemen ever reported to Hobart is unknown. The same document referred to Hobart as commander of the Cretan fleet. Earlier

¹²² BBA, DMA, MKT, 74/22, February 18 1868, From the Ministry of the Navy to the Grand Vizier, and BBA, BOA. DUIT 185/94 February 24 1868 Irade of the Sultan.

¹²³ *The Morning Post*, March 14 1870, p. 6 Column 1, "From the *Levant Herald*, March 2 1870".

¹²⁴ BBA, A.MKT.MHM 425/90, November 8 1868, Grand Vizier to Navy Ministry.

¹²⁵ BBA, A.MKT.MHM 438/35, March 11 1869, Grand Vizier to Navy Ministry.

¹²⁶ BBA, I.DH. 607/4233323 Za. 1286, February 24 1870, Hobart's appointment to supervise the training vessel.

¹²⁷ BBA, I.MTZ.GR 12/359, December 22 1868, Telegram on Hobart's Cypher.

in the same month Elliot had written to the Foreign Office discussing Hobart's appointment to the command.¹²⁸ More will be said about this in the next chapter. It should be noted however, that Hobart was promoted to *Ferik* (vice-admiral) during this command.¹²⁹ Shortly afterwards he requested the payment of 3000 pounds to help cover the costs of legal action taken out against him in Britain.¹³⁰ This sum had been promised at the end of his first contract but he requested early payment and the Ottoman Government agreed.¹³¹

In 1870 Hobart was still receiving a salary of 200 pounds or 21,891 Kuruş.¹³² Hobart's contract with the Ottoman Government was extended by five years in March 1871.¹³³ In 1874 he was awarded the Order of *Osmaniye* Second Class.¹³⁴ His contract was again renewed in 1876. According to Woods' account, he was given command in the Black Sea during the Russo-Ottoman War.¹³⁵ However, according to the account of that war in *The Ottoman Steam Navy* Hobart was not the commander.¹³⁶ Within a few months of the end of the war Hobart was again commanding Ottoman ships, this time supporting the military in Thessaly. In 1878 Sultan Abdülhamid II made use of Hobart in what might be termed his personal diplomacy (more will be said on this in chapter four) and as part of his public relations efforts. In 1879 Hobart was made one of the Sultan's Aides-de-Camp.¹³⁷ In 1881 he was again promoted and became a Marshal.¹³⁸ He fell ill in March 1886 and submitted his resignation to the Sultan in May.¹³⁹ The resignation was accepted in June but Hobart was permitted to continue to

¹²⁸ No.30. December 6 1868, Elliott to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, In *Correspondence Respecting Removal*, pp. 10-11.

¹²⁹ BBA, HR to 451/30, February 9 1869, Hobart Paşa to the Grand Vizier.

¹³⁰ BBA, HR To 451/53, April 15 1869, Hobart Requesting Payment.

¹³¹ BBA, I.DH, 591/41120, 22 M. 1286 4 May 1869, Decree Approving Hobart's Payment.

¹³² Derin Türkömer and Kansu Şarman, *Hobart Paşanın Analari* (İstanbul: T. İş Bankası, 2010), p. XIV.

¹³³ DMA MKT, 24814757 March 25 1871, Grand Vizier to the Sultan.

¹³⁴ BBA, I DH 692/48347, November 22 1874, Conferment of *Osmaniye* Second Class on Hobart Paşa.

¹³⁵ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 154.

¹³⁶ Langensiepen, *Ottoman Steam*, pp. 5-7.

¹³⁷ TNA, FO78/2967 No.300, April 5 1879, Malet to Lord Salisbury, Pera.

¹³⁸ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 212.

¹³⁹ BBA, I.HR, 338/21943, 26 S. 1303, May 30 1886, Hobart Paşa to the Sultan.

receive his salary regardless.¹⁴⁰ Hobart's death was reported in the second edition of *The Times* of 19 June, and was followed by a fuller obituary the following Monday.¹⁴¹ According to his own request, his body was returned to Constantinople for burial in the Haydarpasa cemetery in the Üsküdar (Scutari) district. He was given full military honours, which perhaps indicated the regard in which he was held by the Sultan.

¹⁴⁰ BBA, I.DH, 990/78168, 29 S. June 2 1886, Sultan's approval of Hobart's resignation.

¹⁴¹ *The Times*, June 21 1886, p. 8 column 1, "Death of Hobart Pasha".



ADMIRAL SIR HENRY WOODS PASHA.

[Frontispiece.]

Fig. II: Admiral Sir Henry Woods Pasha

Henry Felix Woods was born on Jersey in 1843. His father had been a master mariner. Woods' mother died when he was five. He entered the Upper Greenwich Hospital, a school which prepared children to enter the Royal Navy, in 1853 and according to his own account came first in each of the five annual examinations that he took.¹⁴² In 1858 he was sent to the training vessel *Rollo* which was stationed at Portsmouth. It was here that Woods befriended Prince Alfred – the Duke of Edinburgh – Queen Victoria's second son, whilst he was preparing to take his seaman's exams. Woods believed that this friendship assisted him during his career in the Ottoman Empire. He qualified as a Master's assistant, a stepping-stone to becoming a navigator. Woods' first posting was meant to be to the vessel *Boscawen*, however he never reached it and ended up on the *Vesuvius* under the command of Admiral Sir Charles Wise. This was not to Woods' liking as the admiral had a reputation for severe discipline. The following is a description of the punishment Woods received for informing a colleague from another ship of the time at which the admiral was to order a manoeuvre. It demonstrates both Woods' enjoyable writing style and adds further weight to Hobart's own recollections of naval discipline. This took place some twenty years after the story quoted earlier in this chapter.

Turning then to me, and pointing up to the 'mizzen-crosstrees,' "Go up there, sir, and stay till you're called down!" he shouted.

Up I mounted the rigging, nothing loathe, and, in fact, rather inclined to congratulate myself at first. ...

My joy, however, was of short duration. A tornado was brewing. I saw the black clouds gathering on the horizon, and knew what was coming. ...

Presently the squall struck with a howl, and I clung to the ropes about the mast as I felt the wind rushing past with a force that, with a less strong hold of the cordage about me, might have sent me overboard. It was a wonderful sight, with the sea whipped into foam which flew with the wind over the ship in clouds of mist like steam. It was over in a few minutes; at least the wind, the dangerous part of it, dropped, and then down came the rain, a veritable deluge.

It was as if the bottom had dropped out of an enormous tank aloft; and the canvas of the sloped awnings billowed under the great weight of the falling water. In a second or so I was wet through to the skin. The rain ceased, and then came a hail from below, "Masthead there!" "Aye, aye!" I promptly answered, as in duty bound. "Come down!" I reached the deck and stood before the grim-visaged Commodore. "Are you wet?" he asked. The answer was needless, for I looked like a drowned rat; but I meekly said, "Yes, sir."

¹⁴² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, p. 13.

"Then go and stand there till you are dry," he ejaculated, as he pointed to the 'main-bits'.¹⁴³

This was not the only occasion that Woods was 'mastheaded'. He used the opportunity presented by another punishment to draw a sketch of the vicinity of the French possession of Goree on the coast of West Africa, which got him a commendation from the admiral in command.¹⁴⁴

Like Hobart, Woods too had a tendency to be insubordinate. He recounted a story of a sailor being whipped for being the last man down after a manoeuvre because Woods had prevented him getting down sooner. As the man was about to be punished Woods told the admiral that the reason the sailor was down last was due to Woods' orders. When told to be quiet or risk being whipped himself, Woods responded angrily 'do it sir'.¹⁴⁵ Woods admitted to surprise at not being punished for his outburst and wrote that it was probably because the 'old man' liked him for his efficiency and the way he stood up to him.

The main function of *Vesuvius* was to deal with slave traders. Although they no longer fought back as they had done previously the chase was still exciting and the risks, at least in financial terms, could be great. If a ship flying the flag of the United States was stopped and searched and found not to be a slaver it was very possible that the reparations demanded by that government would be paid by the man responsible.¹⁴⁶ It was during this period that Woods later wrote he became a man as he learned to think for himself because of the responsibility given to him.

¹⁴³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, pp. 19-22.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

Woods left *Vesuvius* in 1860 and was then posted to a channel transport paddle wheel steamer, *Rhadamanthus* where he learned a lot about channel piloting. In November 1860 Woods transferred to *Charybdis* which, due to its roving brief, enabled him to visit much of the world during his three years service. On this vessel Woods was made responsible for paying off the debts of the gunroom which, due to a prolonged stay at Plymouth, the youth and inexperience of the men and the lack of a senior man in charge, had been allowed to grow rapidly. He was also appointed mate of the upper deck.

He described a number of interesting events including involvement in a colonial problem in Borneo where a chief had been influenced by relatives of the Sultan of Brunei and was creating difficulties for Britain's favoured ruler, whom Woods named as Rajah Brooke. According to Woods' account, a show of force brought the chief back into line.¹⁴⁷ Like so many others at the time, Woods believed that firm resolve would cow the Asiatic. As well as telling stories to his own credit, Woods does not hesitate recollecting ones that reflect his youthful short temper and overconfidence, particularly when wishing to show off to a lady. One such concerned a visit to the stables of the Tumagong in Singapore. Woods decided to accept the Tumagong's offer, extended to all the men of the ship, to make use of his horses. Unfortunately on his second visit the stable hands seemed unwilling to allow him to use the only horse that seemed available. Woods did not speak Malay and they did not speak English and so Woods concluded that they were simply being obstructive in their refusal to understand his desire for the horse. After a final pantomime threat he was given the horse and trotted off happily. Happily, that is until Woods made use of the whip to bring the horse to a gallop, when it jumped off the ground, arched its back and threw him. Apart from a loss of skin to one side of his face, Woods got away uninjured. He later learned that the horse was notorious for throwing riders and had actually killed

¹⁴⁷ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, pp. 69-71.

one of the grooms the day before.¹⁴⁸ The woman to whom Woods had intended to demonstrate his marvellous horsemanship thought him a hero for the minor injuries he had received. Shortly after this, Woods lost all his leave because he disobeyed an order to remain on the ship, in order to go ashore and bid farewell to another lady friend.¹⁴⁹ Interestingly he wrote that he was not reduced in rank because his superiors did not want to lose a capable mate of the upper deck.

Towards the end of 1860, Woods visited Japanese waters where he narrowly avoided the destruction of his ship when travelling through uncharted waters during attempts to locate Yokohama.¹⁵⁰ The following year his ship was sent to Canada in preparation for a possible war with the United States. When that did not take place, he remained in Canadian waters until 1862 when he was sent to the South Sea and spent time in Chile and Tahiti where he learned French. Much of Woods' time there seemed to have been spent in picnicking and dancing.

In 1863 Woods passed his examinations and was temporarily appointed acting second mate. In the same year he was transferred to *Tartar* which was bound for Japan as war with that country was expected. The Captain on this vessel, not liking the way in which Woods gave his orders and having his own ideas about the way they should be given, ensured that they were never on deck together. His duties were to assist the navigator and take the watch.¹⁵¹ Shortly after arriving in Yokohama, after another difficult arrival in Japanese waters, Woods was made second master of the gunboat *Kestrell* and in addition to his usual duties was given charge of the men's pay and medicine chest. In fact he seems to have been virtually the commanding officer as according to his own account the captain did not spend much time on board.¹⁵² Woods spent the next two years on this ship until she was sold to

¹⁴⁸ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, pp. 75-77.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 89-92.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 163-164

the Japanese navy. He was commended for the way he had kept the books and accounts of *Kestrell* by Admiral Kuper.¹⁵³ During this time he participated in the first horse race meeting in Japan and took up photography as a pastime. He also seems to have learned some Japanese to add to the French and Spanish that he already knew.

In January 1866 Woods joined *Cormorant* and for the next year he was her navigator. On one occasion he was forced to navigate the Namoa Straits without the chart as it had been lost overboard.¹⁵⁴ He also successfully negotiated the Naruto Passage, but all other British warships were forbidden to go through it. Woods then determined to return home in order to take his examinations so as to get a permanent promotion to navigator.

During Woods' return journey to England he met with his first Ottoman officer at Mauritius whom he described as becoming Aide-de-camp to the Minister of Marine the following year.¹⁵⁵ His name was not given; although later he was identified as Faik Bey.¹⁵⁶ Woods took his exams, which he passed, and was then sent to the Ottoman capital to be the second in command of the Ambassador's despatch boat, *Caradoc*. For the next two years, 1867-1869, Woods had little to do on this vessel. This was due to the fact that it did not have sails, and so no exercises could be done. In fact he wrote that they only had to keep her clean. All this, added to the fact that the captain spent so much time onshore, meant that discipline was hard to enforce. The commander however commented that he would be pleased to have Woods on his ship in future.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ TNA, ADM196/95, Henry Felix Woods Record of Service.

¹⁵⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, pp. 212-213.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁵⁶ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, ADM196/95, Henry Felix Woods Record of Service.

More important for Woods' future was his appointment to a Commission tasked with improving the approach to the Bosphorus from the Black Sea. His service on this Commission was due to a request from the Foreign Office made to the Admiralty. When after a few months he was promoted and due to leave his current ship, the Commission asked that he should be allowed to remain for a few more months so as to allow the work to continue.¹⁵⁸ According to Woods' memoirs he persuaded the committee to appoint a subcommittee to work out ideas to improve navigation and was made its chairman.¹⁵⁹ They agreed on the placing of a lightship at the mouth of the Bosphorus and of a series of beacons at various locations onshore to either side of the entrance. He spent time persuading the Ottoman officials of its necessity and during this process became, as he put it, 'persona grata' with the various officials.¹⁶⁰ This is supported by a request made to the British Admiralty to keep Woods on the staff of the Ambassador's despatch boat even after his promotion to Lieutenant in November 1867.¹⁶¹ It must have been around this time that the idea of employing Woods occurred to someone in the Ottoman Government. The lightship was anchored and Woods was commended by the Foreign Office.

In May 1869 the Grand Vizier, through the Ottoman Ambassador, made a formal request for five British officers to be transferred to the Ottoman Navy.¹⁶² These were two gunners, two navigation officers and one lieutenant. In July 1869 the Grand Vizier followed up his earlier request by asking for Woods by name.¹⁶³ Elliot responded in October expressing the British Government's approval of the

¹⁵⁸ TNA, FO78/1969, No.3, November 4 1867, Elliott to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, Commercial.

¹⁵⁹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, p. 270.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁶¹ TNA, FO78/1969, NO.3. November 4 1867, Elliot to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, Commercial.

¹⁶² TNA, ADM1/6127, May 18 1869, Musurus to Clarendon, Naval Instructors in Turkish Schools.

¹⁶³ BBA, BOA. I. HR. 241/14307, Enclosure 8, July 14 1869, Ali Paşa to Elliot.

appointment.¹⁶⁴ Woods wrote to the Admiralty in November requesting their approval for him to enter Ottoman service and to place him on half pay.¹⁶⁵

The contract which Woods signed made him an instructor in the Imperial Naval College on the island of Halki, one of the Prince's Islands, it also made him responsible for the training vessel.¹⁶⁶ According to Woods' account he was given the rank of "*kaymakan*", which he translated inaccurately as lieutenant colonel.¹⁶⁷ It was in fact senior captain and therefore a promotion.¹⁶⁸ His contract provided for pay of fifty pounds per month with fifty pounds settling costs. The duration of the contract was set at four years.¹⁶⁹

Despite the lack of any evidence his contract must have been extended. One job Woods had which was not mentioned in his memoirs was the position of correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* in the Ottoman capital. According to David Ayerst there is definite evidence of payments from the paper to Woods from 1878, although when they began and finished is not known.¹⁷⁰ It is doubtful that the Ottoman Government ever knew about this. Woods tells us that during the Russo-Ottoman war he was given responsibility for the defences of Constantinople, and two other key Ottoman towns, Batoum, at the eastern end of the Black Sea and Sulina, at the western.¹⁷¹ This allowed him to

¹⁶⁴ BBA, BOA. I. HR. 241/14307, Enclosure 7, Henry Elliot to Ali Paşa.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, ADM1/6098 NO.342. November 9 1869, Woods To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

¹⁶⁶ BBA, BOA. I. HR. 241/14307, Enclosure 1, October 22 1869, Contract signed between the Council of the Imperial Arsenal and Henry Woods.

¹⁶⁷ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ Langensiepen, *The Ottoman Steam Navy*, p. 197.

¹⁶⁹ BBA, BOA, I. HR 241/14307, Enclosure 1, October 22 1869, Contract Signed Between the Council of the Imperial Arsenal and Henry Woods.

¹⁷⁰ David Ayerst, *Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (London: Collins, 1971) pp. 196-201.

¹⁷¹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 36-38.

demonstrate the importance of torpedoes. At the same time, Woods says he was appointed to the prize court to deal with those allegedly attempting to break the Ottoman blockade of Russian ports.¹⁷²

This raises an interesting question concerning how Woods was treated by the British Government compared to Hobart. Hobart was removed from the Navy List for actively participating in a war in which Britain had declared itself neutral. Woods on the other hand was able to remain on half pay. He wrote to the British Ambassador, Austin Henry Layard, in June 1877 making the argument that, as he was a civilian professor and had no active role in the conflict, he did not breach Britain's neutrality and so should be allowed to keep his position with the Ottoman Government and his retired status in the Royal Navy.¹⁷³ Woods' argument was accepted and his request approved. One cannot help but wonder if Woods was not being a little disingenuous when he claimed not to have an active role in the conflict. To be fair to Woods, the letter in which he made his request included a comment on the arrears in his pay from the Ottoman Government and the financial strain this placed on a man with a wife and family to support.

After the end of the Russo-Ottoman War, Woods was ordered to assist in organising the leaving banquet for the British Naval squadron and its commanding officer Admiral Hornby.¹⁷⁴ He was also given responsibility for organising a training school in the use of torpedoes and was promoted to the rank of colonel.¹⁷⁵ No evidence was found for this in the Ottoman Archives. If he was promoted at this time it would have been to the rank of *Miralay* (Rear Admiral).¹⁷⁶ In 1882 Woods was decorated with

¹⁷² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 39.

¹⁷³ TNA, ADM1/6422, June 25 1877, Woods to Layard.

¹⁷⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 48.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁶ Langensiepen, *The Ottoman Steam Navy*, p. 197.

the *Osmaniye* fourth class.¹⁷⁷ In 1883 he was given the title of Paşa.¹⁷⁸ In 1887 he was given the second class of the *Osmaniye*.¹⁷⁹ In the following year he was given the Mecidiye first class.¹⁸⁰ At some point between 1886-1889 Woods was promoted again, to *Ferik*, (Admiral) and also Aide-de-camp. Although Woods does not provide the date, he wrote that it took place during one of the visits of the Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet to Constantinople. This was Woods' friend from *Rollo*, Prince Alfred. He visited the Ottoman Empire in September 1886.¹⁸¹ Although his promotion to Aide-de-camp took place in February of the following year, according to the same paper,¹⁸² Woods believed it was due to his friend that the promotion was gained.¹⁸³ Like Hobart, Woods was also used by Sultan Abdülhamid II as part of his personal diplomacy and in public relations. In 1908 Woods was retired from the Navy as part of the constitutional changes brought about by the Young Turk revolution and in 1909 stopped being an Aide-De-Camp when the Sultan was deposed. Apart from the majority of the First World War when he left the Ottoman Empire, Woods remained in Constantinople for the remainder of his life, and died in Monaco in 1929.

Hobart and Woods had a number of things in common. Both came from a naval background. This meant that, unlike most other people of the time, they had more experience of the world outside Britain. This perhaps opened their minds to the outside world and to the notion that there were other civilisations with different ways of doing things which were not necessarily inferior. Both worked in the key area of naval reforms. This is crucial given the fundamental need of the Ottoman Government to improve its military performance against the European Great Powers and particularly Russia. More

¹⁷⁷ TNA, FO78/3385 No.447. June 15 1882, Dufferin to Granville.

¹⁷⁸ *The Morning Post*, March 19 1883, p. 3 column 2, "General Foreign Intelligence, Promotion to the Rank of Pasha, Constantinople, March 16".

¹⁷⁹ TNA, FO195/1593, March 23 1887, White to Woods.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, FO195/1627, December 17 1888, White to Woods, Draft.

¹⁸¹ *The Morning Post*, September 23 1886, p. 5 column 7, "The Duke of Edinburgh at Constantinople Reuters' Telegram, September 21".

¹⁸² *The Morning Post*, February 23 1887, p. 5 column 6, "The Egyptian Question, Reuters' Telegrams, Constantinople, February 22".

¹⁸³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 86-87.

will be said on this shortly. Both Hobart and Woods occupied similar time frames and overlapped in their employment with the Ottoman Government in the 1869 to 1886 period. This is important as it means that they were sometimes involved in the same issues, which will become clearer in due course. For both men, working for the Ottoman Government was their last employment, Hobart falling ill in service and Woods retiring. Their lengthy employment meant that they became enmeshed in the Ottoman World and were more likely to see things from an Ottoman perspective. Whilst they considered British interests, it is clear that their loyalty was to the Ottoman Government. The rest of this thesis will show how far they were prepared to go in the service of their employer.

Chapter Three. Hobart and Woods: 1867-1878

The previous chapter provided a brief background to the Ottoman Empire and introduced Hobart and Woods and described their careers. This chapter covers the period from 1867-1878. The first part will deal with the Ottoman Navy, beginning with the specific roles they served as outlined within their contracts. The chapter will then go on to demonstrate that their functions were increased to include active command.

I. Reforming the Ottoman Navy 1867-1876

After Sultan Abdülaziz's accession in 1861, the Ottoman Navy rapidly increased in size so that by 1876 it was considered to be the third largest in Europe.¹ Nezir Akmese gives a figure of 36 warships of which 21 were ironclads.² According to figures given by McCarthy, expenditure on the Ottoman Navy between 1860-1876 was roughly 822,542,469.³ The table does not show the currency – but it is likely that it was Ottoman Pounds. It does not include the expenditures for some years during this period and it is therefore logical to assume that this is an underestimate. Abdülaziz's ship purchases have been described as based on a 'whim' and that they left the navy with 'warships it did not need and could not effectively use'.⁴ Davison described the navy as the 'Sultan's plaything'.⁵ Perhaps part of the reason for the expansion in the Navy during this period and the adoption of steam power and ironclad ships during the 1860s was the destruction of the Ottoman sailing squadron at Synope during the Crimean War. This naval disaster cost the Ottomans seven frigates and four light ships, its entire navy.⁶

¹ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 266.

² Handan Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 7.

³ Justin McCarthy, *The Arab World, Turkey, and the Balkans (1878-1914): A Handbook of Historical Statistics* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), pp. 180-187 (Table 9.1).

⁴ Bernd Langensiepen and Ahmet Güleriyüz, James Cooper (trans. & ed.), *The Ottoman Steam Navy 1828-1923* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1995), p. 3.

⁵ Davison, *Reform*, p. 266.

⁶ Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: an Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson, Education, 2007), p. 444.

If there was little planning in the ship purchases we might ask if there were any plans for how the Ottoman Navy was to be used. The lack of secondary literature does not help us. Few documents were found which directly mentioned Hobart or Woods with reference to the Ottoman Navy. We will therefore use the Navy's actual use as demonstrated through the prism of Hobart's and Woods' careers to help us. We should bear in mind that this will only tell us what the Navy was used for, and not whether this deviated from or coincided with Ottoman naval plans. That will have to wait for future research in the Ottoman Archives.

The previous chapter showed that Hobart was appointed to the Naval Command Council as part of his advisory role, and a report from this body from March 1868 made recommendations in the areas of recruitment and training. It referred to the difficulties in recruiting men for the Naval College from inland provinces, arguing that they were unable to adjust to sea life and recommending that conscripts should be taken from closer to the sea. It suggested that men should be recruited aged sixteen and should be trained for six years. This report referred to the need for practical experience by stating that cadets should have practical training from the third or fourth year of their training. Finally, it asked for three artillery trainers to be employed from the Royal Navy.⁷ Hobart's name was not on this report. However the recommendations, and particularly the one concerning the employment of British officers, would suggest that he was involved. Given the announcement of British neutrality, there was no concrete result until the end of the Cretan rebellion in 1869.

If the report from the Naval Command Council was the first report in which Hobart participated, there was a far more detailed report which he wrote alone a year later. This report was addressed to the Grand Vizier, Ali Paşa, but was not found in the Ottoman Archives. A copy of the report was forwarded

⁷ DMA, MKT. 74/56, March 18 1868, the Ministry of the Navy to the Grand Vizier.

to the Foreign Office by the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, and was located in the National Archives of the United Kingdom.⁸ The report was undated; however it is likely that it was written some time between March and April 1869. According to a letter written by Hobart to the Grand Vizier, he was planning to leave Cretan waters for Constantinople in mid March.⁹ It is most likely that the report was written on Hobart's return to the Ottoman capital. It is a detailed document with recommendations running to some 33 pages. Hobart took responsibility for the report saying that he had not consulted anyone and any errors in it were his responsibility. Hobart opened his comments with a few introductory remarks. Commenting on the men of the Ottoman Navy he wrote that the '...men are docile, well behaved, and are willing and able to learn their work as sailors and artillerists.' On the ships themselves he wrote that lots of money had been spent on them meaning that they were efficient.¹⁰

Hobart's report can be divided into two main categories: people, and stores and equipment. The first includes recruitment, training, practical experience, discipline and promotion, the second includes the purchase of stores and equipment and its maintenance. Taking recruitment first, Hobart repeated the advice given in the 1868 report. He described the current system as being '...defective...' and encouraged the recruitment of what he termed '...seafaring persons....' For Hobart this meant recruiting from provinces close to the sea.¹¹ We can assume that he also meant recruitment from islands under Ottoman sovereignty. The fact that this recommendation was repeated in two reports further emphasises the difficulties in manning the Ottoman Navy.

⁸ TNA, FO78/2074 No.202, April 29 1869, From Elliott, Constantinople. Hobart's report was not found with this letter, it is under the following reference: FO195/947 Embassy Files: Communications Received From The Imperial Porte 1869, 1870, 1871, Report on the General State of the Ottoman Navy By Hobart Pasha.

⁹ BBA, HR, TO 451/38, March 2 1869, Hobart Paşa to the Grand Vizier.

¹⁰ TNA, FO195/947, Hobart, Report, pp. 2-3.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 18.

On training, Hobart recommended the use of training vessels at each major port which could be used to train recruits who could be taken from ages fourteen to eighteen. As places became available in the navy proper, Hobart suggested that these trainees could be co-opted.¹² Each training vessel should have a specific officer for training in gunnery. Trainees should be encouraged to sign ten-year contracts with the navy. Moving to the Naval College, Hobart makes very few recommendations because he felt it was important to see how the reforms recently made by Said Paşa, with his own involvement, would work.¹³ It should be noted here that this Said was known as *İngiliz Said Paşa* (Said Paşa the Englishman), indicating his pro-British leanings. Hobart reminded the Grand Vizier that the college was of the 'greatest' importance and that it was one of the reasons for the lack of good officers.¹⁴

Continuing on the theme of training, Hobart recommended that every ship in the frigate class should have an English gunnery trainer who would have the rank of petty officer.¹⁵ These instructors needed to be under the command of a colonel who would also have responsibility for the general drill instructions for the whole Ottoman Navy. He pointed to the 150 and 300 pound Armstrong guns as an example of why this was a problem. He wrote that some officers had an idea of how these guns worked, whilst others did not.¹⁶ The foregoing suggests that Hobart was thinking more broadly than simply training for raw recruits, or even the Naval College, but also the need for continuous training to support officers and men when new equipment was purchased. As part of continuous training, Hobart recommended the creation of a live firing range in the Marmara Sea. He recognised that this would carry a cost, but nonetheless felt it was necessary.¹⁷

¹² TNA, FO195/947, Hobart, Report, p. 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

Although Hobart made reference to foreign, and particularly British, support with training, he also recognized the difficulties in relying on foreigners. He said that in war they might refuse to serve and, under current contracts, could give a month's notice.¹⁸ Clearly this would place the Ottoman Navy in a difficult position if it lost significant manpower. However, Hobart thought that the navy could be freed from foreign support, describing the native element as '...exceedingly apt in learning service....'¹⁹ He suggested that encouragement would be provided to the men '...if inducements of advancement are held out....'²⁰ He did not give any kind of time frame as to how long it would take to remove foreign support although for what he terms '...seamanship and gunnery...' he wrote that it would only take as long as training the officers and men.

Hobart recommended the creation of two squadrons, which he thought should be stationed away from the capital. Hobart argued that this would allow the crews to get experience in undertaking manoeuvres, something which he felt they were unable to do when located at Constantinople.²¹ Hobart did not indicate why being stationed at the Ottoman capital prevented ships from manoeuvring. However it might have been code for the Sultan's unwillingness to allow his newly purchased ships to go to sea. This will come up again shortly. There were also other reasons for this structural change. Hobart wanted to instil a chain of command in the Ottoman Navy. He felt that, under the existing system, each commander was able to do what he wanted even if a more senior officer was present.²² Hobart recommended that even if there were only two ships together, the commander who had been commissioned first would have seniority and would be entitled to fly a

¹⁸ TNA, FO195/847, Hobart, Report, pp. 25-27.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 5.

²² Ibid., p. 3.

special flag. This would mean that the other commander would be required to follow his instructions.²³ Linked to this was a recommendation that all orders be given in writing with a copy being kept by the officer issuing the order. This would change the current system of verbal orders, which in Hobart's view allowed for subordinates to ignore the instructions from superiors.²⁴ We shall see later in this chapter when looking at Hobart's own commands how justified the concerns he referred to around a chain of command were.

One aspect of the way in which the navy treated its men was that concerning promotion. He wrote: 'No encouragement is held out to officers who are active and zealous in the performance of their duty, for unless an Officer has high influence he has no chance of advancement.'²⁵ This presumably meant that officers would simply do what was necessary rather than working particularly hard. Hobart recommended the use of the French system of promotion. This would have meant three different ways to promotion. The first was through merit, the second via the current system of influence and finally through seniority, or longevity of service.²⁶ This system recognised the existing system and accepted that it would probably be difficult to get rid of it altogether. It did however allow for promotion through hard work and merit and for those who had shown loyalty to the navy through long time service. It should be noted that Hobart made it clear that if someone were promoted they had to be able to make what he terms 'progress' and be able to read and write '...his own language.' Hobart was not clear on this, although we may assume that he meant Ottoman Turkish. Later he also argued that all those who were recommended for promotions would have to pass examinations.²⁷

²³ TNA. FO195/847, Hobart, Report, p. 4.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Another change, which Hobart recommended, concerned the creation of a specific arm of the navy to deal with military transport. He argued that the existing system, by which the navy proper was used to transport men, damaged naval discipline.²⁸ He proposed a transport division of three or more ships arguing that some of the older paddle-wheel steamers had already been converted successfully and that it would be easy to do the same for ships already under construction.²⁹ This transport division would be commanded by a senior officer directly responsible to the Navy Minister. By arguing that this was the system used in England and France, Hobart was showing that if those navies considered the best in the world used this system, the Ottoman Empire, if it wanted to improve its navy, should do the same.

Whilst recommending the creation of a new military transport division for the Ottoman Navy, Hobart suggested that sailing ships should be retired from the service. He argued that they were obsolete, only being used as hospital ships in other navies.³⁰ Using them for the transportation of 'sand' and other supplies cost both time and money, sailing ships taking weeks and steam ships only days to make journeys. The men on these sailing vessels got no training.³¹ Hobart thought that the lack of discipline on board these ships damaged the discipline in the rest of the fleet.³²

Two further points relating to discipline should be made here. The first concerns the lack of a uniform structure of shipboard behaviour. That is, each ship followed its own routine. Hobart recommended the creation of a uniform code to which all naval vessels would have to adhere, which would outline when things like eating, washing, prayers etc. should be done during the day.³³ It should be noted

²⁸ TNA, FO195/847, Hobart, Report, p. 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

however, that Hobart did recognise that ships on special duty might need to deviate from this standard schedule. Second, Hobart recommended the outlawing of corporal punishment for officers and that anyone using it should lose their command or be severely punished.³⁴ It is interesting to note that in this context Hobart only wrote of officers. Given his comments in his memoirs on his own treatment in the Royal Navy, we might assume that Hobart was in fact against corporal punishment altogether. How were these new rules to be enforced? Hobart recommended the creation of an Inspector General directly responsible to the Navy Minister who would visit the various ships to check how well discipline was maintained.³⁵

This Inspector General would also have the function of checking the state of stores and equipment on board ships. This seemed to have been a particular problem as a number of examples of equipment allowed to deteriorate are given in Hobart's report. The state of compasses comes in for attention. Hobart believed that they were in such a poor state that ships were being placed at risk when moving at night.³⁶ The reason for this was not made clear in this report. However, the problems relate to how compasses were affected by the iron in the ships and so caused them to deviate. His solution was to ensure that Ironclad vessels were 'swung' every nine months and wooden vessels 'swung' every twelve.³⁷ This process of swinging ships was designed to correct for any deviations by comparing the actual location of north to that indicated on the compass. A second technical problem related to the deterioration of what Hobart termed 'chain cables'. These are the cables that connect ships to the anchor. Hobart argued that the lack of regular checks on these cables placed the ships in potential danger and that, had regular checks taken place on the *Hudavendigar*, it would not have suffered the

³⁴ TNA, FO195/847, Hobart, Report, p. 21.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

near disaster at Syra.³⁸ Hobart is not clear on what this near disaster was, but we can assume that the ship, whilst anchored, had nearly been blown on shore due to the cable breaking and the ship drifting.

Hobart suggested an additional check to materials on ships. He suggested that if a minor fault were found, an officer on the ship concerned should be tasked with undertaking an investigation; if the fault was major, an officer from the squadron should undertake the work.³⁹ More broadly, Hobart made the point that if problems were dealt with quickly rather than being left, they would not increase in size and would cost less to fix.⁴⁰ Hobart also had views on the protection of stores and equipment kept at the arsenal at Constantinople. Here he suggested that it was important that ships under construction, and other items, needed to be kept under cover to prevent damage.⁴¹

Clearly linked to naval equipment and stores is the matter of supply. Hobart was very critical of the existing supply system calling it 'deplorable.'⁴² He argued that when the navy needed something '...the inferior class of brokers...' quickly found out about it and worked in consort whilst appearing to be in competition with each other.⁴³ He further argued that any reputable merchants quickly withdrew from the process.⁴⁴ After delays, desperation led the Ottoman Government to purchase from whoever was left, meaning that the purchased item was generally of a poor quality and at an expensive price.⁴⁵ Hobart's solution was to introduce a similar tendering process to that used in Britain and France. Announcements of need in the press, followed by sealed tenders from the interested parties, which would contain written guarantees of ability to meet the requirement and the integrity of the

³⁸ TNA, FO195/847, Hobart, Report, p. 17.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁴² Ibid., p. 27.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

merchant.⁴⁶ The sealed tender could also include samples if required.⁴⁷ For purchases from abroad Hobart recommended that ‘...well known high standing firms...’ could be contacted by the government directly and invited to provide tenders.⁴⁸ For Hobart both of these together would mean that the Ottoman Government would not have to spend as much on purchasing material for the navy.

In conclusion, Hobart wrote the following: ‘I am sure the Navy can be made a first rate service, why should it not be?’⁴⁹ Given the recent near war with Greece, Hobart argued that there was even more importance for the reforms to take place as soon as possible.⁵⁰ It is unfortunate that no response has been found from Ali Paşa to this report. It is therefore difficult to say what reception Hobart’s report received from within the Ottoman Government. The British Admiralty did however make a brief comment on Hobart’s report. It was forwarded to the British Embassy by the Foreign secretary – the Earl of Clarendon -- and was meant to be used to guide the Ambassador in any conversations with the Ottoman Government.⁵¹ The Admiralty whilst emphasising that it was impossible for it to enter into great detail as they were not familiar with the workings of the Ottoman Navy (giving the specific example of promotions), did however say that, in general, they agreed with Hobart’s recommendations and that they were in accord with the way the British Navy was run. It would appear that Elliot did transmit this information to the Ottoman Government, as a document from late June 1869 was found in the Ottoman Archives outlining these views.⁵² This document also included the fact that Hobart had sent his report to the British Ambassador.

⁴⁶ TNA, FO195/847, Hobart, Report, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ TNA, Enclosure in FO195/919, No.181, May 29 1869, The Earl of Clarendon to Sir Henry Elliot.

⁵² BBA, HR TO 245/13, June 23 1869, Note from Layard to Ottoman Government on Hobart’s Report.

This is the most detailed report written by Hobart for the Ottoman Government that has been found. It is, however, possible to show that at least one of the points contained within it was made by Hobart elsewhere. In a letter to Grand Vizier Ali Paşa from Crete, dated January 1869, Hobart referred to the serious consequences that would arise if the compasses were not properly maintained and said that the cause is 'inexcusable negligence' in the Admiralty.⁵³ Hobart may well have discovered this problem during his command in Cretan waters. Perhaps the problem was a lack of knowledge and not laxity, a lack that would be solved through education and training. There is no indication that Ali Paşa responded to this letter.

Given that an Ottoman response to Hobart's report has not been found, there are two ways in which its consequences can be judged. One is to look at how the Ottoman Navy performed. The other is to look at other views of the Ottoman Navy, including those who saw it from the outside and compare them to Hobart's report. This chapter will do both, beginning with a number of reports made to the British Government over the years after 1870.

Between 1871 and 1872 Captain James Goodenough R.N. was sent on a mission to look at the navies of the European powers and report his findings to the British Government. By July 1872 he had reached Constantinople, as the Archives of the United Kingdom contain some correspondence from him along with a report from Woods on the state of the Ottoman Navy. As Woods was by this time employed by the Ottoman Government as a professor in the Naval College, we shall examine his report first. Woods opened his remarks with a grim appraisal of the Ottoman Navy. In his view the training was 'unprofessional' and, as a result, the '...knowledge is very far below that of the officers and men of any other service.' If this were not bad enough, he then wrote that the 'formidable appearance' of

⁵³ BL, Ali Paşa Papers, ADD MSS 46698 /154, January 28 1869, Hobart to Ali Pasha.

the navy did not mean it would be effective in a war and in fact would be a danger to itself.⁵⁴ The reason for this latter view will become apparent, as Woods' comments are considered in detail.

On recruitment for the navy, Woods' report said that the majority of the men continue to be drawn from provinces away from the sea and explained this by saying that the Greeks and fishermen in the coastal districts were exempt from conscription.⁵⁵ The report does not explain the reason for this. However, in his memoirs, Woods wrote about his understanding of military exemption saying that the non-Muslims continued to avoid conscription due to the opposition from the religious hierarchy.⁵⁶ Returning to Woods' report, the problem for him with conscripting men from inland provinces was that they had no experience of the sea and, added to the lack of practical training once on board, were totally unready for the reality of sea life. He gave the example of the men used on his steamer when working with the Bosphorus commission, who came down with seasickness.⁵⁷

Unlike Hobart, Woods described the Naval College in some detail. According to his report there were two levels to the college, elementary and nautical, in which the cadets spent three and four years respectively.⁵⁸ He did not describe the subjects taught in the elementary section. The nautical section included navigation, nautical astronomy, popular and theoretical astronomy, seamanship and English. All these subjects were taught by English professors. Woods taught tactics, prize law, signalling and the use of torpedoes.⁵⁹ He commented that, since 1869 – the year when he joined the college staff – the officers being trained there were getting a better education and that, because they were being taught in English, they now had opportunities to access more information.⁶⁰ This can be taken as a

⁵⁴ TNA, Enclosure4 in ADM1/6246 CAP G33, July 13 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir H Elliot, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Enclosure4 in Goodenough to Elliot, p. 9.

⁵⁶ Woods, *Spunyarn*, v2, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁷ Enclosure4 in Goodenough to Elliot, p. 9

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

positive comment on the reforms brought in by *İngiliz Said Paşa* with Hobart. According to Woods, Hobart had by this stage had the rules governing the Royal Navy translated, but had not been able to enforce their use.⁶¹ He is not precise on what these rules were, but, remembering Hobart's desire to regularise routines across the Ottoman Navy, perhaps they included such things as the Royal Navy's daily schedule. It can be presumed however that, as much of the training in the naval school was in English conducted by former English officers, the influence of English naval practice would increase.

On the negative side, Woods expressed concerns that the improvements in the Naval College were being put at risk by the Navy Minister, whom he describes as '...bigoted ignorant...', through his orders to cancel some of the subjects taught.⁶² One of these subjects concerned torpedoes, which we will return to later in this chapter.⁶³ Woods referred to a similar issue in his memoirs when he wrote of a disagreement between himself and one of the Governors of the Naval College – we can assume this was not *İngiliz Said Paşa* – who did not like the way he was teaching the cadets. The Governor, whom Woods described as 'an ignorant old Rear-Admiral,' did not like the fact that Woods was teaching the cadets '*captanlık*' or captaincy, subjects which he thought they would not need to know until they actually became captains. Woods pointed out that they couldn't be good captains if they were not first taught. The matter was left there and, according to Woods, he was left to get on with his teaching in the way he wanted.⁶⁴ This disagreement probably took place in 1874 as it was at this time that Woods spent at least some of his time on the training vessel, but, as we saw, reflected a feeling Woods had prior to this.

⁶¹ TNA, Enclosure4 in ADM1/6246 CAP G33 July 13 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir H Elliot, p. 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn* V2, p. 16.

Returning to the 1872 report, one major criticism, which echoes Hobart's earlier report, concerned lack of practical experience both for the trainee officers, and for officers and men once in the navy proper. Woods wrote that the training vessel for Naval College cadets was commanded by an 'old' officer who was not interested in the work and that Hobart had only been able to get it to sea twice during the past two years.⁶⁵ One development, which Woods did feel improved the training situation, concerned the creation of a gunnery-training vessel and, although the plan to offer increased pay to those who passed well was not carried out, gunnery had improved. Woods gave the credit for this ship to Hobart. Woods commented that the Sultan did not like his ironclad steam navy going to sea, which meant it remained at anchor in the Bosphorus.⁶⁶ Was this what Hobart was referring to in his own report and another reason for the creation of squadrons to be located away from the capital?

Like Hobart, Woods also referred to problems with compasses. He wrote that when he had begun teaching at the college he had persuaded the Governor to ask the then Minister of the Navy to permit him to repair the compasses and explain this process.⁶⁷ The result was that one or two ships were sent down to the Naval College to have this done, but no others. The explanation that Woods gave was that there was no comprehension of the importance of using what he called 'compensating cards and ... correct cards of deviation...', both of which were used to correct the errors in the compasses.⁶⁸ Woods pointed out that many, including the Minister, were not convinced of the usefulness of these things and that they thought that, in fact, they put ships in danger.⁶⁹ He added to that the Sultan's dislike of allowing his ironclad fleet to leave the capital. Returning to Woods' claim that the navy would be a danger to itself in combat, we can assume that the reason for this was the lack of practical experience, which included manoeuvring.

⁶⁵ TNA, Enclosure4 in ADM1/6246 CAP G33, July 13 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir H Elliot, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Captain Goodenough's report largely replicated the information provided by Woods; in fact it may well be possible that Woods had input into Goodenough's report. For that reason It will not be gone into here in too much detail, apart from showing a couple of examples of similarities, extra details provided by Goodenough and then differences. Goodenough repeated Woods' views on conscription from inland provinces and the consequence that the recruits had no prior experience of the sea.⁷⁰ Additionally though, Goodenough wrote that provinces close to the sea were required to provide around 1600 conscripts a year but that, due to '...Greeks and fishermen...' being exempt; they were a minority of the overall recruits. Like Woods, Goodenough commented positively on the gunnery ship.⁷¹ He provided the figure of one thousand sailors passing through the course annually. He also accepted Woods' conclusions on the state of the Naval College.⁷²

In addition to the above similarities, there were areas that Goodenough commented on that Woods did not. Like Hobart, Goodenough had a good opinion of the men describing them as '...sober, willing and industrious....'⁷³ However, Goodenough went on to say that 'the very same qualities of docility and forbearance, which are valuable in the men, become indifference and sloth in ignorant officers.'⁷⁴ In the very next sentence he explained the problem as being down to spending too much time on shore and not getting any practical experience. The lack of practical experience certainly fits in with both Hobart's and Woods' reports. According to Goodenough the best-managed ships in the Ottoman fleet were those under the command of captains who had previously had experience in the British

⁷⁰ TNA, Enclosure3 in ADM1/6246 CAP G33, July 13 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir H Elliot, pp. 1-2.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁷² Ibid., p. 7.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

Navy. He provided the example of six officers and a Hasan Paşa who had recently served in the Channel Fleet...⁷⁵ We shall come across Hasan again.

Before leaving Captain Goodenough altogether we need to examine a letter that he wrote to the British Ambassador a few days prior to his report, which in part dealt with torpedoes.⁷⁶ We have already seen that Woods had been teaching this subject in the Naval College, but had been ordered to stop. The letter from Goodenough provided a little more information. Although Woods' involvement was not mentioned, Goodenough referred to the employment of an American, Mr. Edenborough, who had undertaken some torpedo experiments. He wrote that the last experiment had taken place over two years ago and that nothing else had happened. According to Goodenough, the Ottoman Government thought that, as no other government had come to decisions about torpedoes, they could not either. This meant that no torpedo defence had been worked out and that it was not taught in the Naval College. This latter assertion fits in with what we have seen that Woods wrote.

It is necessary to pause here for a moment. This was the last detailed report that has been found prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman War. These two reports by Hobart and Woods are the only detailed reports of theirs which have been located. Woods' report was made for Captain Goodenough and not for his employer. This may have led to him being blunter in his views, than perhaps Hobart was in his. Neither report was found in the Ottoman Archives. This may mean that Woods' report at least was not known of by the Ottoman authorities. Hobart's clearly was. A few summary remarks might be useful here, before looking at some less detailed comments on the Ottoman Navy that have been found. All the reports so far argue that the Ottoman Navy had problems with its recruitment,

⁷⁵ TNA, Enclosure3 in ADM1/6246 CAP G33, July 13 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir H Elliot, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶ TNA, ADM1/6246 CAP G37, July 11 1872, Captain Goodenough to Sir Henry Elliot, Constantinople.

training, manoeuvring and other issues related to the lack of practical experience as a result of not allowing ships to go to sea regularly, and problems with supply and maintenance of ships and other equipment and stores. We know from the previous chapter that recruitment had been a problem and clearly this was the case at the time that these reports were written. The changes made in the Naval College are commented on positively, but warnings are given concerning the attitude of individuals within the Ottoman establishment. The raw materials within the navy, that is the men themselves, are favourably commented upon. Technologically speaking, the Ottoman Navy seemed to be able to get the latest equipment. One final comment here related to the image presented by the Ottoman Navy. Whilst it might have looked good on the surface this did not necessarily mean that it would be able to function in combat.

In June 1873 the commanding officer of the Mediterranean fleet, Vice-Admiral Hastings Yelverton, inspected the Ottoman ironclad fleet. In a letter to the Secretary to the Admiralty, he described how this came about and what he concluded.⁷⁷ Yelverton had met the Sultan as part of a public gathering at which the foreign Ambassadors were present. Abdülaziz asked Yelverton to inspect the ironclads and Yelverton met the Sultan again a few days later to report his findings. The squadron was anchored at the capital. In this report he commented favourably on the efficiency of the gunnery, but suggested that the crews would benefit from experience at sea. According to Yelverton the Sultan didn't 'appreciate' this and so he suggested that experience in wooden ships would be acceptable, to which the Sultan agreed.⁷⁸ Here we have first-hand evidence of the Sultan's unwillingness to allow the ironclads to go to sea, but agreed to allow the perhaps older wooden ships to be used to give his sailors experience. The vice admiral also referred to the importance of torpedoes in the defence of the capital and the need to train Ottoman naval officers in their use.⁷⁹ Separately Yelverton met with

⁷⁷ TNA, ADM1/6258 June 30 1873, Vice Admiral Sir H. Yelverton to the Secretary to the Admiralty.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

both the Grand Vizier and Minister of the Navy who gave him the opportunity to visit the naval dock, which appeared to have everything needed to repair ships and in which he saw the construction of a 4,000 ton ironclad vessel.⁸⁰ The concluding paragraph commented specifically on Hobart Paşa. Yelverton wrote that he, Hobart, had given him a lot of 'attention' and that the 'creditable state' of the ironclads was down to Hobart's '...zeal, energy, and intelligence....'⁸¹ He concluded by describing the Ottoman Navy as 'formidable' and ready to confront any potential difficulty and that this helped to maintain '...commercial confidence and foreign respect for the Turkish Government.'⁸² This latter point is interesting given what both Woods and Goodenough had written and perhaps emphasized the point concerning appearances being deceptive.

In June 1874 the Sultan gave an audience to another commander of the British Mediterranean fleet, this time Vice-Admiral Sir James Drummond. The *Dragoman* (interpreter) at the British Embassy, Alfred Sandison, attended the meeting and wrote a report of it which was forwarded to the Foreign Office in London in July.⁸³ Like the previous year's comments by Vice-Admiral Yelverton, Drummond was pleased with what he had seen of the anchored ironclads, describing their condition as 'satisfactory.'⁸⁴ Drummond was also pleased with the way the Ottoman Government had developed its ironclad fleet. The Sultan responded to Drummond's comments by saying he planned to increase the size of that part of his fleet.⁸⁵ Drummond was also complimentary about the ironclad vessel, which had been built in the imperial dock.⁸⁶ The vessel referred to could well be the one mentioned by Yelverton the year earlier as being under construction. He also expressed his surprise at both how

⁸⁰ TNA, ADM1/6258, June 30 1873, Vice-admiral Sir H. Yelverton to the Secretary to the Admiralty, p. 4.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁸³ TNA, FO78/2331 No.70, July 4 1874, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

⁸⁴ Enclosure in Elliot to The earl of Derby, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

much the docks had improved and the work that went on there, saying that they had ‘...exceeded all his expectations.’⁸⁷

Another area in which the admiral expressed his positive views was that of trade. He commented favourably on the number of ships at the capital.⁸⁸ In addition to complimenting the Sultan, Drummond made a couple of recommendations for improvements. He suggested the substitution of heavier guns for the existing ones and also the use of Woolwich-Armstrong gun carriages.⁸⁹ He then proceeded to discuss the importance of having sufficient spare boilers to account for the rapid deterioration of those on ironclad ships. Drummond was making a second point here. He was arguing that the Ottoman Government needed to be able to produce its own boilers because of the probability that if the empire went to war there would be difficulties in getting boilers from abroad.⁹⁰ This would appear to be linked to Drummond’s view that the docks and other naval establishments had insufficient space. Drummond had not had an opportunity to make reference to this as a response to the Sultan’s stated intention of purchasing land to increase the capacity of the yards.⁹¹ According to Sandison, the Sultan’s interpreter, “Sadoolah Bey”, had misinterpreted the Sultan’s comments on this point and so Drummond had not had the opportunity to comment further on the need for more land.⁹²

The conversation then moved on to the use of English engineers in the Ottoman Navy. Here again there may have been a mistake in translation, or the Sultan chose to misunderstand Drummond’s meaning. Drummond had said that although it was understandable for the Ottoman Navy to wish to dispense with foreigners and to use its own people, it was first necessary to ensure they were capable

⁸⁷ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2331, No.70, July 4 1874, Elliot to the Earl of derby, Therapia, p. 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 5.

⁹² Ibid, p.5-6

of undertaking the work. Clearly Drummond thought they were not yet at that stage.⁹³ The Sultan took it as him saying that the Ottoman engineers were ready.⁹⁴ The final topic concerned torpedoes. Drummond emphasised the defensive importance of these weapons that Britain had now largely adopted, and urged the Sultan to send someone trustworthy to Britain to learn all about them.⁹⁵

The conversation between the Sultan and Drummond dealt with a number of issues briefly. As a whole it lasted around forty-five minutes. According to Sandison, the Sultan remained ‘...much pleased and interested...’ throughout.⁹⁶ Given the Sultan’s stated commitment to further expenditure on the Navy we might conclude that those who claimed that palace expenditure was unmanageable may well be correct. It is also interesting that the Sultan’s interpreter was described as his ‘ex-interpreter’ at the beginning of Sandison’s letter.⁹⁷ It might be too much to assume that the reason for that was the two mistakes made during this meeting. Like the previous report by Yelverton, Drummond’s views were based on a brief examination of the squadron and clearly he had not had the opportunity to see the ships at sea. Drummond’s point on the continued need for British engineers reflects the slow pace in the Ottoman training programme in producing Ottoman engineers with the necessary skills. Clearly Hobart’s recommendation to remove the need for foreign support had not yet been met.

The previous chapter showed how Hobart was made responsible for the ports in 1869 and then replaced by Edhem Paşa in 1870.⁹⁸ It could be concluded that part of the improvement referred to by Drummond was due to him. Unfortunately no documents have been located from the Ministry of Ports with Hobart’s name on them. Woods’ memoir provides a possible explanation for this. He wrote:

⁹³ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2331, No.70, July 4 1874, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia pp. 6-7.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹⁸ See p.52 above

'...he could not hold these positions with the intrigues against him, and he relapsed into an advisor whose counsel was not wanted and seldom accepted.'⁹⁹ Just over a month after Drummond's meeting, the Ottoman Government came to an agreement with a number of foreign powers concerning the anchorage and port dues at the port of Constantinople. This agreement allowed the Ottoman Government to charge vessels wishing to anchor in the port in order to pay for the improvements of anchorage through the placement of buoys.¹⁰⁰ It must have brought much needed money to the Ottoman treasury not only through direct payments, but through increased trade. Hobart cannot be directly connected with this agreement either.

Recalling the advice given by Yelverton in 1873 concerning using the older wooden vessels to allow Ottoman sailors to get experience, there is some evidence to suggest that this happened. According to Woods' memoirs he participated in two training cruises on two different vessels in the mid 1870s. The first in the *Hudavendigar* and the second the *Muktar Sorugu*.¹⁰¹ The first of these vessels could well be the same ship mentioned by Hobart in his 1869 report. According to an article in the *Morning Post*, Hobart took it on a three-week cruise in 1870 during which he was impressed with the performance of the officers and men.¹⁰² When Woods cruised in this ship it was severely damaged in a storm *en route* to Tunis and was forced to return to Suda Bay to undergo repairs. Woods commented that he thought that the officers of the English naval training squadron were surprised at how quickly the Turkish men were able to complete the repairs.¹⁰³ The cruise was successfully completed, after which the ship was broken up. The second training vessel was sent through the Suez Canal and into the Red Sea.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, FO78/2336 No.44, August 15 1874, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

¹⁰¹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 12 and p. 25.

¹⁰² *The Morning Post*, December 28 1870, p. 3 column 3, "From *The Levant Herald* December 14 1870".

¹⁰³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

1876 seems to have witnessed a change in the Sultan's policy concerning his ironclad ships. Letters from the British Embassy from March and April suggested that the Ottoman Government was seriously considering sending ships under the command of Hobart Paşa into the Adriatic Sea.¹⁰⁵ Neither letter specifically referred to ironclads however. Since the reasons given for sending Hobart included trying to prevent supplies from reaching the rebels, it is inconceivable that the best available ships would not have been used. The rebels referred to must have been those in Bosnia and Hercegovina where an uprising had begun in 1875.¹⁰⁶ The second of these letters suggests two other reasons for sending ships to that region. The first was to see if a port at Antivari (Bar Montenegro) could be constructed to take warships. The second was to examine the possibility of deepening the river connecting lake Schutai to the Adriatic Sea. It would appear that ships were not sent. Perhaps this was due to Elliot's warning that Austria might see Ottoman ships in the Adriatic as a sign that the Ottoman Government did not trust Austria to guard the frontier properly and prevent arms from crossing it.

In May discussions seem to have taken place within the Ottoman Government about sending ships into the Black Sea.¹⁰⁷ This is the first clear evidence found in the Ottoman Archives of Hobart being given command of an Ottoman Naval squadron. The file contains four documents, the first being a report dated 28 May from Ahmed Paşa the Navy Minister to the Grand Vizier summarising the Sultan's verbal order giving Hobart command of this squadron. It outlined the purpose for sending these ships as being to fly the flag and respond to the presence of warships belonging to other nations. We can presume that these ships probably included Russian vessels. The report concluded by requesting permission for the dispositions as outlined in the second file.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, FO78/2456, No.283, March 13 1876, Elliot to Earl of derby and FO78/2457, No. 341, April 3 1876, Elliot To the Earl of derby.

¹⁰⁶ Feroze Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996), pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁷ BBA, I.DH. 723/50443, 7 Ca. 1293 May 31 1876, Imperial Warships Under the Command of Hobart Paşa.

The second file contained the proposed disposition of ships including those to be used as part of a mobile force under Hobart's command. They comprised the three ironclads *Asar-i Şevket*, *Necm-i Şevket*, and *İclaliye*, the frigate *Selimiye* and the steamer *Resmo*. The third file contained a letter from the Grand Vizier forwarding the Navy Minister's request and asking for the Sultan's approval. The final file contained the Sultan's sanction for the ship movements as outlined. This file was dated 31 May.

The orders raise some issues. All the ships listed in the second file are accompanied by their ostensible locations; for example, the *Asar-i Şevket* was located at Izmir and the *İclaliye* at Salonika (Thessalonica). It is perfectly possible that Ottoman ironclads had been sent to these locations at some point prior to this document. The upheavals in the Balkans would provide a reason for this. But if that is the case no evidence has been found. If these ships were sent away from the capital prior to the outbreak of rebellion in the Balkans it would raise questions around the Sultan's alleged unwillingness to allow his ironclads to be sent to sea. Given the comments of Hobart, Woods and Yelverton this is not convincing. We must therefore conclude that the ships were sent to these locations as a result of the Balkan upheavals. There is a second more intriguing issue. Was the Navy Minister attempting to slow down the proposed deployment to the Black Sea through including ships in the squadron which were stationed away from Constantinople in order to prevent it due to his concerns over a Russian response? One final issue concerns the preparations to depose the Sultan. Were these orders used as a cloak to hide the movement of ships with officers who were loyal to the Navy Minister and therefore involved in the plot? This thesis cannot solve the issues raised. It is most likely that the deployment of a fleet to the Black sea was an aggressive move on the part of the Sultan to attempt to counter the criticisms of him and his regime concerning their closeness to the Russian Embassy. Abdülaziz had been forced to depose his Grand Vizier on 11 May

at least in part due to that reason.¹⁰⁸ If that was the Sultan's intention he wasn't around long enough to implement his order as he was deposed during the night of 29-30 May and it was his successor Murad V who must have approved the order on May 31.

Hobart did not enter the Black Sea and according to a note from Elliot dated 1 June he was never going to.¹⁰⁹ That would appear to strengthen the notion that the movement of ships was more to do with a wish from the deposed Sultan. The note from Elliot stated that Hobart was to cruise the islands and the coast of Macedonia with his squadron. Rumours appeared in *the Morning Post* of May 30 saying that Hobart was to take a squadron in to the 'archipelago' (the Aegean).¹¹⁰

A three-month cruise did take place between the end of June and October. An English translation of Ahmed Paşa's orders to Hobart was sent to the Foreign Office by the British Embassy on 29 June.¹¹¹ It has not been possible to locate these orders in the Ottoman Archives. However, Elliot wrote that these orders were given to him 'confidentially' and it is very probable that they came directly from Hobart himself.¹¹² We can therefore assume that they are accurate. Articles 1 and 2 of Hobart's instructions outlined the route he was to take. Hobart's squadron was to go first to Salonika and remain there until the situation had calmed.¹¹³ After gaining permission from the Minister he was then to proceed to Volo, then Crete and finally cruise the Aegean Sea visiting various islands including Rhodes.¹¹⁴ Article 3 instructed Hobart to follow appropriate behaviour when making contact with any foreign ships during his tour.¹¹⁵ Article 4 allowed Hobart to practice manoeuvres and to conduct gunnery exercises,

¹⁰⁸ For the removal of the Grand Vizier see Davison, *Reform*, p. 326, for pro-Russian criticisms see pp. 313-314 and 324.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, FO78/2459, No.563, June 1 1876, Elliot to the Earl of Derby.

¹¹⁰ *The Morning Post*, May 30 1876, p. 4 Column 6, "Turkey, Constantinople, May 29".

¹¹¹ TNA, FO78/2460, June 29 1876, Elliot to The Earl of Derby.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹¹³ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2460, June 29 1876, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*,

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

specifically giving him authority over the captains in his squadron.¹¹⁶ He was also authorised to include any Ottoman ships he came across during his tour in any proposed manoeuvres, so long as he did not move them so as to prevent them from undertaking their assigned tasks. This clause also included the requirement to ensure that the men were properly dressed and fed by their captains to maintain morale. Articles 5 and 6 were both concerned with the impression that the squadron was intended to make on the inhabitants of the places it visited. The first instructed Hobart to ensure that when the men went on shore they were dressed properly, behaved appropriately and ‘...never visit such places that are not pertinent to H.I.M.’s troops....’¹¹⁷ The second referred to the ships and instructed Hobart to ensure they were in good order when entering port etc. so as to ensure ‘...the dignity and glory of H.I.M.’s Government and thereby produce a great many moral and physical benefits.’¹¹⁸ The orders concluded by instructing the admiral to telegraph for further instructions should any serious questions arise.¹¹⁹

Although these orders are detailed, they do not enumerate the ships which Hobart was given. Fortunately an earlier despatch from Elliot gave an indication.¹²⁰ Hobart had apparently been given *Aziziye* as his flagship. Accompanying this ship were two other similar ironclads, unnamed in this report, along with a wooden frigate *Selimiye* and a Corvette *Lebanon*.¹²¹ The same note indicated that four more ships, stationed at Salonica and Crete were going to join Hobart during the cruise.¹²² These ships were not named. Nonetheless it is clear that the squadron Hobart had was a relatively sizable one. It gave him the opportunity to enable his subordinates to gain practical experience at sea both by manoeuvring their ships individually and together and to practice firing their guns. They gave him

¹¹⁶ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2460, June 29 1876, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹²⁰ TNA, FO78/2459, No.605, June 8 1876, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

command over the other commanders in his squadron, which suggests that a chain of command had still not been properly established. The order concerning the proper treatment of the men by the commanders suggests that they were not always treated well.

No documents have been found in the Ottoman Archives either by Hobart discussing this cruise, or by anyone else. It is therefore impossible to know what the Ottoman Government made of Hobart's command. Fortunately Hobart wrote a letter to *The Times* in which he commented on his squadron. The context of this letter was as a response to an article summarising a speech by the Member of Parliament Thomas Brassey, at the Royal United Services Institute, who had said 'the Turks are practically without a cruising squadron....'¹²³ Hobart wrote that he had been given eight ironclads and a number of wooden ships with which to cruise the islands '...for the purpose of exercise and of showing the national flag among the numerous foreign vessels of war now in these waters.'¹²⁴ Commenting on the cruise he argued that despite the fact it was only made up of 'Turks', apart from himself, it should not be '...despised or ignored....' He concluded by saying that he thought the British officers of the Mediterranean squadron held the same view. Setting aside for a moment the slight exaggeration in Hobart's claims concerning the squadron under his command being made up of only Ottomans - he must have decided not to include the British engineers - and the understandable desire to defend his work and his employers in print, we can see that things were nowhere near as bad as Brassey had stated.

There is at least a little more evidence to support Hobart's view. *The Morning Post* published two articles in which this cruise was commented upon. The first from August described its popular

¹²³ *The Times*, June 24 1876, p. 13, column 6, "Our Mercantile Marine and Navy".

¹²⁴ *The Times*, July 13 1876, p. 10 column 1, "Letter from Hobart Pasha, The Turkish Fleet, Besika Bay, June 30".

reception in Crete and complimented the efficiency of the squadron.¹²⁵ The second article from October included an alleged comment from the British admiral in charge of the fleet who witnessed the Ottoman squadron as it returned. He was complimentary about the way the Ottoman ships remained in their assigned positions as they sailed.¹²⁶ Apart from the stated reason for the cruise as outlined above in Hobart's orders and letter, it is safe to assume that another reason was to do with general war preparations and the need to give the ships of the navy time to become ready for sea.

So, we have seen that Ottoman naval squadrons did go to sea in 1876. Some improvements from the period that Hobart and Woods were employed do appear to have taken place. It has already been shown that Hobart at least was given responsibilities that went beyond the purely advisory role that he was originally assigned. Taking command of the training vessel in 1870 and of course the Ottoman squadron in 1876 were both examples of this. But neither of these was the first example of Hobart, at least, being given active naval command. For that we need to return to the Cretan blockade of 1866-1869.

II. Commanding the Ottoman Navy

Between 1866 and 1869 the Ottoman Government tried to deal with a movement on Crete which was intended to join the island with Greece. Crete had participated in the Greek revolution earlier in the century, but a concern for Ottoman naval security led to its maintenance under Ottoman sovereignty. There had been other attempts on Crete to join the island to Greece with no success. The efforts between 1866-1869 were the most serious to that date due to the Ottoman Empire's apparent

¹²⁵ *The Morning Post*, August 18 1876, p. 5 column 3, "From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, August 10".

¹²⁶ *The Morning Post*, October 28 1876, p. 6 column 1, "Turkey, From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, October 10".

inability to deal with the upheavals on the island. This was largely caused by the empire's failure to make the naval blockade it had declared on 13 September 1866 effective. The two ships *Arkadian* and *Panhelenion* became notorious during the first two years by regularly breaching the Ottoman blockade and transporting both men and supplies from Syra (Syros) and other ports in Greece to various locations in Crete. The consuls of the Great Powers on the island as well as in Greece and the Ottoman Government all knew what was happening.¹²⁷ *Arkadian* was captured in 1867 and incorporated into the Ottoman Navy with the name *Arkadi*.¹²⁸ But the blockade running continued. There were two Ottoman naval squadrons stationed in Cretan waters, known as the European and Asian squadrons.¹²⁹ Either because of the insufficiency of ships, or due to flawed tactics, these squadrons were not able to stop the blockade running. Supplying the ships with quality coal was a problem throughout the blockade, which perhaps adds another explanation to the lack of naval success.¹³⁰

Due to the navy's inability to prevent supplies coming to Crete, each time the army seemed to be succeeding the revolution broke out again. Ömer Paşa was given command of the military forces on Crete in 1867 and attempted to deal with the rebels. Despite some successes the revolution continued. The following year, command was given to Hüseyin Avni Paşa who introduced a series of blockhouses designed to consolidate Ottoman military gains and ensure that the army was able to respond quickly to any events.¹³¹ This meant that revolutionaries were pinned down to specific locations and the revolution was gradually diminished.

¹²⁷ Three Parliamentary Blue Books were published on Crete, as well as one on the breakdown in Greco-Ottoman relations.

¹²⁸ No.249, Consul Dickson to Lord Stanley Canea Crete, August 24 1867 in *Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete 1867*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1867), pp. 253-254. For the incorporation of the *Arkadian* into the Ottoman Navy see Langensiepen *Ottoman Steam*, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

¹³¹ James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), p. 213.

Running parallel to the military efforts to end the revolution were also peaceful efforts. The Ottoman Grand Vizier, Ali Paşa, went to Crete in 1867 in order to find a bureaucratic settlement designed to both calm the islanders and show to the Great Powers that the Ottoman Government was taking the problems on Crete seriously. These offers included a significant amount of autonomy, remission of taxes and exempting the island from military conscription. These were rejected by the revolutionaries who insisted on the island's union with Greece.

Running alongside the empire's efforts to deal with the Cretan revolution and Greece's support of it, were separate but interconnected external factors. The European Great Powers took an interest in the events on the island. Some of them were guarantors of the existence of Greece, whilst also guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. If this was not sufficient reason to be interested, there were also the individual interests of the Powers to consider. Russia for example had supported separatist movements among Orthodox Christians including Greece earlier in the century. Separate to the foregoing, was increased public pressure on their Governments when news of the suffering of Christians became known. This led to ships from the French, Italian and Russian navies evacuating refugees from Crete to Greece despite Ottoman opposition.¹³² According to Rodogno the French stopped removing refugees after they discovered that Russian ships were in fact bringing men and weapons to the island.¹³³ The hope of the British Government was to prevent the problems in Crete leading to a general discussion of the Eastern Question.¹³⁴ However, Pottinger Saad has shown how British confidence in the Ottoman Empire was damaged to the point where support for it was

¹³² Kenneth Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt" *Slavonic and East European Review*, 35: 84, (December 1956), pp. 74-94, p. 87.

¹³³ Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815-1914* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 133-134.

¹³⁴ Bourne, "Great Britain", p. 94.

more to do with the lack of anything else to replace it.¹³⁵ This would prove to be serious for the Ottoman Government.

Towards the end of 1868 the Cretan crisis entered its most serious phase when the Ottoman Empire issued an ultimatum to Greece threatening to expel all Greek citizens from Ottoman territories and break off diplomatic relations as a protest at the Greek Government's breach of its stated neutrality. At approximately the same time, December 1868, Hobart was finally given command of the Ottoman blockade. It might be asked why the Ottoman Government took so long to give the command to someone who clearly had the necessary experience given his own past record as a blockade-runner? A possible answer might be that elements within the Ottoman Government were uncomfortable in giving such a sensitive command to a non-Ottoman. Perhaps the Ottoman Government did not wish to exacerbate the situation internationally by having someone who might be capable of stopping the blockade running, whether undertaken by Greek ships or anyone else. Alternatively it might simply reflect a chaotic approach to managing the Ottoman Navy.

No orders have been found outlining the Ottoman Government's instructions to Hobart Paşa. It can be assumed, however, that he was given enough latitude to do what he thought was necessary, and sternly warned to avoid getting the empire into trouble with the Powers and particularly Russia. In his memoirs Hobart stated that he thought he was given the command because he knew 'something' about blockades.¹³⁶ A critic of Hobart described it as '...set a thief to catch a thief...', which Hobart thought was '*ben travato*' (appropriate if untrue).¹³⁷ According to a despatch from the British

¹³⁵ Ann Pottinger Saab, "The Doctors' Dilemma: Britain and the Cretan Crisis 1866-1869" *The Journal of Modern History*, 49: 4, (December 1977), pp. 1383-1407.

¹³⁶ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 203.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Ambassador in the Ottoman capital, Hobart had been told by the Governor-General of Crete, that if the supplies could be stopped for three weeks, the revolution would end.¹³⁸

Hobart had clearly entered Cretan waters by 9 December as he issued a declaration to the Powers outlining his position on that date. He told them that any ship which attempted to breach the blockade risked seizure and that any vessel firing on an Ottoman ship, risked being treated as a pirate.¹³⁹ Five days later, on 14 December, Hobart in his fifty-gun frigate, the *Hudavendigar* accompanied by the despatch vessel *Izzeddin* located the *Enosis*. According to his memoirs Hobart had thought that it was likely that the *Enosis* would attempt to return to Syra (the Greek port from which many of the ship's journeys began) in the early morning; and in order to more easily locate the blockade-runner, decided to steam towards the port. The tactic of entering port in the early morning was one that Hobart himself had used during his blockade running in the American Civil War.¹⁴⁰ Hobart's gamble paid off and his two vessels intercepted the *Enosis* not far from the port.

There is a difference in the accounts given by Hobart and the Captain of the *Enosis*. According to Hobart's memoirs, and his letter to the Governor General on Crete and the *Nomarch* (Governor) of Syra, the ships met six or eight miles from the port.¹⁴¹ According to the Captain of the *Enosis*, the interception took place half a mile from Syra.¹⁴² The difference may appear academic, but is important given what happened next. Returning to Hobart's account as contained in his memoirs, and with more

¹³⁸ No.29 Mr Elliot to the Earl of Clarendon, January 5 1869, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture of Diplomatic Relations Between Turkey and Greece, 1868-69* 4116, 1868-69, (London: Harrison & Sons, 1869), p. 84.

¹³⁹ Enclosure2 in No.36, Notification from Vice Admiral Augustus Hobart December 1868, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁰ Kephæet, *Hobart*, pp. 204-205.

¹⁴¹ For the correspondence between Hobart and the *Nomarch* and the statement by the captain of *Enosis* see TNA, FO78/2025, No.495, December 18 1868, Elliot to Lord Stanley, Constantinople. For Hobart's letter to the Governor General of Crete, see TNA, FO78/2049, December 14 1868, Dickson no recipient given, Hobart to Avni Pasha.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

details in the letters previously referred to, his vessel fired a blank shot to request the *Enosis* colours. In response the *Enosis* fired live shots causing some damage to Hobart's flagship. According to the Captain of the *Enosis* the Ottoman vessels fired live shots to which his vessel responded. Both accounts agree that the *Enosis* ran into Syra with the Ottoman vessels in pursuit.

Returning to the dispute concerning the location where the ships first met, this now becomes crucial. If it had happened in international waters, Hobart was perfectly within his rights to request that the *Enosis* identify itself by firing a blank shot. Had it taken place in Greek waters, his position may have been somewhat more uncertain. It would certainly have brought criticisms from pro-Greek elements in Britain, although, given that Hobart's own blockade-running vessel had been searched by an American ship whilst in British waters, we can probably conclude that legally speaking he may have been correct. Wherever the location and whoever fired live shots first, the *Enosis* was now blockaded in the port of Syra with Hobart outside in command of two naval vessels.

In judging the reliability of Hobart and Captain Stourmeli it is fair to point out here that the Captain was completely open about what he had been doing for the past few days in his report to the *Nomarch*.¹⁴³ It may well be that the men on the *Izzeddin*, seeing the ship that had been causing so much trouble, fired live shots when blank shots should have been used. Alternatively, it is just as likely that the Greek ship fired live shots in response to blank ones. Both superior officers, presumably knowing the law of the sea, would not want this to be known. As there are no independent accounts of what happened, it is almost impossible to know which was the truth. The British Ambassador in Constantinople described the assertion that the Ottoman vessels had fired first as 'improbable.'¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ TNA, FO78/2025, No.495, December 18 1868, Elliot to Lord Stanley, Constantinople.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Unlike on a previous occasion when Ottoman vessels managed to chase and imprison a blockade-runner in a Greek creek, Hobart was determined to remain where he was.¹⁴⁵ In his communications with the *Nomarch* and the Governor General of Crete, he made it clear that he would not leave unless the *Enosis* was arrested and put on trial as a pirate, and a guarantee was given to him agreeing that the vessel would not be allowed to leave until the legal process was concluded, or, alternatively, handed over to him. Given that Hobart had little trust in the local Greek authorities, his real intention must have been to prevent the *Enosis* from leaving for as long as possible, starving the rebels on Crete of all supplies. According to Hobart's memoirs, this was made more likely as two other blockade-runners were also in the port at the time.¹⁴⁶ Part of the reason Hobart's evidence is strengthened is that he is prepared to admit that the blockading of these two vessels was perhaps stretching the law of the sea a little. However, he argued that as the Greek Government had been obviously sending provisions to the rebels in Crete, a little stretching on his part was acceptable.

Over the next few weeks, negotiations took place involving Hobart, the *Nomarch*, various consuls and the Captains of the Austrian and French naval ships at Syra. At the same time Hobart had requested reinforcements from Crete and by 16 December his squadron was made up of five vessels providing him with overwhelming naval superiority.¹⁴⁷ The Greek Government having been informed by the *Nomarch* of the events of the 14th, decided to send the frigate *Hellas* with instructions either to order Hobart to leave Syra or to force him out.¹⁴⁸ According to the British Consul in Athens, Mr Erskine, there

¹⁴⁵ See: No.176 p. 155 and No.177 p. 158, in *Correspondence Respecting The Disturbances in Crete 1867*.

¹⁴⁶ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 206.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, ADM1/6049 No.28, December 17 1868, Captain Armytage to Vice-Admiral Lord Clarence Paget, HMS Prince Consort.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, ADM1/6049 No.330, December 16 1868, Captain Armytage to Vice-Admiral Lord Clarence Paget, HMS Prince Consort.

were two ships sent, but he thought they were no match for Hobart's vessel.¹⁴⁹ According to Hobart, the *Hellas* had no powder on board and this was the reason why they did not fire on his vessel.¹⁵⁰ It is more likely that the Greek commander, looking at the odds, decided that discretion was the better part of valour. Whatever the reason, no conflict took place and the *Hellas* returned to Athens on the 22nd, Hobart remaining outside the port as before.

One of the proposals Hobart made whilst the *Hellas* was present was that the Greek ship should take the *Enosis* under guard to Athens. His terms included the disarming of the *Enosis*, the removal of any men not necessary to sail her and insistence that they both leave in early morning so that they would reach Athens before dark.¹⁵¹ This proposal was refused by the *Nomarch* who ordered the *Hellas* to return to Athens. A second proposal that Hobart made included the suggestion that the French and Austrian vessels present should escort the *Enosis* to Athens but this too was refused.¹⁵²

Eight days had now passed and no agreement seemed imminent on what should happen to the *Enosis*. It would appear from the documents in the Blue Books that whilst the British Government didn't wish to get involved, they felt that Hobart was, in fact, in the right. Elliot went so far as to say that the Ottoman Government's actions towards Greece were justified given the obvious support given to the *Enosis*.¹⁵³ By 2 January 1869 some kind of investigation into the events of the 14th had begun, as a report from Consul Lloyd at Syra included some information on the questioning of both Hobart and the Captain of the *Izzeddin*. But the *Nomarch* still refused to provide Hobart with the guarantee which

¹⁴⁹ No.60, Mr Erskine to the Earl of Clarendon, December 16 1868, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p.36.

¹⁵⁰ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 209.

¹⁵¹ Enclosure2 in No.89, December 21 1868, Vice-Admiral Hobart Pasha to Captain De Meyer, *Hudavendikiar*, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 68.

¹⁵² Enclosure3 in No.89, December 21 1868, Vice-Admiral Hobart Pasha to Captain de Meyer, *Hudavendikiar*, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 68.

¹⁵³ No.62, December 18 1868, Mr Elliot to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, in *Correspondence Respecting rupture*, p. 52.

he required and the blockade continued. At the same time there is evidence of the surrender of the rebels on Crete to the Ottoman authorities due to the lack of supplies.¹⁵⁴ The rebels were sent to Hobart and he seems to have been responsible for landing them in Greece and handing their arms over to the local authorities.¹⁵⁵ Hobart finally received the written guarantee from the *Nomarch* agreeing to his demand that the *Enosis* be held until the legal proceedings were concluded on 18 January 1869, and after a further couple of days of discussion he left on 21 January for Crete with all his vessels minus the *Izzeddin* which, according to Hobart, was expecting correspondence from the Ottoman capital.¹⁵⁶ Although, we might wonder if Hobart had not left the *Izzeddin* in order for it to keep an eye on the *Enosis*, the blockade of Crete seems to have been over by 27 February.¹⁵⁷ The cause of the crisis, the *Enosis*, seems to have remained at Syra until June when it left under the Greek flag having apparently been transferred to the Greek Navy.¹⁵⁸

It is clear from the foregoing that Hobart's blockade of the *Enosis*, and incidentally the other two blockade-runners, led to the end of the Cretan rebellion. Hobart's squadron blockaded Syra for more than the three weeks that the Governor-General of Crete had said he needed to end the rebellion. The question must be asked why was Hobart successful at enforcing the blockade when his predecessors had failed. Hobart was clear in believing that it was because they were not versed in international maritime law and that laws were being created by foreigners to fool the Ottoman authorities.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ No.105, December 29 1868, Mr Elliot to the Earl of Clarendon, Constantinople, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁵ For the rebels, see Kephæet, Hobart, pp. 209-210 and arms see, Enclosure1 Consul Lloyd to Mr Erskine, Syra, January 2 1869, in No.134, *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁶ No.180, January 28 1869, Mr Erskine to the Earl of Clarendon, Athens, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 186.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, FO78/2102, February 27 1869, Consul Dickson to the Earl of Clarendon.

¹⁵⁸ Photiades Bey to Ali Pacha, June 9 1869, Athens, No.1568, in Sinan Kuneralp, (ed)., *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on the Eastern Question* V2, part 2, "The Cretan Uprising 1866-1869 September 1867 to June 1869" (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009) no page number.

¹⁵⁹ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 200.

Woods thought something similar.¹⁶⁰ His report from 1872 argued that Ottoman captains were not confident to assert their rights for fear of getting the Ottoman Government into trouble with the Great Powers.¹⁶¹ It would appear that they were correct. Although at the time naval law was not as codified as it was to become later, the Declaration of Paris, signed shortly after the Treaty of Paris in 1856, provided a good basis for Hobart's opinion. It said that a blockade, to be considered valid, had to be effective (which meant a sufficient force had to exist to make an attempt to breach it hazardous to the blockade-runner).¹⁶² It did not mean that a successful breach of the blockade invalidated it. Hobart made the blockade effective by gambling that he could successfully guess where the *Enosis* was going to be located, approaching it in international waters, and imprisoning the three blockade-runners in Syra. Was it legitimate for him to have done so? The ships were blockade-runners, as proven by the Captain of the *Enosis*' own account, and they had allegedly fired on a man-of-war undertaking its lawful duties. Given that fights had taken place between Ottoman vessels and Greek-registered ships, Hobart's account of this becomes more likely. It could therefore be concluded that they had placed themselves beyond the pale. Hobart during his blockade running days had never opened fire on a man-of-war, but had always sought to use guile to elude the patrolling ships. Of course Hobart was lucky in that he came across the *Enosis* at the right time, but he placed himself in the correct position to be lucky. It is interesting that in a letter to *The Times* from 1873, Hobart wrote that he had asked for a lawyer to be sent to him after he had forced *Enosis* into Syra.¹⁶³ Both the French and Austrian governments decorated Hobart as a reward for his efforts shortly afterwards so it can be assumed that they too thought he was correct -- or at the very least, were grateful to him for ending a dangerous situation which had the potential to lead to a war amongst the Great Powers. His employers obviously

¹⁶⁰ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 152.

¹⁶¹ TNA, Enclosure4 in ADM1/6246, CAP G33, July 13 1872, Goodenough to Sir H. Elliot, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶² <http://www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/105>

¹⁶³ *The Times*, August 26 1873, p. 7 column 6, "Letter From Hobart, A Lawyer Afloat, Hobart Pasha, Admiral, Interlaken, Aug. 23".

approved of his activities as he was promoted to *Ferik* (Vice-Admiral) and later had his contract extended.¹⁶⁴ As Hobart puts it, in reference to blockade-running, ‘...success ... is a virtue...’ and the successful end of the Cretan revolution removed a potential source of international conflict.¹⁶⁵

Two further points on Hobart’s involvement in this event can be made. They both come out of the letter which Hobart wrote to the Governor General of Crete. The first concerns the sighting and pursuit of *Enosis*. He wrote: ‘I am very annoyed at not having captured the *Enosis* this morning, that would have been effected if a good watch had been maintained....’¹⁶⁶ This is the only reference to this concern of Hobart’s and it would seem to suggest that, at the least, discipline was not quite what it should have been. Perhaps it was simply frustration on the part of Hobart, which led him to write this way. It certainly suggests that more work needed to be done on board ships to improve the general behaviour of the crew. Perhaps it was just as well that a direct conflict between the Ottoman ships and the *Enosis* did not take place. Had it done and had the *Enosis* been captured or destroyed, a tense situation may well have developed into a Greco-Ottoman War.

The second is more intriguing. The letter concludes with the following: ‘I am sorry to say that the *Efseri Nasset* (sic.) has never re-joined me, and I am quite unwell due to lack of food.’¹⁶⁷ This is the only reference that Hobart makes to this ship or to problems with his supplies. It would appear that this vessel was responsible for resupplying Hobart’s vessel and that its disappearance had led to a problem. Why had this ship left Hobart and not returned. Was it an attempt on the part of its commander to damage Hobart, a foreigner? Was the ship called away for other duties, perhaps by the

¹⁶⁴ BBA, HR to 451/30, February 9 1869, Hobart Paşa to the Grand Vizier.

¹⁶⁵ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 172.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, FO78/2049, December 14 1868, Hobart to Hussein Avni Pasha, p. 7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Governor General on Crete, or the naval authorities there, and Hobart not told about it? Without further evidence it is impossible to be certain.

Clearly there are issues raised by the above that Hobart referred to in his 1869 report. Officers ignoring the orders of superiors and the lack of written orders both may explain the loss of his supply ship.

This fits in with the part of Hobart's report written within a couple of months, which dealt with the chain of command and how orders could be ignored. Problems with the watch fit in with problems with training and practical experience.

The command structure is something that will come up again later with reference to the Russo-Ottoman War, but it would appear that often ships that were supposedly under the command of an officer on the spot might be given orders directly by the Navy Ministry in Constantinople. Or perhaps the captain got lost, thus confirming again problems with navigation. Presumably given that Hobart received reinforcements within a few days, they resupplied his ships. The disappearance of Hobart's supply vessel may also suggest a problem with provisioning an Ottoman force located at some distance from the capital. This vessel seems to have returned at some point as Consul Dickson refers to it being part of Hobart's squadron, when he returned to Crete.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore the provisioning problem must have been solved as in Hobart's memoirs he referred to giving the rebels sent to him a good feed before landing them on Greek soil.¹⁶⁹ Both of the points above link well into the difficulties with training and with the lack of experience of Ottoman sailors due to the lack of experience at sea. But Hobart's successful blockade also emphasized what could be done by an experienced commander.

¹⁶⁸ No.185, February 22 1869, Consul Dickson to the Earl of Clarendon, in *Correspondence Respecting Rupture*, p. 190.

¹⁶⁹ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 210.

From the end of Hobart's blockade of Crete in early 1869 until the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, there were relatively few opportunities for active commands for either Hobart or Woods and no conflicts to participate in. 1876 has already been shown to indicate a change in Ottoman naval policy through the deployment of a large Ottoman squadron. Part of the reason for this has already been mentioned but there were other reasons which were to have serious consequences for the Ottoman Empire. Before looking at Hobart and Woods' involvement in the 1877-1878 war we should look at these.

We have already seen that part of the reason for Sultan Abdülaziz's deposition in 1876 was the perception that he and his Government were too close to the Russian Government. In a similar vein many Muslims believed that the Sultan had given way to Great Power pressure too easily when responding to the rebellions in Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1875 by accepting the proposals by Austria and Russia in the Andressy Note.¹⁷⁰ If all that wasn't sufficient to weaken the Sultan's position with his Muslim subjects, there was also a common belief that the Sultan continued to receive his debt repayments when others who were also owed money did not.¹⁷¹ Bankruptcy not only damaged the Sultan internally but the standing of the empire externally as well. An Ottoman official, Ismail Kemal Florya, was sure that the Ottoman Empire's image had been damaged in Britain by the suspension of repayments.¹⁷² These investors then put pressure on the British Government, who could not afford to be seen to support a government that had defaulted on its debts due to its own perceived extravagance.

¹⁷⁰ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 14.

¹⁷¹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 314.

¹⁷² Ismail Kemal Florya, (Ed. Falaschi R), *The Memoirs Of Ismail Kemal Florya* (Tirana: Toena Publishing House, 1997), p. 107.

Sultan Abdülaziz was succeeded by Murad V, who proved to be unfit to rule and was himself replaced by Abdülhamid II on 31 August. This Sultan would rule for the next thirty-three years and as most of Hobart's and Woods' careers occurred during his reign we should spend a little time describing him. As the second son of Sultan Abdülmecid it was unlikely that he would inherit the throne. This may mean that he was not as prepared as he might have been. He did not have much of an education.¹⁷³ He had left the empire on one occasion, and that to participate in a ceremonial tour of Europe with his uncle and brother. This must have affected the then Prince. The impact of the deposition and death of his uncle, the deposition of his brother, and the assassination of government ministers shortly after his own accession had a significant effect on his character. For the rest of his reign the fear of deposition and/or assassination was a major consideration. Bearing this in mind however, he possessed innate intelligence as well as caution. As has already been shown, he continued many of the reform efforts begun long before his reign and he self-consciously modelled himself on the reign of his great grandfather Mahmud II when he said:

I made a mistake when I wished to imitate my father Abdülmecid, who sought reforms by permission and by liberal institutions. I shall follow in the footsteps of my grandfather Sultan Mahmud. Like him I now understand that it is only by force that one can move the people with whose protection God has entrusted me.¹⁷⁴

This quote indicates another principle that underpinned Abdülhamid's reign, that of autocracy, based on his own understanding of his position as both Sultan and Caliph. Throughout his reign he tried to keep power in his own hands and prevent the growth of any alternative sources. Although this was not obvious during the first couple of years of his reign. He was forced to promulgate an Ottoman Constitution and Parliament in December 1876. By 1878 he had prorogued the Parliament and it is arguable that his personal rule can be said to begin in that year. He showed himself to be a capable ruler who was often underestimated by his opponents. Finally, he could inspire loyalty and affection

¹⁷³ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

from his subordinates and could be equally loyal to them. Given the longevity of both Hobart's and Woods' careers it is arguable that this applied to them.

Returning to 1876, rebellion broke out in the region of Philippopolis (Plavda Bulgaria) in June and although it was dealt with, war with both Serbia and Montenegro followed quickly. Finally, as a result of being successful in the wars with Serbia and Montenegro the Russian Government issued an ultimatum and began to mobilise.¹⁷⁵ The Ottoman Government accepted the Russian ultimatum but in retaliation to Russia's mobilisation she did the same.

Returning to the rebellion in Philippopolis, the harshness of the suppression of it led to huge criticisms of the Ottoman Government across Europe but particularly important for this thesis, in Britain.¹⁷⁶ In Britain the suppression of the rebellion became known as the 'Bulgarian Horrors' after the pamphlet of the same name written by the ex-Prime Minister William Gladstone and published on 5 September.¹⁷⁷ Reports began appearing in newspapers beginning with the *Daily News* in June, concerning Ottoman massacres of Christians. Some of these accounts were extremely lurid including such allegations as impalement (see chapter five). The fact that Muslims had suffered at the hands of Christians, and that much of the press coverage was exaggerated made no difference. Taking the Battak massacre as an example, Tetsuya Sahara shows how Bulgarian accounts of the massacre bore no resemblance to what appeared in the British media. The accounts began with Sir Edwin Pears in the *Daily News*, and then Januarius MacGahan in the same paper and a published report by consul

¹⁷⁵ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁶ Richard T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (Hassocks: Harvester Press Archon Books, 1975), R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question: a Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics* (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1962) and Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815-1914* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁷⁷ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, p. 88.

Eugene Schuyler of the United States.¹⁷⁸ What these three all had in common was a bias which made them predisposed to believe negative stories about the Ottoman Government and Muslims.¹⁷⁹ A consequence of this was a growth in the belief that Balkan territories, particularly Bulgaria, should be split away from Ottoman authority. Or to put it another way, the creation of national states in which Christians would make up the majority would solve the religious problems, and if this meant Muslims leaving Europe, so be it. The pamphlet by ex-Prime Minister Gladstone was perhaps the first which argued for this.

If the rebellion in Crete undermined popular support for the Ottoman Empire in Britain, the events of 1876 may be argued to complete that process. Furthermore, it made it impossible for any British Government to offer the Sultan support. In December a conference met in the Ottoman capital to discuss the situation in the Balkan provinces of the empire. The British representative was the Secretary of State for India, Robert Cranborn (Marquess of Salisbury). According to David Steel's biography Lord Salisbury had allowed his 'contempt' for the Ottoman Government to become known to all the delegates.¹⁸⁰ The conference failed due to the Ottoman Government's refusal to accept the recommendation from the Great Powers. A second set of proposals were rejected in March 1877 -- which made war with Russia inevitable.¹⁸¹ Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire on 24 April.

It has already been suggested that at least part of the reason for Hobart's training cruise in 1876 was as part of war preparation. In the same year it appears that there was increased interest in torpedoes on the part of the Ottoman Government. It is at least conceivable that part of the reason for this

¹⁷⁸ Tetsuya Sahara, "Two Different Images: Bulgarian and English Sources on the Batak Massacre" in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin* Eds. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011), pp. 479-510.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 506.

¹⁸⁰ David Steel, *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 115.

¹⁸¹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, pp. 16-17.

increased interest was also general war preparations. Perhaps Woods' constant pressure had led to recognition on the part of the naval authorities that torpedoes might be of use after all. Where the American expert, previously mentioned, had failed, Woods succeeded and in 1876 twice demonstrated the use of a torpedo. Although given that both demonstrations involved static torpedoes it might be more accurate to refer to them as mines. The first time was in front of the navy's senior staff, the second in the presence of the Sultan himself and showed how easily a frigate could be destroyed.¹⁸² Both mines were successfully exploded despite the difficulty in getting the necessary materials. This would seem to suggest that the decision to demonstrate the power of mines was taken quickly and with little thought, as there seem to have been no actual materials available, meaning that Woods had to improvise everything. Unfortunately no evidence for Woods' involvement in Ottoman torpedoes has been found in the Ottoman Archives.

An article in the *Manchester Guardian* commented that mines were being laid in the Bosphorus in late 1876 as part of general war preparations.¹⁸³ The demonstration before the Sultan seemed to have taken place less than a month later, according to another article in the same paper.¹⁸⁴ Both articles would appear to have been written by Woods himself, given their bylines. As a result of these demonstrations Woods wrote that he was given command of the coastal defences of the empire and was asked to draw up a report outlining what would be needed.¹⁸⁵ That report has not been found.

¹⁸² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 31-35.

¹⁸³ *The Manchester Guardian*, November 17 1876, p. 8 column illegible, "The Proposed Conference: From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, November 9".

¹⁸⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, December 15 1876, p. 5 column illegible, "Russia and Turkey: Affairs at Constantinople, by Telegraph, via Bucharest, From Our Special Correspondent, Constantinople, Thursday".

¹⁸⁵ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 36.

Woods also wrote that he was sent to the port of Sulina (Rumania).¹⁸⁶ The town is located at the mouth of the Sulina branch of the Danube where it meets the Black Sea.¹⁸⁷ His job was to place mines to defend the town. He decided to place small ones on the beaches, buried in the sand, which were designed to explode when stepped on, perhaps an early example of an anti-personnel mine. He also placed larger mines in the canal preventing Russian boats from getting too close. The success of these efforts was demonstrated by the fact that Sulina held out throughout the whole of the war. According to Woods both Russians and Ottomans had a healthy respect for each other's torpedo defences and avoided going too close to each other's shores.¹⁸⁸ As part of Woods' torpedo work, he seems to have taken it upon himself to provide misinformation to a number of correspondents of newspapers on the locations of torpedoes.¹⁸⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that he was ordered to do this by the Ottoman Government or the Sultan personally. This was not the end of Woods' involvement in torpedo warfare as will become clear later.

No orders have been found in the Ottoman Archives related to Hobart or Woods and the Russo-Ottoman War. It could be that this represented both a defensive attitude and confusion in the high command about the strategy which the navy should pursue in the war, not to mention who should command the various squadrons. The previous chapter made it clear that Woods thought that Hobart was in command of the Ottoman Navy in the Black Sea. At the time the British Ambassador, Austin Henry Layard, thought the same.¹⁹⁰ He went on to write that some senior Ottomans were opposed to the use of Hobart in this role because they were jealous of the Sultan's 'favour' shown to the

¹⁸⁶ Woods, *Spunyarn*, p. 38.

¹⁸⁷ See map on next page for the location of Sulina and other Ottoman ports on the Black Sea.

¹⁸⁸ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 33.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁰ Sinan Kuneralp, (Ed)., *The Queen's Ambassador to the Sultan Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880* (Istanbul: the Isis Press, 2009), p. 77.



Fig.III Black Sea Antique Engraved Hand-Coloured Map, drawn & engraved by J. Rapkin. (Publisher: London H. Wrinkles, J. Rapkin. 1851).

Englishman through the appointment, and therefore tried to prevent Hobart actually taking it up.¹⁹¹

One of those Ottomans might well have been the War Minister Redif Paşa. Hobart wrote a couple of critical private letters to Layard in May 1877. In the first Hobart expressed pleasure in the criticisms made of Redif by the Ottoman Parliament.¹⁹² It had condemned the War Minister and others on 23 May for the mismanagement of the war.¹⁹³ In the second Hobart described him as a 'rogue' and also believed he was a 'traitor'.¹⁹⁴ If Redif had prevented Hobart from taking active command his dislike for the Minister may be understandable, even if the language may be thought to be injudicious. A letter from Layard to the Foreign Secretary from July indicated that Hobart had only recently been given an active command.¹⁹⁵ This may well have had something to do with Redif's fall from office, which was reported in the *Morning Post* on 2 August.¹⁹⁶ Hobart had been summoned to see the Sultan in mid July, who during the conversation had suggested to Hobart that '...influences adverse to the employment of foreigners...' had prevented Hobart going to sea, but now that would change. Furthermore the Sultan said that he had ordered Hobart to be given a squadron to command and that he should be free to do as he wished. This latter injunction, if true, adds further evidence to a lack of overall control or a distinct plan. It also suggests a willingness on the part of the Sultan to interfere directly with subordinate officers, bypassing the naval staff.

This offer of command by the Sultan may well have been what Woods was referring to. But he went on to write that Hobart's squadron was weakened because many of his ships were called away to

¹⁹¹ Kunalalp, *Queen's Ambassador*, p. 7.

¹⁹² BL, Layard Papers, Add Mss 39,012/338, May 10 1877, Hobart to Layard, date illegible, place illegible.

¹⁹³ Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 194.

¹⁹⁴ BL, Layard Papers, Add Mss 39,012/342, May 31 1877, Hobart to Layard.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, FO78/2577, No.792, July 17 1877, Layard to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

¹⁹⁶ *The Morning Post*, August 2 1877, p. 5 column 4, "From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, July 25".

other duties, specifically the transport of Ottoman soldiers.¹⁹⁷ If this was the case it would explain some of the confusion. It must also reflect the assassination of the previous War Minister Hüseyin Avni Paşa in late 1876 and a degree of uncertainty that that event caused. Furthermore, what is clear is that the war was won and lost not at sea but on land.

Based on various sources including Langensiepen's *The Ottoman Steam Navy*, it is possible to suggest four related tasks which the Ottoman Navy performed during the war.¹⁹⁸ It supported the Ottoman military; fought any Russian ships in the Black Sea; maintained a blockade of the Russian coast; and transported civilians from Russian territories to the Ottoman Empire. The first of these tasks included transporting Ottoman soldiers, supplying them and providing them with covering fire. This was crucial due to the lack of land based transport links. The second task was made both easier and harder due to the lack of a serious opponent with which to deal. The Treaty of Paris had forbidden any Russian naval ships in the Black Sea. It had done the same to the Ottoman Empire. However, the possession of the Bosphorus meant that it was far easier for the Ottomans to quickly remilitarise the Black Sea. Russia had unilaterally abrogated the clauses concerning the Black Sea in 1871, but by 1877 there had not been sufficient time to build up a Russian Naval squadron. The Russian Government took a decision not to send its Baltic fleet to the Mediterranean presumably because of concerns around a British response. This left the Russians using smaller steam ships which could be transported overland to Sevastopol and other Black Sea ports. These ships were small and fast and so presented difficulties for the larger Ottoman ships attempting to stop them -- as will become clear later. The maintenance of a successful blockade would have the effect of damaging the Russian war effort by cutting off Russian trade through the Bosphorus. The fourth task was to remove refugees fleeing the Russian Army in the Caucasus.

¹⁹⁷ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 154.

¹⁹⁸ Langensiepen, *Ottoman Steam*, pp. 5-7.

Clearly if ships are being withdrawn to transport or support the military there will be fewer available for other naval tasks. There is some indication that the navy was subordinated to the military in other ways as well. Prior to Hobart's appointment to command a squadron in the Black Sea, he had been on the Danube. In his memoirs he explained his presence there as being due to him being ordered to investigate what could be done to defend the river.¹⁹⁹ He later recounted his own ideas about using small ironclad vessels to attack the Russian military on the Rumanian side of the Danube and to destroy a bridge located at Galatz.²⁰⁰ But the military refused to follow his ideas and those of other (what Hobart called) 'competent' officers. He went so far as to describe those in authority as pig-headed, obstinate and ignorant.²⁰¹ Hobart departed the Danube in what can best be described as a fit of pique, taking his small steamer *Rethymo* (picture on next page) through the newly laid Russian mine fields and directly under the Russian guns.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Kephart, *Hobart*, p. 215.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 216.



Fig.IV Russo-Turkish War. Hobart Pasha, Commander of the Turkish naval forces, descending the Danube, in April, in a despatch boat, to inspect the Russian fortifications.

Layard described how Hobart had presented a plan to the Sultan, which would have led to the destruction of a bridge over the Sereth (Siret) river, between Rumania and Ukraine.²⁰³ He had also suggested an Ottoman assault on the Russian town of Anapa located near to the Sea of Azov.²⁰⁴ Hobart's recommendation was not accepted however, and despite his opposition a landing was made at Tchamchira (Ochamchire Georgia).²⁰⁵ According to Layard, Hobart had thought that it would not be possible to cut off Russian communications, that the promises of rebellion from the Caucasian tribes could not be relied upon and that it would be a military disaster.²⁰⁶ He also thought that there would be unfortunate consequences for the civilian population of the Caucasus.²⁰⁷

If the above was indeed Hobart's view, events proved him to be accurate. The Ottoman expeditionary force at Tchamchira became pinned down and, whilst the Russians were unable to do it much damage due to the presence of Ottoman ships, the army was unable to proceed inland. By the end of August Hobart, after a reconnaissance, decided to withdraw the force. On this occasion he worked much better with the military under the command of Süleyman Paşa. During the night of 31 July-1 August, the army was withdrawn, the supplies being taken off the day before.²⁰⁸ According to Layard, Hobart had said that the generals in command were drunk and ensured that they were the first on to his ships.²⁰⁹

The navy was also used to resupply the army based at Batoum.²¹⁰ Both of these add to the impression that subordination to the military interfered with other naval tasks. A final example of the navy

²⁰³ Kunalp, *Queen's Ambassador* p. 77.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

²⁰⁵ See map on p. 110. Tchamchira is referred to as Escuria.

²⁰⁶ Kunalp, *Queen's Ambassador*, p. 77.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ *The Times*, August 18 1877, p. 10 column 1, "The Turkish Fleet in the Black Sea, From A correspondent With Hobart Pasha, Tchamchira, July 1".

²⁰⁹ Kunalp, *Queen's Ambassador*, p. 136.

²¹⁰ See map on p. 110 for the location of Batoum.

supporting the army was when it removed Süleyman Paşa's army from the coast of Albania and transported it to take up positions to defend the Ottoman capital. According to Hobart's account, 40,000 men were transported a distance of 800 miles, which he described as '...a feat ... unheard of in the naval annals of this century.'²¹¹

In order to do the first task successfully, it was necessary to clear the Black Sea of Russian ships so that they would not be able to disrupt Ottoman naval movements. This had the benefit of ensuring that Ottoman coastal vessels transporting merchandise could continue to move safely. As part of efforts to dissuade Russian steamers from venturing out, Ottoman vessels were tasked with patrolling the Black Sea and pursuing any Russian vessels. At various times Hobart seems to have had a squadron under his command, known as the flying squadron. An article in *The Times* from August, suggested that this squadron was first put together in July and comprised four ships: a frigate, two armoured corvettes and a despatch boat capable of taking Spar (contact) Torpedoes.²¹² His flagship was the *Asar-i Tevfik*. This would fit in with the Sultan issuing orders for Hobart to be given a command, mentioned earlier. Between 22 July and 15 August, the make up of this squadron seems to have changed. By this date he seems to have had only one other vessel with him, namely *Fethi Bulend*. This would further confirm Woods' view on ships being withdrawn from Hobart's command.

On 15 August, Hobart chased the Tsar's own yacht, which had been converted into a man-of-war, into Sevastopol.²¹³ The Russian vessel was just too fast for Hobart's ships. Part of the difference in speed may have been caused by the mixed quality of his own coal.²¹⁴ However, in a memorandum, Hobart praised the captain of the *Fethi Bulend* for the way in which he responded when both ships were fired

²¹¹ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 214.

²¹² *The Times*, August 14 1877, p. 8 column 1, "From An Occasional Correspondent, Heraclea, July 22".

²¹³ TNA, Enclosure, Memorandum by Hobart Pasha, in FO78/2584, August 30 1877, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

upon by the guns of the fortifications.²¹⁵ The second engineer was also praised for maintaining the engines when his superior was off the ship during the chase.²¹⁶ According to Layard, Hobart had said that the fire from all the guns at Sevastapol had been concentrated on a single point over which any ships would have to travel and, had they not been fired early, his ships might have been sunk.²¹⁷

It is said that the first casualty in war is the truth. A couple of weeks prior to Hobart's chase, another had taken place with a different converted Russian steamer. On this occasion a lot was written in the press and for that reason, and because it offers a possible way of interpreting Russian claims on other events in the war, it will be looked at in some detail. On 23 July the Russian steamer *Vesta* armed with mortars and torpedo boats encountered an Ottoman ironclad between twenty-five and thirty miles from Kustendje (Constanta Romania). The Ottoman vessel concerned was not identified. According to the account published in *The Times* there followed a considerable battle in which the smaller, faster vessel survived numerous shots from the ironclad and only withdrew when, the main gun on the Ottoman vessel being damaged, she withdrew. The commander of the *Vesta* described the outbreak of a fire on his vessel, the damage done to the ironclad, the injuries done to some of his crew and the dead on his own ship.²¹⁸ Another reason given for withdrawing was the presence of other Ottoman vessels in the vicinity.

An alternative version of this story appeared in a letter published in the same paper in September by Captain Manthorpe, a subordinate of Hobart's.²¹⁹ He identified the Ottoman ship as the *Fethi Bulend*,

²¹⁵ TNA, Enclosure, Memorandum by Hobart Pasha, in FO78/2584, August 30 1877, Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Therapia, p. 6.

²¹⁶ Ibid, p. 7.

²¹⁷ Kuneralp, *Queen's Ambassador*, p. 145.

²¹⁸ *The Times*, August 8 1877, p. 4 column illegible, "The Merchantman and an Ironclad, From Our Prussian Correspondent, Berlin, August 4".

²¹⁹ *The Times*, September 3 1877, p. 10 column 3, "Letter to the Editor, Re. "A Merchantman And An Ironclad, Manthop Bey, Chief of the Staff, Black Sea Fleet, Varna, Aug. 21, 1877".

an ironclad corvette with four twelve-inch guns in two pairs on the main deck. It was presumably the same *Fethi Bulend* that was in Hobart's squadron. It was on its way to Batoum with military supplies when it sighted the *Vesta*. The *Fethi Bulend* gave chase for four hours and the closest distance it reached was 4,000 yards, when the *Vesta's* rudder had been damaged. The *Fethi Bulend* fired a number of shots but due to the distance the crew did not realise how much damage was done. The Ottoman vessel was completely undamaged and the pursuit was given up after the *Vesta's* rudder was repaired and the distance increased. The Ottoman commander decided that his original mission was too important. The edition of *The Times* for the following day quoted a letter written by Hobart to *the Levant Herald* where he too denied the original story in *The Times* and said that the *Fethi Bulend* had been hit just once with a spent shot.²²⁰ In a letter to Layard, Hobart described the account as a '...frightful lying report.'²²¹ It is unclear as to which report Hobart meant. He did not specify. Given that the date on the letter to Layard was added later it could well be the report in *The Times*, but it could equally have been a journal in the Ottoman Empire itself. However, the story Hobart was referring to can only be the chase of *Vesta*.

Returning to the accounts in the British press, apart from the three articles used above, a number of others were published taking one side or the other and, to most readers, it would have been difficult to know which side was telling the truth. After the war, in a brief article published in September 1878, it was stated that an investigation had begun after a request from Captain Baranoff into the event. According to the article, this was due to a controversy in the Russian Navy as many of the captain's colleagues believed too much had been made of the chase.²²² In an article by Woods in 1885 he described what had taken place as '...an unsuccessful chase after a flying foe.'²²³ This was the last

²²⁰ *The Times*, September 4 1877, p. 6 column 3, "The *Vesta* and the *Fethi-Bouland*, Originally Published in *The Telegraph*, From The Special Correspondent, Therapia, September 02".

²²¹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,014/276, July 23 or 24 1877, Hobart to Layard, this date appears to have been added later and must be incorrect given the content.

²²² *The Times*, September 14 1878, p. 8 column 3, "Odessa, September 2".

²²³ Woods Pasha, "The Armed Strength of Turkey", *The Nineteenth Century*, 18: 101, (July 1885), p. 112.

reference that it was possible to locate until an obituary article from 1905. The obituary was for Admiral Rozhdestvensky who had died during the Russo-Japanese War. The article made reference to an article published in the Russian paper *Novoe Vremya* in which Lieutenant, as he was then, Rozhdestvensky, had said that the story told by the captain was completely untrue. This led to an investigation after which captain Baranoff was stripped of his rank and decorations.²²⁴

This event has been gone into in some depth for a number of reasons. First, it further illustrates the subordination of the Ottoman Navy to the military forces. Both Manthorpe Bey and his superior Hobart Paşa stated that the *Fethi Bulend* was carrying supplies and that it was unable to go at full speed due to the weight of its cargo. The implication is that had the ship been free to do what it wanted, it might have had a better chance of chasing down the *Vesta* and forcing her to terms. Second, if it can be shown that in this case exaggeration characterised the Russian accounts, we may be able to say the same for other claims. Third, there was considerable discussion about the types of ships that navies should use, and the original story as told by the Russian captain led some to argue that lightly armoured, fast vessels with torpedoes would be able to outmatch heavier armoured ironclad ones. Given that ships continued to grow in size, this argument did not appear to win traction. What can be said is that there were a number of chases of Russian steamers by Ottoman vessels and that few if any were successfully sunk.

At the same time, however, it appears that not much damage was done to Ottoman shipping by those Russian steamers. One example that did create a great deal of condemnation of the Ottoman Navy, and by implication Hobart himself, was the capture of the steam ship *Mersin* in December 1877. The steamer was carrying amongst other things silver for the Ottoman mint. There was so much criticism

²²⁴ *The Times*, January 20 1905, p. 8 column 1, "An Early Romance of Admiral Rozhdestvensky, From a Correspondent".

from the Parliament, which went so far as to summon the Navy Minister, Ingiliz Said Paşa, to answer questions, that Hobart wrote a letter to *The Levant Herald* to try to deal with the criticisms.

In this letter, written on 11 January 1878, Hobart emphasised the importance of the navy in supporting the Ottoman military efforts and in re-supplying the armies as well as in removing the sick from the front.²²⁵ This would appear to fit in with what has already been suggested. He answered complaints made about the navy not attacking Russian towns on the coasts by saying that the fortified ones were too strong for any ships to attack with any hope of success. He illustrated his point with several examples including the allied attacks on Russian forts in the Baltic during the Crimean War when special mortar boats were required in order to attack the forts. He also wrote that after those vessels needed to defend Sulina, Batoum etc., there were only four ships left. Hobart positively refused to attack unfortified places. It would appear that that was what some wanted him to do. On the specific criticism of the loss of the *Mersin* Hobart was extremely honest. He admitted that the blockade was not always kept as it should have been, and that the Russian steamers were prepared to break through the blockade through the use of smokeless coal and small light high speed ships. This contrasted with the Ottoman ships that had often been out for months, where the watch had become lax, the engine pipes had not been cleaned, and the variable quality of the coal. We can assume that this last point meant that speed was affected. All this added up to a situation which made it very difficult to protect all Ottoman shipping.²²⁶ In a private letter to the British Ambassador, Hobart blamed the Ottoman Government for the loss of the ship arguing that had it not removed all the ships from the area it may not have happened.²²⁷

²²⁵ TNA, Enclosure in FO28/2776 No.75, January 17 1878, Layard to The earl of Derby.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ BL, Layard Papers, Add Mss 39,017/345, January 12 1877, Sinope, Hobart to Layard.

In addition to attacking Ottoman shipping at sea, the Russian steamers also attempted to sink the Ottoman ships making up the squadrons based at Sulina and Batoum. A number of torpedo attacks were launched on these squadrons throughout the war. Many of these attacks were unsuccessful. We will look at one in particular, at Batoum, later in this chapter. Part of the lack of success seems to have been a defence strategy developed by Hobart himself. The idea was to use a series of buoys and small guard boats connected by a cable to surround the larger vessels when at anchor. This solution was first used at Sulina in June. A diagram was printed in an article by Hobart entitled 'The Torpedo Scare' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and can be seen on the next page.²²⁸

Its success can be demonstrated by the fact that no Ottoman ships were sunk whilst at anchor and surrounded in this way, but also that the chain caused one torpedo boat to sink. The screw of the attacking vessel was fouled by the chain and the boat was sunk.²²⁹ Other defensive measures that were used included ensuring the vessels were in complete darkness and/or moving around.

Both contact torpedoes and mines have already been referred to in this chapter. Two Ottoman vessels were sunk on the Danube, one due to a fixed mine, which exploded as a ship floated over it, the other as a result of a Russian torpedo boat attack using a contact torpedo. The Russian Navy also had access to a quantity of torpedoes of a revolutionary nature which the Ottoman Navy did not. The Whitehead Torpedo, named after its inventor, Robert Whitehead, was the first self-propelled torpedo. Whitehead was so concerned about the security of his secret that he did not register it for the purpose of patents

²²⁸ Hobart Pacha, "The Torpedo Scare" *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* 187: 836, (June 1885), pp.737-747, p. 739.

²²⁹ *The Times*, June 27 1877, p. 4 column 6, "The War in the Black Sea".

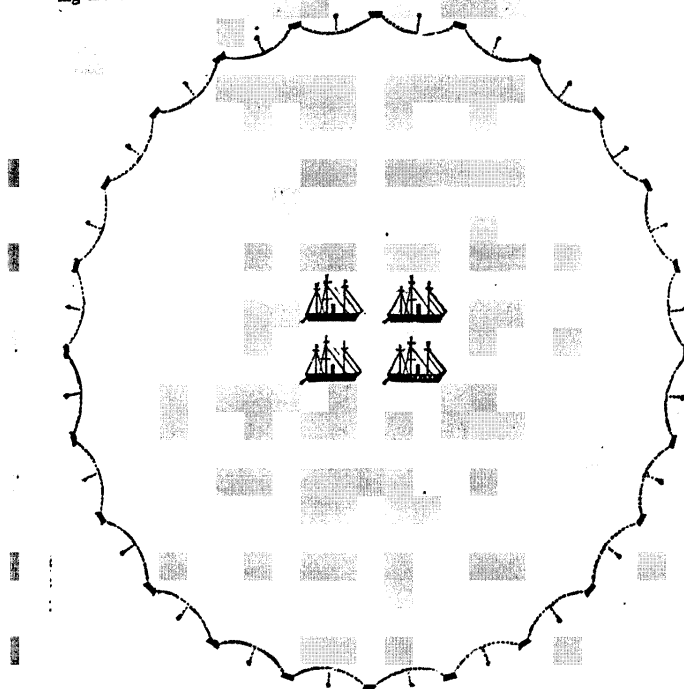
1885.]

The Torpedo Scare.

739

PLAN NO. 1.

The wire-rope between the boats is sunk sufficiently to catch the screw of the torpedo-boat, and buoyed half-way between the boats to prevent its sinking more than necessary.



N.B.—The 4 vessels are 120 yards long. The two pairs, breadthways, are 50 yards apart. There are 24 boats, each 8 to 9 yards long; and the 24 spaces between the boats are 54 yards each. The radius of the circle described by the boats is 550 yards, which keeps them 400 yards from the ships.

It seems to me that this system, carefully applied, would prove a most efficient and thorough defence against torpedo attack. I am aware that the present torpedoes are fitted with screws so sharply edged that they would cut through any rope placed to stop them. With the wire-rope this would be impossible. This system of defence would apply to single ships at anchor in the same way as it would apply to a

squadron or to a detachment, and I see no reason why a larger number of ships than I have shown on the plan should not be protected in a similar way—the only question being, that the radius would have to be increased according to the number of ships, which might prove, if overdone, inconvenient, if not impossible. Objections might be made that in bad weather boats could not keep their

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Fig. V Hobart's diagram showing defence against torpedoes: Diagram printed in an article by Hobart entitled 'The Torpedo Scare' in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* (See footnote 228)

and in order to maintain secrecy, he charged all governments a large fee to ensure they kept it. The Russo-Ottoman war was the second conflict in which this torpedo was used in battle, and although it had very little success, there was a great deal of interest in how it performed. Arguably the most useful and interesting thing that Woods did during the war was to gain the Ottoman Government an advantageous agreement with the Whitehead Torpedo Company for the sale of torpedoes and training in their use.²³⁰

Batoum has already been referred to in terms of the navy supporting the military located there. Woods had been sent to the port prior to the outbreak of the war, presumably to look at its defences.²³¹ An attack seems to have taken place towards the end of the war on the night of 20-21 December 1877.²³² It should be noted that other dates have been suggested for this attack. Sleeman is not consistent and gives both this date, and the night of 27-28 December.²³³ Other dates are provided in various newspaper articles. However, as 20-21 December was given in an article from *The Times* shortly after the event, which was almost certainly written by Woods himself, this date is the most likely. Whichever date is accurate, what is important is that Whitehead torpedoes were launched at the Ottoman squadron.

According to *The Times* article referred to above, two torpedoes were fired, one going straight on shore, and the other striking a chain and remaining floating in the water; neither exploded and both were picked up the following morning. The torpedoes were then sent to the Ottoman capital where the Minister of the Navy, Woods' former superior at the Naval College, Ingiliz Said Paşa, allowed him

²³⁰ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 42-44.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²³² *The Times*, January 30 1878, p. 10 Column 1, "The Torpedo Attack At Batoum, From a Naval Correspondent, Constantinople, January 17".

²³³ Charles Sleeman, *Torpedoes and Torpedo Warfare* (Portsmouth: Griffin and Co., 1880), p. 131 and p. 200.

to gain access to them.²³⁴ Woods took the torpedoes apart, learning their secret.²³⁵ His memoirs refer to the letter to *The Times* and its result, the arrival in the Ottoman capital of a representative of the Whitehead Torpedo Company to try to prevent the secret becoming public knowledge. Woods' memoirs provided his recollections of the details of the deal reached with the company's representative. The company agreed to waive the fee, refurbish the two damaged torpedoes, returning them to the Ottoman Government along with three of the latest design. Additionally, the Ottoman Government gained the right to purchase fifty torpedoes of the latest design at half the price that they were sold to any other country whenever they needed them. Finally, the Ottoman Government was to receive free training in the use of the Whitehead torpedo for two officers, an engineer and a gunner, at the company's headquarters at Fiume (Rijeka Croatia).²³⁶ Despite the fact that the contract has not been found, there is other evidence to suggest that some sort of deal was in fact reached.

A short piece in *The Times* from March 1878 referred to an agreement on sales of Whitehead Torpedoes to the Ottoman Government.²³⁷ Sleeman wrote that the Ottoman Government was the only one to have the Whitehead Torpedo without paying for it.²³⁸ Presumably Sleeman meant the extra charge demanded by the company to ensure the secret was kept. Nothing else however is mentioned with regard to the deal. Sleeman served with the Ottoman Navy during this war. Woods wrote that he sent Sleeman to command the defences at Sulina.²³⁹ Sleeman may therefore have known something of the deal but perhaps not the full details. An article from Hobart Paşa published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1885 also made reference to the deal.²⁴⁰ In this version the

²³⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 42.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

²³⁷ *The Times*, March 25 1878, p. 5 column 2, "The Treaty and The Congress, From Our Correspondents, Pera, March 22".

²³⁸ Sleeman, *Torpedoes* p. 132.

²³⁹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 139.

²⁴⁰ Hobart Pacha, "Torpedo Scare", p. 741.

number of torpedoes, which the company was to sell at cost price, was 25. Hobart also provided the figure that other governments were required to pay in order to purchase a torpedo. If the amount is accurate Woods saved the Ottoman Government between twelve and fifteen thousand pounds.

The official history of the Whitehead Torpedo Company says that Robert Whitehead himself went to Constantinople to retrieve the torpedoes and try to prevent the secret becoming known to the Ottomans, or worse, made public.²⁴¹ The Ottoman Government managed to persuade Whitehead to pay an unknown sum of money and to agree to supply them with torpedoes in the future without the usual fee. This confirms Woods and Hobart's accounts. However, the history says that between 1878 and 1886 the Ottoman Government trialled five different Whitehead Torpedo types before purchasing forty torpedoes in 1886. Despite the fact that the official history includes a considerable number of tables showing sales of torpedoes by country and type, these sales do not appear in them. It may well be that as no profit accrued to the Whitehead Torpedo Company records were not kept.

Two documents were found in the Ottoman Archives which referred to torpedo purchases from 1886. The documents included references to both Whitehead Torpedoes and a competitor Schwartzkopff. The first file included an extract from a telegram from a representative of Whitehead saying that the torpedo experiments had been completed and that if payment were received they could be sent in a week.²⁴² On Schwartzkopff Torpedoes there was an extract from a letter, which stated that thirty torpedoes had been tested and were ready for purchase. Concern was expressed that no payment had yet been received despite the fact that 15,000 pounds sterling was meant to have been paid over two instalments in May and June. This resulted in an order from the Sultan approving the payment of 45,360 pounds sterling to cover the costs of Whitehead Torpedoes, Schwarzkopff Torpedoes, Torpedo

²⁴¹ Benito Petrucci, *WASS: 133 years of History* (Rome : Ciuffa Editori, 2008), pp. 100-101.

²⁴² YEE, Y.Prk.MYD 5/550, 7 Z. 1303, September 6 1886, Whitehead and Schwartzkopff, Delay in Payment.

boats and delivery.²⁴³ The document does not itemise the costs. However, given the earlier referenced file, we can assume that 15,000 pounds was specifically for the purchase of thirty Schwarzkopf Torpedoes. There is also no evidence of Ottoman officers being trained.

Whatever the specifics of the deal were, there is no doubt that some kind of preferential agreement was reached favouring the Ottoman Government. This must be credited to Woods' integrity, as according to his own account there were many people who thought that a private deal could have been reached which would have financially benefitted him.²⁴⁴ But like the example of the Prize Court, which will be dealt with shortly, Woods saw his loyalty to the Ottoman Government as being above personal gain. Woods gave credit to Said Paşa because of the support that the minister gave him.

Returning to the 1877-1878 war, there were other occasions on which Whitehead Torpedoes were used and did manage to strike their targets. However, there was little success. Instead of programming them to go beneath the waves, thus avoiding the protective iron shell, more often than not the torpedoes went across the surface. This is clearly what happened at Batoum. The effect was that even when they did hit an ironclad vessel the force of the explosion was not sufficient to cause any damage. One final point to make about the Whitehead is that the Russian Navy claimed that a mail-steamer was sunk at Batoum in late January 1878. This claim has appeared in a number of sources. The first instance was the book by Sleeman.²⁴⁵ However Hobart denied it, Woods makes no reference to it and there are no records of it in any newspaper searched for this thesis. Given the claims made concerning the chase of the *Vesta*, we might discount this one as well.

²⁴³ BBA, I.DH. 1002/71946, 17 Z. 1303 September 16 1886, Sultan's Decree.

²⁴⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 44.

²⁴⁵ Sleeman, *Torpedoes*, p. 203.

In theory at least the third task the Ottoman Navy had -- blockading the Russian coast -- should have been easy. The Ottoman Government could close the Bosphorus to all Russian vessels and anyone proposing to trade in Russian ports. In practice it was not so simple. We have already seen some practical problems; there were theoretical ones as well. There were competing views of how far a blockade could be enforced. In Britain and the United States legal opinion was that a vessel could be seized anywhere at any time during its journey from a blockaded coast or port.²⁴⁶ Continental European opinion was that a blockade was only effective up to a line, after which the blockade was considered to be void. It is unclear which view the Ottoman Government took. This issue led to considerable pressure being placed on the Ottoman Government to allow vessels passage if they had not been seized at sea or just off the Russian coasts.

A second problem which the Ottoman Government faced were the laws that governed the passage of the Bosphorus. This had become bound up with the issue of the Capitulatory privileges. Free passage of the Bosphorus for trading vessels was one of these grants and therefore some believed that once a ship reached the Straits it had entered international waters. According to the Russian and German Ambassadors in Rome, the Treaty of Paris had made the Bosphorus international waters as far as merchantmen were concerned.²⁴⁷ This argument was also used in a letter of complaint made to the British Ambassador by merchants who argued that the blockade was not valid and the ships should be released.²⁴⁸ The English law officers did not agree with any of the above arguments.²⁴⁹

Nor it seems did Woods. In his memoirs he wrote that he was appointed to the Prize Court due to pressure from the British Consulate.²⁵⁰ Was this part of what Layard meant when he wrote that ships

²⁴⁶ TNA, FO195/1126 No.878, December 20 1877, FO to Layard.

²⁴⁷ TNA, FO195/1126 No.840, December 13 1877, FO to Layard.

²⁴⁸ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2592 No.141, From Embassy to FO, November 28 1877.

²⁴⁹ TNA, FO195/1126 No.883, December 21 1877, FO to Layard.

²⁵⁰ Woods, *Spunyarn* V2, p. 39.

had been declared legal prizes due to his efforts?²⁵¹ Unfortunately the decree appointing Woods has not been found. He wrote that the reason he was appointed was due to the loss of business by the British merchants who were the only ones obeying the blockade. Three Italian registered vessels had been seized and the Ottoman Government were under considerable pressure to release them. Woods described the court in some detail.²⁵²

The Procurator Fiscal said that as there was no Ottoman code the European one should be used and that as the ships had reached the Bosphorus -- international waters -- they should be released. Woods argued that far from there not being an Ottoman code there was one which was based on British naval prize law, and that he should know as he was the professor that taught it in the naval school. He further argued that the forts at the entrance were sufficient to prove that the blockade was in fact effective and that the Bosphorus was not international waters but Ottoman territorial waters. On this occasion the ships were declared lawful prizes and Woods was called an 'ass' by his Greek doctor who said that he would have received a bribe had he kept quiet.²⁵³

There is some corroborative evidence to suggest that Woods' opinion was sought by the Prize Court. In a document from Layard sent to the Foreign Office he included a description of the sitting of the Prize Court which dealt with the three ships, from an unnamed source who he described as an '...upright, honourable man.'²⁵⁴ This source described how he had wished to condemn the three ships from the outset, taking the British view on the blockade, but that other members wished to follow a precedent, which had previously been set when two Greek vessels were released. It would appear that they had accepted a European interpretation of blockade, which would have freed the ships in

²⁵¹ TNA, FO78/2599 No.487, November 17 1877, Layard Telegram.

²⁵² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2 pp. 39-42

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ TNA, Draft Enclosure in FO78/1132 No.1416, November 28 1877, Layard to Derby.

question due to them breaching the line of blockade. He alleged that bribery had been used to persuade the members of the court. A letter from the Navy Minister criticising the court for not enforcing the blockade and alleging that it had been corrupted was forwarded to the members by the Grand Vizier who also expressed the wish that the court would condemn. At this point, the court summoned Woods who expressed his view that the ships could be legally condemned according to British practice. The letter concluded with the comment that the whole Prize Court resigned feeling that its honour had been brought into question. It would appear therefore that if Woods was not an official member of the court, his advice was certainly sought, but that this was not until very late on during the war. It is not possible to say whether or not the Prize Court was reconstructed after the resignations and if Woods then became a member. Despite the problems with the blockade as recognised by Hobart, the differences in legal interpretations and possible bribery leading to inconsistent decisions by the court, the blockade did have an impact on Russia. According to one writer, it was extremely effective as it nearly led to the collapse of the Russian rail network and that the war effort was beginning to be affected.²⁵⁵ We know from the course of World War I that an Ottoman blockade, if of long enough duration, could significantly damage Russia.

One final task that the Ottoman Navy performed was the removal of refugees from the Caucasus. Like so much else nothing was found within the Ottoman Archives concerning this. In Woods' memoirs, he referred to going with Hobart to Batoum and Tchimchira and participating in the withdrawal of the army.²⁵⁶ The withdrawal of the Circassian civilian population seems to have taken place at roughly the same time. We have already seen that Woods was the correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* and there are a number of articles which byline our correspondent from this period, which also indicated that the person was with Hobart. The first, which indicated the removal of the Circassian

²⁵⁵ Matthew Allen, "The British Mediterranean Squadron during the Great Eastern Crisis 1876-9" *The Mariner's Mirror*, 85: 1, (February 1999), pp.53-67, p. 62.

²⁵⁶ Woods, *Spun yarn*, V2, pp. 154-156.

population, appeared in the edition of the paper published 6 August.²⁵⁷ A more detailed account appeared on the 14th.²⁵⁸ Here Woods described how the embarkation was being managed by Hobart, describing the creation of a floating jetty created from small boats lashed together over which the refugees walked to get on the ships. He also wrote that the lowest estimated figure for the numbers of people involved was 50,000 and added to that 150,000 animals. Hobart wrote two letters to Layard from Soukhoum Kaleh in which this exodus was mentioned. The first stated that the Ottoman Government had 'promised protection' to the people concerned. This job was given to him and although he would have preferred to continue with his blockade work, he had to get on with it.²⁵⁹ He gave a figure of 20,000 families. In a second letter to Elliot he referred to 50,000 refugees and 100,000 animals and estimated that it would take two months to complete the transportation.²⁶⁰ Hobart's desire to return to the Russian blockade seems to have been answered on the 12th if Woods in *The Manchester Guardian* is to be believed.²⁶¹

To conclude this part, it is fair to say that, where the Ottoman Navy was given time to do something, it seemed to do it pretty well. Supporting the military, both by transporting soldiers and resupplying them, was successfully carried out as shown by landings at Tchamchira early in the war; the protection of military positions at Sulina and Batoum was done well and enabled both places to remain Ottoman until the end of the war. However, the consequence of supporting the military was that there were fewer ships available to sit outside Russian ports or regularly cruise the Black Sea to deal with the small Russian steam ships, protect Ottoman shipping and enforce consistently the Ottoman blockade of

²⁵⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*, August 6 1877, p. 5 column illegible, "Campaign in Asia Minor, Destruction of Russian Forts, Circassian Expedition Withdrawn, Soukoum Kaleh, August 1".

²⁵⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*, August 14 1877, p. 8 column illegible, "The Circassian Emigration, From Our Own Correspondent, Batoum, Monday 5:30 PM".

²⁵⁹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,014/279, August 24 1877, Hobart to Layard. This date was added later and is highly unlikely given the content.

²⁶⁰ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,014/157, August 10 1877, Hobart to Layard, Soukhoum Kaleh.

²⁶¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, August 31 1877, p. 5 column illegible, "Notes From The Black Sea, From Our Own Correspondent, Batoum, August 12".

Russia. A naval correspondent in *The Times* in an article from July 1877 commented on the Ottoman navy's involvement in the war as follows:

...hitherto the Turkish Fleet has not been deserving of any extraordinary praise, for though they have done nothing they ought not to have done, yet they have decidedly left undone the things they might have done.²⁶²

Given that the same article advocated assaults on Sevastopol and other well-defended Russian ports on the Black Sea, whilst admitting that twenty years after the Crimean War the achievements of the Allied fleets were still being debated, one might think that this conclusion was a little harsh. What is true is that the lack of a plan for the navy, the constant shifting around of ships and Hobart being kept in the Ottoman capital at the beginning of the war -- which the author linked to the Minister of War Redif Paşa -- certainly made the Ottoman position harder.

If any further evidence were needed of a lack of a plan and the reactive nature of the Ottoman Navy during the war, Hobart's letter to Layard in December provides further proof. He wrote that he had just been given orders to go to Batoum, describing this as '...when the Turks get into a funk they send for me.'²⁶³ He also complained that he had been left by the Ottoman Government at Sinop with only one ship, *Izzeddin*, with which he was expected to maintain the blockade. The same note suggested that the reason for this was that his flagship had been at the capital for around six weeks under repair. During this stay in Batoum Hobart's squadron was attacked by Russian torpedo boats, as has already been described. His final action during the war was again transportation, this time moving soldiers from Batoum to Constantinople.²⁶⁴ Hobart did not know the reason for these orders, but suggested it might be due to an impending war with Greece. The armistice came on 31 January 1878 and peace

²⁶² *The Times*, July 21 1877, p. 5 column 2, "The Turkish Navy, From a Naval Correspondent, Therapia, July 10".

²⁶³ BL, Layard Papers, Add Mss 39,017/76, December 12 1877, Hobart to Layard, *Izzeddin* En Route to Batoum.

²⁶⁴ BL, ADD MSS, 39,017/345, January 12 1878, Hobart to Layard, Sinope.

was signed at San Stefano in March. Perhaps the most important comment on the navy was that the war was lost on land and by the Ottoman army.

One of the many consequences of the Ottoman loss in the war was increased tensions on the Ottoman frontier with Greece. In March 1878 Hobart was sent in command of a squadron to support the military forces in dealing with an insurrection in the vicinity of Golos (Volos Greece). This is the second occasion when orders concerning Hobart were found in the Ottoman Archives.²⁶⁵ This file contains minutes from a meeting of the Naval Council, according to which, the situation was 'critical' and extra vessels were necessary to deal with 'brigands' from the local islands who were expected to take advantage of the rebellion. A number of ships were named in these minutes and Hobart was given the command. The Sultan approved the decision of the Council on 5 March. It should be noted that there were various rumours in the press concerning where Hobart was going. A piece in *The Times* suggested he was going to Crete.²⁶⁶ A telegram from the Reuters' correspondent in Athens in *The Manchester Guardian* suggested he was being sent to Greece on a mission of peace.²⁶⁷

Hobart arrived at Golos on 16 March and in order to fulfil the original instructions proceeded to lay mines at sea.²⁶⁸ In addition to this, he also transported Ottoman soldiers.²⁶⁹ *The Manchester Guardian*, in a summary of foreign news published on 21 June, described Hobart's involvement as 'unpleasantly prominent'.²⁷⁰ It seems however, that he rapidly went beyond those instructions and opened

²⁶⁵ BBA, I.MTZ 01 16/519 1 RA. 1295, March 5 1878, Despatch of Ships to the Aegean Under the Command of Hobart Paşa.

²⁶⁶ *The Times*, March 12 1878, p. 5 column 3, "Turkey, Constantinople, March 10, 9.30PM".

²⁶⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*, March 16 1878, p. 5 column illegible, "The Greek Insurrection, Reuter's Telegrams, Athens, Friday".

²⁶⁸ No.142 March 27 1878, Acting Consul Barker to Earl Derby, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*, Turkey No. 32, 1878 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1878), p. 74.

²⁶⁹ *The Times*, March 18 1878, p. 5 column illegible, "The Greek Insurrection, Paris, March 17".

²⁷⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, March 21 1878, p. 4 column illegible, "Summary of News Foreign".

negotiations with the leaders of the rebels. On 18 March Hobart invited them to a discussion of the situation with a view to agreeing a peaceful solution.

Two versions of these documents – that is Hobart’s offer and the reply – are available in the Blue Book Entitled *Correspondence Respecting the Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*.²⁷¹ The two from Hobart Paşa are exactly the same but the reply is slightly different. Hobart’s offer addresses the recipient as ‘the malcontent party’ and offered to meet them to find a peaceful solution.²⁷² The reply says that whilst they would be happy to meet Hobart, they can only do so as the ‘Provisional Government’.²⁷³ This version of the response describes them as being invited to govern the province until the wishes of the people are met. The second version describes them as being elected.²⁷⁴ Of course Hobart could not accept the terms presented. As it has not been possible to find any further documents in the Ottoman Archives, it is difficult to say for certain if, even by negotiating, he had gone beyond his orders. If the approved minutes of the Naval Council are the only orders Hobart received, then clearly he did. A sentence in a note from the Greek Foreign Minister to his Ambassador in London seemed to suggest that the reason that the rebellion continued was that Hobart’s suggested solution had been rejected by the Ottoman Government.²⁷⁵ What this was is not stated. Although an article in *The Times* stated that Hobart offered the insurgents autonomy if they laid down their arms.²⁷⁶ Certainly the Sultan would have opposed the idea of autonomy fearing that it would lead to the loss of the territory.

²⁷¹ Enclosures 8-9 in No. 147, p. 82. and Enclosures 4-5 in No. 149, p. 84, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*.

²⁷² Enclosure 8 in No. 147, March 18 1878, Hobart Pasha to Bazdeki and Avelos, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*, p. 82.

²⁷³ Enclosure 9 in No. 147, March 18 1878, Bazdeki and Avelos to Hobart Pasha, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*, p. 82.

²⁷⁴ Enclosure 5 in No. 149, March 18 1878, Bazdeki and Avelos to Hobart Pasha, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*, p. 84.

²⁷⁵ No. 139, April 6 1878, M. Delyanni to M. Gennadius, in *Correspondence Respecting Insurrections in Thessaly and Epirus*, p. 73.

²⁷⁶ *The Times*, March 21 1878, p. 5 column 4, “The Greek Insurgents, Athens, March 19”.

Shortly after these negotiations, fighting increased and Hobart was involved in bombarding the rebel-held strongholds. Another function he had was to prevent rebels from escaping from the Ottoman military forces by sea. A second offer of peace was made by Hobart, according to *the Manchester Guardian*, towards the end of March. This time he suggested a truce until the conference met to deal with the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War.²⁷⁷ If this is accurate, this too would have been an unwelcome suggestion from the point of view of the Sultan. Given the military and naval superiority the empire now enjoyed, there was no longer any need to agree anything. Hobart left the area in April and his involvement in Thessaly came to an end. This short incident in Hobart's career was to be the last active command he held. If he did go beyond his orders it did not appear to affect his standing with his employers and by this time we must think of the Sultan himself as Hobart's employer. Hobart was to visit Britain after his command in Thessaly and it would be during this visit that a new role for him would begin to take shape.

²⁷⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*, March 29 1878, p. 5 column illegible, "The Hellenic Insurrection, Special Telegram From Our Own Correspondent, Athens, Thursday".

Chapter Four. Hobart and Woods: 1878-1886

The previous chapter dealt with the reforms of the Ottoman Navy in the period 1867-1878 through the prism of the careers of Hobart and Woods. It also looked at how the navy operated during the rebellion in Crete and the Russo-Ottoman War. It also examined the 1876 Bulgarian Horrors campaign and its effect on attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire in Britain. 1878 would introduce new roles to Hobart, which would subsequently be taken by Woods. This chapter will begin by examining a number of issues in the period between the end of the Russo-Ottoman War up to the conclusion of the mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to the Ottoman capital in 1887. The chapter will then introduce Ottoman management of the press. We will then examine how Hobart was used by the Sultan as part of his attempts to manage the Empire's image in the press. This section will also include the other tasks Hobart performed as the Sultan's Aide-de-camp. Finally, we will return to the original purpose for which both Hobart and Woods were employed, the Ottoman Navy.

I. From San Stefano to the Conclusion of the Drummond Wolf Mission 1878-1887

The Ottoman Empire had been defeated by Russia and forced to sign the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878. This agreement included the loss of territory in Asia Minor to Russia including Batoum, and a form of Russian protection for the Armenian population.¹ In Europe the Ottoman Empire agreed to recognise the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania, the creation of a large Bulgarian province which would be under the influence of Russia, greater autonomy for all other European provinces and the payment of an indemnity of forty million Turkish Liras.² Given the huge changes brought about through the Russo-Ottoman Treaty to the Eastern settlement established by

¹ Feroze Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996), p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

the Treaty of Paris the Great Powers were required to agree to the alterations and to enable this to happen a conference was organised which took place in Berlin in June and July.³

Britain was particularly concerned by San Stefano fearing that the consequence would be that the Ottoman Empire would fall under the influence of Russia permanently. Between San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin the British Government prepared the ground carefully to ensure this would not happen. She did this by agreeing secret treaties with a number of powers. With Russia she agreed to her continued control of most of the Asian territory she had captured, but insisted on a reduction in the size of Bulgaria in Europe.⁴ To gain Austria's support at the Conference she agreed to back her claims to occupy the provinces of Bosnia and Hercegovina.⁵ In that way Britain hoped to prepare the way for Austria to become the guarantor of Ottoman security in Europe.⁶

The last secret treaty completed by Britain was with the Ottoman Empire herself. This agreement guaranteed the future of the Sultan's Asian provinces if Russia should invade again.⁷ In return the Sultan had to agree to allow Britain to administer Cyprus from which she would be able to undertake her military obligations. The Cyprus Convention also bound the Sultan to reform his Asian provinces and particularly those inhabited by Armenians after negotiations with Britain.⁸ The Sultan had reservations about the convention. He felt he was being asked to agree to give up territory with no guarantee of support, to surrender part of his sovereignty and he feared a general land grab on the

³ Chapter Four Yasamee *Ottoman Diplomacy*, W. N. Medlicott *The Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement 1878-1880* (London, Frank Cass and Co, 1963) (pp.53-72); and M. Yavuz and Peter Sluglett eds. *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011).

⁴ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 58.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dwight Lee, *Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).

⁸ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, pp. 58-59.

part of the Great Powers. Ambassador Layard argued that the convention would cease to apply if Russia returned her Asian gains. Needless to say he failed to mention the secret treaty with Russia. The Sultan agreed to the Cyprus Convention on 4 June and ratified it on 13 July: albeit after adding a phrase to the effect that he did so on the understanding that his imperial rights would not be affected.⁹

The Sultan's fears were proven to be accurate when the secret treaty between Britain and Russia was leaked to *The Globe* newspaper on 13 June. He had been given a couple of other reasons to distrust Britain prior to the Cyprus Convention. Despite the fact that Britain had professed neutrality during the Russo-Ottoman War the Government seemed to be speaking with two voices. During the war the Foreign Secretary – the Earl of Derby, -- maintained strict neutrality. However, the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli – the Earl of Beaconsfield -- and British Ambassador – Layard -- seemed to be following a different policy. In a letter to Layard Disraeli spoke of actively supporting the Ottoman Government if the Ottoman Empire were able to continue the war into a second campaign.¹⁰ This may well have held out false hope to the Ottoman Government. Shortly after the war Britain had unilaterally sent a naval squadron through the Dardanelles into the Marmara Sea without the Sultan's permission.¹¹ As a result the Russians threatened to enter the Ottoman capital. It did not, due to the British Government agreeing to keep its ships in the Marmara Sea, but the situation had become tense and the possible collapse of the empire was down to Britain's own actions.

The treaty of Berlin was arguably a marginal improvement for the Ottoman Government on that of San Stefano. Russia's territorial gains in Asia Minor were confirmed except for the city of Bayezid

⁹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 64.

¹⁰ Harold Temperley and Lillian Penson, (Eds.) *Foundations of British Foreign Policy 1792-1902* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 360.

¹¹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 55.

which was returned to the Sultan.¹² The port of Batoum whilst remaining Russian was not to be militarised.¹³ In Europe the size of Bulgaria was reduced and it was split in two. The eastern part, known as Eastern Rumelia remained a part of the empire with a Christian Governor-General who had to be confirmed by the powers. The Sultan had the right to keep military garrisons between the two parts of Bulgaria on the Balkan range. He never did militarise this region, coming to the conclusion that the positions would be difficult to hold given the likelihood of a potential enemy population in its rear. The western part of Bulgaria had greater autonomy under its own prince.¹⁴ Both parts were able to have their own internal military forces. Austria's right to militarily occupy Bosnia and Hercegovina was confirmed along with that of the province of Novi Pazar – although the details were to be agreed separately between the Ottoman and Austrian Governments.¹⁵ Finally in terms of territorial alterations the Ottoman Government was required to make concessions to Greece. The reason for this was that some of the powers – Britain and Austria – wanted to create a counterbalance to Slav influence in the Balkans. The territorial concessions to both Montenegro and Serbia were reduced.¹⁶ It is arguable that a general compensation policy was being established by which if one Power benefited all would, in order to maintain the balance of power. We will see how this apparent policy was continued beyond the Treaty of Berlin.

The part of San Stefano which referred to reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces and seemed to place them under Russian influence was replaced by one that internationalised the reforms.¹⁷ Given the Cyprus Convention Britain would take a special interest in this. Within a month she had made reform proposals which looked to the Sultan as if she were planning some form of

¹² Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 60.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

protectorate over large parts of Asia Minor.¹⁸ They included the employment of Europeans throughout the provincial administration and judiciary.¹⁹ Whilst the Russian army remained within Ottoman territory and disagreements remained with Austria the Sultan had to appear cooperative towards Britain's proposals. In August 1879 the Russian army left and in September Austria successfully placed garrisons in Novi Pazar.²⁰ When Britain made new reform proposals and threatened to use her Mediterranean fleet to intimidate the Sultan into accepting them he resisted, threatening to fire on the ships if they should attempt to enter the Dardanelles, and to ask Russia for assistance.²¹ Britain gave way and in return the Sultan showed his goodwill by appointing an Ottoman Catholic as the Governor in one of the provinces inhabited by Armenians. He also appointed a few European inspectors.²² Britain changed her proposals slightly by asking for Christians to be appointed to senior administrative positions in areas where Christians lived.²³ This gave the impression that Britain was now preparing to promote an independent Armenian state as a new buffer to Russia. The consequence of the above was that Britain realised that she could not force the Sultan. In 1880 Salisbury told Layard to stop applying pressure. But he failed to understand that defeat in the 1877-1878 war had not led to the collapse that had been predicted. In fact he continued to expect the empire to become dependent on either Britain or Russia.²⁴ This would prove not to be the case.

On the rectification of the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers very little had happened until 1880. In Britain the Liberal Party returned to power with Gladstone as Prime Minister. Soon afterwards the new government was able to organise the Great Powers to meet at Berlin to settle the territorial

¹⁸ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 63.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

rearrangements.²⁵ At this conference they agreed that the town of Dulcigno (Ulcinj) on the Adriatic Coast should be transferred to Montenegro. On the Greek territorial adjustment they determined that large parts of Epirus and Thessaly should be transferred to Greece. Dealing with Dulcigno first, the Powers sent a note to the Ottoman Government recommending the alteration. In return the Sultan argued that he would accept Dulcigno's transfer if there were changes to the rest of the territorial cessions to Montenegro. The Great Powers refused and implemented a naval demonstration. The Ottoman Government were forced to agree when Britain made it clear that they would move to occupy the Ottoman port of Smyrna (Izmir) if the Montenegrin cessions did not proceed. At this point the Sultan agreed. As a result of the British Government's threat some of the other Powers became concerned and so did not support the original territorial changes for Greece. Eventually it was agreed that only Thessaly would be transferred.²⁶

With the solution of the Greek frontier issue the last outstanding territorial matter from the Treaty of Berlin was dealt with. A new diplomatic issue was on the horizon however, that of Egypt. Since the reign of Mehmed Ali Paşa, it had been a tributary province of the empire with a large amount of autonomy. It had gone bankrupt in 1875 and European control of Egyptian finances had been imposed.²⁷

Egyptian opposition to that control had grown to the point where a military uprising under the leadership of Colonel Ahmed Urabi Paşa began in 1881.²⁸ The Sultan, far from supporting the Urabist movement, preferred the maintenance of the existing system.²⁹ The *Khedive* (hereditary ruler of Egypt) proved to be unable to deal with the rebels and had requested Ottoman military intervention,

²⁵ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, pp. 76-77.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

but then withdrew the request.³⁰ The Sultan attempted to use his moral influence by sending two officers to Egypt but was forced to withdraw them due to British and French threats.³¹ After the Urabists had removed officers whose commissions came directly from the Sultan, discussions took place around a possible Ottoman naval demonstration. Again this was blocked by Britain and France.³²

Finally an international conference was held in the Ottoman capital in 1882 to discuss the nature of an Ottoman intervention, but this time the Sultan was unwilling and did not allow his government to participate.³³ By this stage Abdülhamid seems to have believed that Britain herself was behind the Urabist movement with the intention of forcing the Sultan to fight fellow Muslims, diminishing him in the eyes of his subjects. Yasamee described the idea as 'fantastic' but that it also proved to be 'unshakeable.'³⁴ However, we have already seen that the Sultan had been given plenty of reasons to distrust Britain. The Sultan tried the moral approach again and sent Marshal Derviş Paşa to attempt to persuade Urabi to leave Egypt. This was unsuccessful.³⁵ Finally, a riot in Alexandria led to the deaths of fifty Christians and British military intervention.³⁶ Abdülhamid then allowed the Ottoman Government to join the conference, although remaining unwilling to militarily intervene fearing that Urabi would now be raised to the status of a warrior for the faith, thereby damaging the Sultan's position as Caliph.³⁷ In July 1882 the Sultan offered to send military forces to Egypt and negotiations between the Ottoman Government and Britain continued until the Urabist defeat at Tel el-Kebir.³⁸ Part of the reason why these negotiations failed was Britain's insistence on circumscribing both the numbers of Ottoman soldiers and their disembarkation points on the Egyptian coast.³⁹ Abdülhamid

³⁰ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 91.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p. 94.

³³ Ibid., p. 95.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 95-96.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

³⁹ Ibid.

complained that according to advice he had been given, he was being asked to send troops to a disembarkation point that was dangerous.⁴⁰ It is likely that this advice came from Hobart.

Egyptian negotiations continued off and on for the next two years. In 1883 many of them were to do with the Sudan. This was a province of Egypt in which a religious movement led by the so-called *Mahdi* had been growing for the past couple of years.⁴¹ His general, Osman Digna, defeated the *Khedive's* army and Britain decided that Egypt had to abandon the province.⁴² In early 1884 the Ottoman Government through its Ambassador in London Constantine (Costaki) Musurus Paşa invited the Foreign Secretary, Earl Granville, to enter into discussions around a complete Egyptian settlement.⁴³ Granville asked for the Ottoman Government's proposals. The Ambassador wanted to discuss a joint reconquest of the Sudan, but his government wanted a complete Egyptian settlement.⁴⁴ Granville refused to discuss this, but indicated that Ottoman control of part of the Sudanese Red Sea coast would not be unacceptable.⁴⁵ During these negotiations the Ottoman Ambassador suggested that the Sultan was willing to send troops to Egypt.⁴⁶ This went beyond his orders from the capital and was the first, although not the last, time that a subordinate of the Sultan was to make independent suggestions concerning Egypt.

In December 1884, partly due to the growing tensions between Britain and Russia over the Afghan frontier, the Sultan decided to send a special ambassador to London to discuss settling the Egyptian question. The basis of these discussions were ten points drawn up by the Ottoman Government.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴² *Ibid.*,

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

These included British withdrawal eight months after the ratification of the agreement, military neutralisation of Egypt following British withdrawal and maintaining the pre-existing rights of the Sultan, as well as reintegration of the Egyptian legal practices to those in the Ottoman Empire proper. He chose the Justice Minister Hasan Fehmi Paşa as his special ambassador.⁴⁸ Shortly afterwards, Hobart was also sent (more will be said on this later in this chapter). This was an example of the Sultan's preference for appointing whoever he felt was most suited to a particular task. On this occasion, he bypassed the traditional Foreign Ministry bureaucracy. Hasan Fehmi was seen as pro-British and there were certainly concerns in the Ottoman Government that he would not remain independent.⁴⁹ He ignored the part of his instructions that required him to discuss Egypt with the German and French governments on his way to London. He also transmitted overly positive messages about the progress of his negotiations.⁵⁰

In addition to bilateral discussions with Britain, separate but parallel negotiations on Egyptian finance, which involved all the Powers, developed.⁵¹ Both Hasan Fehmi and Musurus promised Earl Granville that the Ottoman Government would sign an international agreement on Egyptian finances despite knowing that the Sultan had preferred to issue a *Firman* (edict).⁵² This nearly had serious consequences when Granville then threatened to issue both ambassadors with their passports if signature was not forthcoming within twenty-four hours. Fortunately discussions in the Ottoman capital calmed the situation. Granville extended the deadline and allowed for Ottoman reservations to be registered. The Ottoman Government finally signed on 30 March but this was the limit attained by Hasan Fehmi's mission. At the same time a serious deterioration in Anglo-Russian relations occurred as a result of the Russian occupation of the Afghan Penjdeh oasis.⁵³ This may have played a

⁴⁸ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 123.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 131-133.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

part in Granville's willingness to find a solution to the disagreement over the Egyptian financial agreement. Hasan Fehmi was recalled in April but due to a final complication didn't leave until May.⁵⁴

Later that same year, after the Conservatives under Lord Salisbury returned to power, Britain sent Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to the Ottoman capital to try and find a solution to the Egyptian question.⁵⁵ This time the Foreign Minister Asim Paşa and the Minister of Religious Foundations Kamil Paşa negotiated on the part of the Ottoman Government.⁵⁶ For some reason the Sultan did not accept the Grand Vizier's suggestion that protocols of the meetings should be kept leading to the almost inevitable replication of the situation with Musurus earlier in the year.⁵⁷ They were found out and protocols were then kept.⁵⁸ A convention was eventually signed. However it contained less than either side had wanted. The outbreak of a new crisis, this time in the Eastern Rumelian province made a rapid settlement necessary. The convention allowed for British and Ottoman commissioners to go to Egypt to reform the military and the administration together. It allowed for the Ottoman commissioner, with the *Khedive*, to take the lead in dealing with the Sudanese problem, with the British commissioner being informed and having the right to be involved in any decisions.⁵⁹ Drummond Wolff, as the British commissioner, left immediately, and the Sultan's appointee, Marshal Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, left in December.

Over the next year the commissioners worked in Egypt. One area of disagreement concerned the Egyptian army where Ahmed Muhtar suggested an increase, which was not accepted by Wolff.⁶⁰ Separate to the Egyptian difficulty, in July 1886 the Russian Government decided to abrogate the

⁵⁴ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 137.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

clause of the Treaty of Berlin related to the port of Batoum remaining a free non-militarised port.⁶¹

Aside from Britain none of the other Powers protested meaning that the Ottoman Government remained quiescent not wishing to be accused of taking Britain's side in an Anglo-Russian dispute.⁶²

The impasse over Egypt continued until 1887 when Wolff returned to Constantinople. Formal negotiations began in April. An agreement was signed on 22 May.⁶³ This recognised the Sultan's rights in Egypt; agreed the size of the Egyptian army; gave a date for British evacuation subject to the agreement of all the Powers to the convention (a secret separate note was exchanged clarifying this to mean a Mediterranean power); British officers were permitted to remain in Egypt after evacuation; and Egypt was neutralised. The agreement also allowed for future military intervention on the part of either Britain or the Sultan if Egypt was threatened. The convention did not come into force because Abdülhamid refused to ratify it. The reason for that was a concern on his part that other Powers would refuse to agree to the convention. He had been given reason to think this by the reaction of the French Ambassador. Confirmation came in June that France would oppose the Convention.⁶⁴ Russia too expressed serious concerns.⁶⁵ When the Sultan tried to reopen the part of the convention related to an external threat, Salisbury refused to discuss it.⁶⁶

Part of the reason all these negotiations failed was the Sultan's desire to remain neutral (that is independent from all the powers). Each time an agreement came close, other powers reacted as if the Ottoman Government was in danger of becoming a client of Britain. When the Sultan tried to renegotiate the convention, Britain acted as if it was being done due to French and Russian threats,⁶⁷

⁶¹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 183.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 225-226.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 233.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 234.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 238.

⁶⁷ Ibid.,

and reflected the Sultan becoming a client of Russia. In fact it was neither. It was a part of the Sultan's own diplomacy to remain untied to any of the Great Powers.

II. Ottoman Press Management

Turning to the Ottoman Government's press management: over the nineteenth century it had developed a policy for responding to negative articles and publicising its own point of view. This brief overview will concentrate on how the Ottoman Government dealt with the international press in general and British newspapers and periodicals in particular. There are a number of works dealing with the Ottoman Government and the press. As we are principally concerned with the international press, and specifically the British press, only works which reference that have been used. Fatmagül Demirel's 2007 book deals specifically with newspaper management during Abdülhamid's reign, as does a chapter in Selim Deringil's *The Well Protected Domains*.⁶⁸ Roderic Davison examined the Ottoman Government's changing awareness of the press and its attempts to deal with it over the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ He categorised the process into seven stages. The first was recognition of its existence. In the second the Ottoman Government began to produce its own information to the press. The third is the use of subsidies to papers within the Ottoman Empire in order to control them. The fourth is the use of subsidies to foreign newspapers. The fifth is employing people directly to write positive articles. Stages six and seven involve the control and suppression of newspapers which published material the Ottoman Government did not like. Clearly this was only possible within the empire itself.

⁶⁸ Fatmagül Demirel, *II Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür* (Istanbul: Bağlam, 2007) and chapter 6, Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

⁶⁹ Roderic Davison, "How the Ottoman government Adjusted to A New Institution: The Newspaper Press", in *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999), pp. 361-370.

According to Davison the first of these stages went back to the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I (r. 1774-1789), when translations of newspaper articles were first made for the Grand Vizier.⁷⁰ During the reign of the next Sultan, Selim III, Ottoman embassies began to send cuttings of newspapers printed in the countries in which they resided to the Ottoman Government.⁷¹ Clearly this was part of a process whereby the Ottoman Government was trying to find out what was being said about it in the outside world.

The second stage can be seen as a logical response to this. Here the Ottoman Government published its own point of view. This happened in a number of ways. First, it began publishing its important documents in French. The *Tanzimat Firman* was produced in French, the *lingua franca* of diplomacy, to make it easier for the international community to understand. Second, in 1858 the Ottoman Government produced a newssheet, which was intended for its own diplomats to use in their contacts with the press and governments to which they were accredited.⁷² Although only a few bulletins were issued, it showed a growing acceptance that it was necessary to support Ottoman diplomats by providing them with information regularly on what the Ottoman Government was doing and why. These bulletins began again in 1878. It should be noted that both years coincide with the recent ending of conflicts in which the Ottoman Government participated and may well be connected with a desire to improve perceptions of the Ottoman Government at a time of international attention. Another example of a newssheet which responded to a particular situation, was issued in 1885 when the Ottoman Ambassador in London produced his own bulletin to respond to claims of massacres in Macedonia, which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.⁷³ It is difficult to say how far any of these made

⁷⁰ Davison, "How the Ottoman Government", pp. 361-362.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 362.

⁷² Ibid., p. 352.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 353.

a difference to impressions of the Ottoman Empire, but it is important that people within the Ottoman system thought it was important enough to attempt to change minds.

A practice which does not appear to have been used very often was the reproduction of correspondence between the Ottoman Government and a foreign government. Communications between the Ottoman Government and Greece were sent to Ottoman embassies in 1866 to demonstrate the alleged underhand tactics of the Greek Government on the Cretan issue.⁷⁴ This could be compared to the printing of British diplomatic correspondence in the Parliamentary Blue Books.

The third stage is not relevant to this research as we are not concerned with internal press management. The fourth stage that Davison referred to involved the Ottoman Government providing subsidies to foreign newspapers.⁷⁵ The first known subsidy seems to date from 1846 and is referred to in a document from the Finance Ministry.⁷⁶ More specifically, Davison referred to the Sultan's Ambassador in London – incidentally the same Musurus Paşa we have already come across – who was able to have positive articles published in the *Morning Post*, which were republished in other papers, including the Liberal supporting *Manchester Guardian*. Unusually, it is possible to describe in some detail how this relationship began and worked, at least at the start, and to trace it over a long period.

Thomas Edward Kebbel, a Conservative-supporting journalist, wrote in one of his memoirs about how he began writing positive articles about the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁷ Kebbel wrote that shortly after the end of the Crimean War a Mr Haydon would bring him sheets covered in pencil that Kebbel edited for

⁷⁴ Davison, "How the Ottoman Government", p. 353.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 364.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 365.

⁷⁷ Thomas Edward Kebbel, *Lord Beaconsfield and Other Tory Memories* (London: Cassell And Company Limited, 1907), pp. 218-219.

the *New Quarterly*.⁷⁸ This periodical was described by Kebbel as promoting the interests of the Ottoman Empire. It only appeared twice in 1860 and then folded.⁷⁹ Kebbel wrote that Haydon had been offered a job outside London. Before leaving he told him how the Ottoman Ambassador subsidised the periodical by £200 a year, which had been split between him and Haydon. Kebbel wrote that Musurus decided that an article every quarter was not sufficient and therefore made an arrangement with Algernon Borthwick, the owner of *the Morning Post*. Kebbel had regular meetings with the Ottoman Ambassador where issues were discussed, he then wrote articles that were printed in Borthwick's paper. He received payment from both Musurus Paşa and Borthwick when articles were published. They had long and detailed conversations in which we can presume that the Ottoman Ambassador outlined the views of his government for publication. Pottinger Saab's research suggests that a number of articles in the summer of 1860 were due to this connection as they were very detailed and were different in tone from those received by *the Morning Post's* correspondents in Paris and Constantinople.⁸⁰ It is unknown when Kebbel stopped writing these articles.

The relationship between Musurus and *the Morning Post* was still active in 1876 as the Ambassador had rented Combe Wood, a country estate in Devon, from Borthwick.⁸¹ In 1878 Algernon Borthwick was awarded the Order of the *Osmaniye* Second Class (see next page). The cover letter says that the

⁷⁸ It has not been possible to find any further information on this Mr Haydon, other than he was a son of the famous painter who committed suicide.

⁷⁹ Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes 1856-1878* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 209, note 37.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 236.



Fig. V : Imperial Order of the Osmanié, 2nd class, awarded to Algernon Borthwick.

award was for his work for the Stafford House Committee.⁸² However, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that services rendered in the realm of public relations might have played a part; we will see shortly how important Abdulhamid regarded the press to be and it is arguable that this award was an early example of this. The relationship seems to have still been continuing in 1895 when *the Morning Post* made almost no reference to the Armenian Massacres, apart from one article in which it was stated that all was quiet.⁸³ The foregoing shows that there was clearly a strong relationship between the Ottoman Embassy and *the Morning Post*, one that may have lasted over thirty years. Apart from this and the short-run *New Quarterly*, already mentioned, it is very difficult to say if there were subsidies to other newspapers or periodicals published in Britain.

Demirel reminds us that the Ottoman Empire was not the only state to provide subsidies to newspapers in an attempt to control what was written.⁸⁴ She questions whether any positive results came of these payments. Whether it was successful or not there were many rumours in Britain of newspapers being linked to various embassies. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was linked to the Russian Embassy, with the wife of the Ambassador writing articles.⁸⁵ If that was the case it would explain the paper being banned in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁶ The German Embassy was thought to be linked to *the Daily Telegraph*.⁸⁷

In addition to subsidising newspapers directly the Ottoman Government paid individual journalists. Demirel argues that this was more effective as it was possible to have an impact on stories at the source.⁸⁸ She provides examples of journalists paid by the Ottoman Government. Journalists were

⁸² It Raised funds for Ottoman Soldiers and Muslim refugees as a result of the 1877-1878 war.

⁸³ Brown, *Victorian*, p.236.

⁸⁴ Demirel, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 135.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Victorian*, p. 237.

⁸⁶ Demirel, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 118.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

categorised into different classes: Volasi (sic.) of *The Times* received one hundred and fifty pounds sterling and was considered first class.⁸⁹ Those journalists who were considered to be second class, those that wrote for *The Telegraph* and *The Standard* received fifty pounds.⁹⁰ Those journalists that wrote pieces the Ottoman Government did not like might be invited to explain themselves, and the ultimate punishment the Government possessed was expulsion from the empire.⁹¹

Full-time journalists were not the only writers that the Ottoman Government attempted to court. Those that wrote part-time for newspapers because they were thought to have expertise and who might have written pamphlets and books were also deemed worthy of attention. Examples here include the academic Orientalist Arminius Vambery – more of whom will be said shortly, and John Lewis Farley. The latter was also an example of what might happen if the payments stopped, as he started to write critical pieces.⁹²

Clearly Abdülhamid II understood the importance of knowing what was written about the Ottoman Empire in the press. Demirel argues that this period witnessed the systemisation and establishment of control mechanisms for press management.⁹³ The Censorship Bureau was established in 1878.⁹⁴ By 1883 its work load had become so great that a separate Foreign Press Directorate was created.⁹⁵ One of the largest collections in the Yildiz Archives (Abdülhamid's residence) is made up of cuttings they

⁸⁹ Demirel, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 137.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 138-139.

⁹² Roderic Davison, "Ottoman Public Relations in the Nineteenth Century: How the Sublime Porte Tried to Influence European Public Opinion", in *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999), pp. 355-356.

⁹³ Demirel, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 153.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

found. At least a hundred different publications are represented, ranging from *The Times* to less prestigious publications from Serbia and Bulgaria.⁹⁶

Any article that was deemed to be particularly dangerous might result in a response. In 1885 a piece from Paris published in *The Times* argued that once the power of the Caliph was reduced to that of the Pope, and the Ottoman capital placed under the control of the European Great Powers, then Europe would have peace. The Ottoman Embassy in London was ordered to write a response.⁹⁷ That year *The Times* was a cause of quite a lot of discomfort as the Ottoman Embassy was asked if it could try and change the paper's anti-Ottoman stance. The Ambassador's response was that this would be difficult as the newspaper had recently undergone an editorial change, but that he would try.⁹⁸

As well as official responses, or officially prompted responses, there were occasions when articles and books were written by people spontaneously. Charles Williams, for example, who served as a freelance correspondent and was attached to the army of Ahmed Muhtar Paşa in the 1877-1878 war, made the following comments in a book he wrote shortly afterwards:

I have seen much which has endeared to me for ever the Ottoman nation ... But any stick is good enough, in the opinion of some Christians, to beat a Turk with and the rule which they make so elastic in the case of the Muscovite is very rigid indeed when it is brought to bear on the Osmanii....⁹⁹

Another example appeared in an 1889 journal, *Diplomatic Flashes*, written by a certain Hayd Clarck. He argued that the Armenian population was treated better in the Ottoman Empire than in Russia. His contribution was significant because he had experience of long-term residence in the Ottoman Empire and had perhaps been a friend of the former *Tanzimat* Grand Vizier Ali Paşa.¹⁰⁰ Clearly some people

⁹⁶ Deringil, *Well Protected*, p. 136.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 138.

wrote positively concerning the Ottoman Empire. However, in a study of articles from periodicals in the 1876-1885 period one author wrote: '...most of the writing on Turkey is shot through with feelings of European cultural superiority'.¹⁰¹ This period fits neatly with the Bulgarian agitation and its effects.

Arminius Vambery, already referred to, wrote articles defending Sultan Abdülhamid II from criticisms in Europe.¹⁰² He is a good example of how the Sultan's own fears might be used against him through bribery. In 1888 the palace heard that Vambery was about to publish a pamphlet which would be critical of both the Sultan and his regime. After some negotiations during which Vambery first denied the story then accepted it was true, an agreement was reached which gave him 200 gold Liras and a catalogue of materials contained in the Yildiz Palace Library. The money came from a fund known as the Secret Fund for Foreign Press.¹⁰³ On this occasion it seemed to work as relations between the palace and Vambery then improved. Another example comes from a Hungarian news service that published an item alleging that the Sultan was to go on a European tour. This was rapidly denied by the Palace. But they were informed that if the payments which had been stopped were resumed, greater care would be taken over what was printed.¹⁰⁴

We have already seen that the Sultan provided decorations for those he wished to reward in the case of Algernon Borthwick. He was not the only person involved in the press that received this kind of treatment. Demirel writes that journalists also received them.¹⁰⁵ Some writers were offered them but refused. Sir Edwin Pears, already mentioned for his reporting of the Bulgarian massacres, had been

¹⁰¹ Paul Auchterlonie, "From the Eastern Question to the Death of General Gordon: Representations of the Middle East in the Victorian Periodical Press 1876-1885" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28: 1, (2001), pp.5-21, p. 14.

¹⁰² Arminius Vambery, "Sultan Abdulhamid", *New Review*, June 2 1890, pp. 493-501.

¹⁰³ Deringil, *Well Protected*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

¹⁰⁵ Demirel, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 142.

offered a decoration by the Sultan, which he rejected.¹⁰⁶ The Sultan must have been attempting to woo the critical journalist. An editor of a Belgian publication was recommended for the order of *Osmaniye* third class for his services to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁷

One aspect of the press which has not had enough academic attention is the impact of Gladstone's pamphlet on Bulgaria. Nazan Çiçek's article argued that it was '...the manifestation of Turcophobia in late Victorian Britain'.¹⁰⁸ The article examined a 1904 anonymous article and demonstrated how it could be interpreted as an Ottoman response to that attitude.¹⁰⁹ However, Çiçek's article does not show how the Ottoman Government responded directly to Gladstone's pamphlet in the immediate aftermath of its publication. Given the importance of the pamphlet in Britain, it must have had an impact on the Ottoman Government. It is arguable that the Sultan's concerns about the power of the press were affected by the popularity of the pamphlet. An echo of this may be seen in the Sultan's reaction to the article written by the former British Ambassador Sir Henry Elliott as will be dealt with in chapter five.

So far we have seen that Ottoman press policy began before the accession of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1876, but that his reign can be seen as one that led to greater consistency in the Government's efforts to respond to newspapers. It will be argued that Hobart and later Woods were used as part of these efforts. There is at least some evidence to support this, although it is not sufficient to make a conclusive case from 1878. It would make sense therefore to examine how Hobart saw himself in

¹⁰⁶ Edwin Pears, *Forty Years In Constantinople: The Recollections of Sir Edwin Pears 1873-1915* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1916), pp. 39-42.

¹⁰⁷ Davison, "Ottoman Public Relations", p. 356.

¹⁰⁸ Nazan Çiçek, "The Turkish Response to Bulgarian Horrors: A Study in English Turcophobia", *Middle Eastern Studies* 42: 1, (January 2006), pp.87-102, p. 87.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

terms of where he fitted between the Ottoman and British Governments: and whose side he was likely to take in any disagreements.

III. Hobart on his employment and the Ottoman Empire

In Hobart's memoirs he described his view of his employment and contract, writing that over sixteen years he had '...never had cause to regret the step I took.'¹¹⁰ On his employers he wrote: 'It is not difficult to serve such masters as the Turks; they are always kind and considerate to strangers in their service, and if one avoids offending them in certain matters on which they are supposed to have prejudices, and if one while giving advice avoids offensive censure, it is easy to get on.'¹¹¹ One might argue that Hobart was bound to say this. Given that it is unclear when he wrote his memoirs he perhaps hoped for continued employment and therefore did not wish to take the risk of making critical comments. If, however, we look at private correspondence, we see that similar views are reflected there too, albeit with some interesting nuances.

In 1873 Hobart wrote a letter to Baring's Bank in which he encouraged them to take an interest in Ottoman finance. He described his employers as '...my unfortunate friends the Turks...'.¹¹² In a private letter to Layard from 1877, Hobart described the Ottoman Empire as 'our side' when referring to his hope that they would defeat the Russians.¹¹³ In 1878, as part of a letter describing Hobart's time in England, he described himself as '...working hard for his friends the Turks.'¹¹⁴ Two years later in a letter

¹¹⁰ Horace Kephaet, (ed) *Hobart Pasha*, (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1915), p. 202.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹¹² Baring Archive, HC17.306, December 18 1873, Letter From Hobart Pasha.

¹¹³ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,014/276, 23 August 1877, Hobart to Layard. This date added in pencil after the letter and may not be accurate.

¹¹⁴ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,020/62, May 9 1878, Hobart to Layard.

to Gladstone, Hobart described the Ottoman Government as 'idiotic' but maintained his positive views when it came to the people describing them as 'good.'¹¹⁵

On the ordinary people, Hobart wrote his views on them when describing his hunting exploits. He recommended that hunters should stay in a 'Turkish village' because of the '...traditional hospitality of the oriental ... practiced in every sense of the Word...'. He compared that to a 'Greek village' whose inhabitants would exploit the visitor '...even to the pilfering of your cartridges.'¹¹⁶ Setting aside the obvious stereotypes, the above shows that Hobart did not spend all his time among the Ottoman elite of the capital or even the foreign communities there. It emphasises a deeper relationship with the empire.

Apart from the above, Hobart saw his continued employment by the Ottoman Government as a matter of personal honour. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary in May 1877 Hobart asked that Derby reconsider requiring his resignation from either his Ottoman position or his British one due to the war. Hobart wrote: '...it being obviously difficult for me as an Englishman and a man of honour to throw over those whom I have served nine years....'¹¹⁷ He went on to write that it would have been 'false' of him to serve the Ottoman Government in peace time, if he had intended to leave in war.¹¹⁸ Hobart did give one exception to this, that being a war in which the Ottoman Empire and Britain were on opposite sides.¹¹⁹ He firmly believed in the traditional British policy of needing the Ottoman Empire as a buffer between it and Russia. In his view the Russian Empire declared war on the Sultan

¹¹⁵ BL, Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS, 44,454/88, May 4 1879, Hobart Pasha to Gladstone.

¹¹⁶ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 248.

¹¹⁷ TNA, Enclosure in FO78/2571 No.421, May 8 1877, Hobart to Layard, Constantinople.

¹¹⁸ TNA, FO78/2571 No.421, May 8 1877, Hobart to Layard, Constantinople.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

not because of humanitarian considerations but strategic ones. By gaining control of Bessarabia and Batoum Hobart believed that Russia held the keys to Britain's '...Indian possessions.'¹²⁰

It has already been hinted that Hobart's relationship with his employers was not always as positive as the above would suggest. First, in November 1878 in a letter to the British Admiralty in which Hobart requested restoration to the Royal Navy, he also offered to resign his position with the Ottoman Government if they still felt it necessary.¹²¹ This was the first time that he offered to do this. In the letter he received in response, he was told that restoration could not be considered at that time and no reference was made to his resignation.¹²² This offer from Hobart may have reflected a deterioration in relations with his employers. The period from 1879-1880 would appear to have been particularly difficult. We will see later in this chapter that there were issues around naval reforms and Hobart's involvement in them.

At some point in the first half of 1879, Hobart was expressing concerns about Abdülhamid. He wrote to Layard telling him that the Sultan was in control but would not do '...what is right,' and that he would require 'bullying'.¹²³ Hobart did not specify the reason for this belief although in December he indicated that the Sultan was worried about the policy of the British Government. In this letter he wrote that the Sultan believed that Britain was aiming to take possession of some Ottoman territory in Asia Minor and because of this he was '...playing a false game with us under the influence of fear.'¹²⁴ It was very lucky for Hobart that letters like this did not gain public attention. Given the Sultan's reaction to the publication of a letter from Layard in which the Sultan was criticised, one cannot but

¹²⁰ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 228.

¹²¹ TNA, ADM1/6551 No. 23, 20 November 1878, Hobart to Admiralty.

¹²² TNA, ADM1/6551, No. 25, January 7 1879, Robert Hall to Hobart.

¹²³ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,027/295, No date, Bound in collection at the end of January-July 1879, Hobart to Layard, *Candide*.

¹²⁴ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,030/237, No Date, bound between December 31 1879 and January 1 1880, Hobart to Layard, Private and Confidential.

think that he would have responded in a similar way to Hobart's comments.¹²⁵ The difficulties suggested during the second half of 1879 may well be connected with increasing British pressure on the Sultan and his efforts to resist as shown earlier in this chapter.

There is a fascinating letter from Hobart to the Sultan from February 1880.¹²⁶ Hobart reported that 'friends of his' in Britain had asked him to stand for Parliament. If he were to be elected, Hobart informed the Sultan that he would be able to respond to any future criticisms and defend both the Ottoman Empire and Abdülhamid. He told the Sultan that if he were elected he would need to spend at least five months in Britain in order to deal with his Parliamentary responsibilities but would be able to attend to his Ottoman duties the rest of the year. He therefore requested the Sultan's permission in order to do this.

Hobart also sent a similar memorandum to Layard in which he outlined the same idea.¹²⁷ This is slightly different to the version in the Ottoman Archives, as here Hobart referred to the '...Turkish Party in England...' rather than 'friends'. He then proceeded to ask for permission, writing that, if the Sultan agreed, Hobart would accept the 'invitation.' As with the Ottoman version, Hobart argued that the opportunity would allow him to defend the Ottoman Empire. He concluded by outlining the practicalities of having to be in Britain for five months of the year, leaving the rest to undertake his duties in the Ottoman capital.

¹²⁵ No.3, April 27 1880, Sir A. H. Layard to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Constantinople, Extract, in *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Turkey* Turkey No. 7, 1880, C.2574, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1880), p. 2.

¹²⁶ YEE, Y.PRK MYD, 1-43, Lef. 1, February 5 1880, Hobart Pasha to the Sultan.

¹²⁷ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS39033/310, Undated, Hobart to Layard, memorandum, document inserted at the end of May 1880 but cannot have been from that date.

It is unclear whether the first document was a translation of the second and whether Layard handed it to the Sultan on Hobart's behalf. There is some evidence to support this possibility. In the covering letter that went with it, Hobart told Layard that he had sent the memorandum so that Layard could try to find out why Hobart was being ignored by the Sultan, and to help him. Given the differences in the memoranda it is also possible that they were two different versions and that the version Layard had was not the same as in the Ottoman Archives. What Layard thought of the idea is not recorded. Nor is there any indication of Abdülhamid's thinking on the subject. But the idea that Hobart could have sat in the Commons as the Sultan's representative is ludicrous. How he could have thought such a thing was possible is incomprehensible. After all, in order to take up his seat in the Commons he would have had to take the oath to Queen Victoria. Who were these 'friends' who had suggested this? Equally what was meant by the 'Turkish Party'? There is no way to know. Nothing came of the memorandum and Hobart did not stand for Parliament. It is unlikely that he would have been elected. But perhaps this was an effort on the part of Hobart to leave Ottoman service. We have already seen that he was concerned about his position and whether the Sultan was ignoring him.

In a letter to the British Ambassador, George Goschen, from July 1880, Hobart offered to resign for a second time.¹²⁸ This was undoubtedly connected to the disagreements over territorial alterations – already referred to in this chapter. As relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire were not broken off, the eventuality did not occur and Hobart's employment continued.

Whatever concerns Hobart had, they seemed to have dissipated. His relationship with the Sultan improved again, as he told Layard that he had been playing backgammon with Abdülhamid in June 1880.¹²⁹ In January of 1881 Hobart was promoted to Marshal by the Sultan. In February Hobart went

¹²⁸ TNA, ADM1/6551, No. 30, July 5 1880, Hobart to Goschen, Therapia.

¹²⁹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,034/27, June 17 1880, Hobart to Layard.

so far as to request Ottoman nationality. In a petition to the Sultan he wrote that if there was a war between the empire and Greece, and he refused to resign, he risked imprisonment by the British Government.¹³⁰ The Department of Nationality, within the Foreign Ministry, considered Hobart's request and said that he met clauses 3 and 4 of the Code of Citizenship. Clause 3 required a foreign national to reside in the empire for five years and clause four allowed citizenship to be given to certain people in special circumstances.¹³¹ According to this document, Hobart met both clauses. It then outlined the next stage of the process. The application would be sent to the consul of the power to which nationality currently belonged in order to discover if there was any reason for Ottoman citizenship to be refused. Ministers considered this report at a meeting and submitted their recommendation, in line with that of the Nationality Department, to the Sultan.¹³² The Sultan's approval was not found in the Ottoman Archives. However, given that the recommendation had gone to the palace, it is possible that it was given serious consideration.

Returning to Hobart's reason for requesting Ottoman nationality, he clearly felt that involvement in war with Greece would make his position in Britain difficult. It might be thought that imprisonment was a slight exaggeration, except for a comment in a private letter from Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, to his wife Mary.¹³³ Ponsonby expressed incomprehension at the idea that Hobart or Baker might be prosecuted by the government, and pointed out that a 'Lieutenant Salusbury' had fought with the Serbs.¹³⁴ In Hobart's case, Ponsonby believed that losing his Royal Naval position was sufficient and that a prosecution would be 'petty.'¹³⁵ It has not been possible to find any other evidence for a possible prosecution. However, the Foreign Enlistment Act (1870) did make it an

¹³⁰ YEE, Y, A, RES, 9-92 LEF, 5, Undated, Hobart Paşa's petition to the Sultan.

¹³¹ YEE, Y, A, RES, 9-92, Lef 3, February 17 1881, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Nationality, Hobart's Request for Ottoman Nationality.

¹³² YEE, Y, A, RES, 9-92 Lef 1, February 20 1881, Cabinet to the Sultan on Hobart Paşa's request for Ottoman Nationality.

¹³³ RA, Vic/ADD a/36/1346, October 29 1879, Henry Ponsonby to Mary Ponsonby, Balmoral.

¹³⁴ Valentine Baker, also known as Baker Paşa.

¹³⁵ RA, Vic/ADD A/36/1346, October 29 1879, Henry Ponsonby to Mary Ponsonby, Balmoral.

offence for a British subject to take military or naval service and participate in a conflict between two powers with which the crown was at peace.¹³⁶ The act made the offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment, which could be with hard labour. Adding to the evidence from the foregoing, is a note from Baron Tenterden (permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office), in which denationalisation was discussed.¹³⁷ Neither the addressee nor the reason for the note was indicated. However, given its location in the Royal Archives, we must assume that either the Queen herself, the Prince of Wales – with whom Hobart was personally acquainted – or someone else had asked a question of the Foreign Office. The note made it clear that Hobart could not be denationalised as he had not become an Ottoman subject. According to Act of Parliament, only someone who had taken the nationality of another country could lose their British nationality, which could be regained only after spending five years in British dominions.¹³⁸ It would appear therefore that Hobart's concerns had some basis. Why this seems to have been discussed in 1878 and 1879 may only be related to the Russo-Ottoman War, but it is possible that the deterioration in relations between the Ottoman Empire and Greece and the recent death of *The Times* Correspondent in Thessaly, Mr Ogle, may have played a part as well. This death will be referred to later in this chapter. Despite the problems outlined, Hobart clearly remained loyal to his employers and went so far as to request Ottoman citizenship, with all that that meant for his British nationality.

We have already seen that part of Hobart's reasoning for being able to remain in Ottoman employment was his belief about the strategic importance of Anglo-Ottoman friendship for Britain. In a letter from late September 1876 Hobart outlined why he thought this relationship had deteriorated. He referred to the successful efforts of the Ottoman Empire's 'great enemy' which had led to the

¹³⁶ Section 4, *Foreign Enlistment Act 1870* 1870 C.90 (Regnal. 33_and_34 Vict)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/33-34/90/section/4> (Accessed 07/08/2018).

¹³⁷ RA, Vic/main/H.22/26, May 23 1878, Tenterden, A British Subject, Gildford.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

estrangement between Britain and the Ottoman Government.¹³⁹ He was not specific here, but we can assume that Russia is meant. Another example of this appeared in a letter first published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and then republished in *John Bull* which appeared a couple of weeks prior to the one just quoted. Here he wrote: 'The Bulgarian affair, which was commenced by Christians, egged on by the unscrupulous foreign policy of a great neighbour...'.¹⁴⁰ Finally, a letter from the time of the outbreak of the war described Russia's role in the conflict as one of 'aggression and spoliation,' linking it to both Peter and Catherine the Great.¹⁴¹

In a letter from 1878, Hobart was clear who he thought was responsible for the events in Bosnia and Bulgaria prior to the outbreak of war. The letter opened by describing the current situation of Muslims in the 'conquered province of Bulgaria' and asked: 'where, oh where is the voice of public opinion such as we heard when Russian intrigues had cleverly brought on the not-to-be-defended Bulgarian massacres!'¹⁴² Hobart's dislike for Gladstone is also demonstrated where he described what was happening to the Muslims as 'being "bag and baggage" in the truest Gladstonian sense of the word.' We will return to the relationship between Gladstone and Hobart shortly.

Hobart held Russian intrigues responsible for other things as well. In a letter to *the Times* from 1878, he used them to explain why reforms had not been successful. It is unclear as to whether this referred to the period prior to 1876, or that between 1876-1878, or both. In it he argued that the reason reforms had failed so far was due to intrigue from the Russian embassy.¹⁴³ He gave two specific

¹³⁹ *The Times* October 5 1876, p. 10 column 6, "Letter from Hobart Pasha, Alleged Turkish Barbarities, Crete, September 25".

¹⁴⁰ *John Bull*, September 2 1876, p. 572 column 3, "War In The East, Crete, August 13".

¹⁴¹ *The Times*, May 2 1877, p. 6 column 4, "Hobart Pasha on the War Letter, Silistria, Danube, April 26.

¹⁴² *The Times*, July 22 1878, p. 8 column 3, "Letter from Hobart Pasha, Bulgaria, July 20".

¹⁴³ *The Times*, August 6 1878, p. 8 column 6, "Letter from Hobart Pasha, Our Responsibilities in Asia Minor, August 5".

examples of projects allegedly blocked by the Russian Embassy: a project to develop the resources of Asia Minor from Scott Russell; and a proposed new dock to be constructed at Constantinople.

Hobart further argued that reform minded ministers could be sent into exile due to the Russian Ambassador. It is difficult to know to whom Hobart is referring here. It is unlikely to be Midhat Paşa, (the Ex-Grand Vizier exiled by Abdülhamid) as in a letter written in 1877, Hobart contradicted the rumour that Midhat had been exiled due to Russian intrigue, arguing instead that it was the decision of the Sultan, and that he had been sent into exile in one of the best ships of the Ottoman Navy and given funds for his expenses by the Sultan.¹⁴⁴ We saw in the previous chapter how it was commonly believed that the Russian Ambassador Ignatieff had too much influence over Mahmud Nedim Pasha and Sultan Abdülaziz.

In addition to blaming Russia for the deterioration of Anglo-Ottoman relations, Hobart was quite happy to criticise the British Government when he thought their policies were having the same result. Or indeed when he felt the British Government was being unfair. Take for example the leak of the agreement between Britain and Russia concerning territorial arrangements after the Russo-Ottoman War. In a private letter to Layard, Hobart expressed shock. He wrote: 'I cannot and do not believe that Lord Beaconsfield is a traitor (no other word applies if all in that circular is true)...'.¹⁴⁵ There followed articles in *The Times* in which the cession of Batoum was criticised (this will be covered in more detail later in this chapter). But, it should be said here that, according to another letter from Hobart to Layard, this defence of Batoum annoyed the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ *The Times*, March 12 1877, p. 9 column 6, "Hobart Pasha on Rumours Letter, Constantinople, March 2".

¹⁴⁵ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS,39,020/375, June 11 1878, Hobart to Layard, Marlborough Club, Pall Mall.

¹⁴⁶ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,021/223, August 15 1878, Hobart to Layard, Tulchan on Glenisla.

After the election of the Liberal Party in 1880, Hobart's criticism of the British Government increased. This was undoubtedly linked to Hobart's views on the Prime Minister, Gladstone. In a letter to *The Times* from October 1876, he described the outcry on the part of the public as being encouraged by the '... cleverest of journalists and some of the first statesmen in England...'.¹⁴⁷ He went on to argue that he thought they were '...unwittingly, I presume...' supporting Russia. Clearly the leading statesman referred to here was Gladstone. In the following year, letters were published in *The Times* from Gladstone and Hobart illustrating their differences. Gladstone had referred to Hobart in a speech in the House of Commons in which he expressed shame that an Englishman was defending the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁸ Hobart responded with a private letter in which he sought to defend his position. This letter was then forwarded to *The Times* by Gladstone, according to Hobart's wish, along with a short covering note in which he wrote that, whilst Hobart was acting as he thought honourably, Gladstone hoped he would soon be 'undeceived!'.¹⁴⁹

Hobart first complimented Gladstone for being an exemplar of 'justice and fair play.' But then went on to ask why he had been so unfair when it came to 'Turkish Massacres'. He accused the ex-Prime Minister of a lack of objectivity and concluded his letter with the following question asked by Ottomans: 'why does he make out one side to be all angels, and those on the other devils?'¹⁵⁰ In private, Hobart went quite a lot further in describing Gladstone as a 'scoundrel' and '...almost as bad as mad Freeman'.¹⁵¹ In a letter to Lord Salisbury from November 1880, Hobart described how the British Ambassador, George Goschen, had said that Hobart was 'the enemy of the Government';

¹⁴⁷ *The Times*, October 5 1876, p. 10 column 6, "Letter From Hobart Pasha, Alleged Turkish Barbarities, Crete, Sept. 25, 1876".

¹⁴⁸ Hansard, HC Deb 23 March 1877, vol 233, col 430.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, May 14 1877, p. 10 column 2, "Mr. Gladstone and Hobart Pasha, Letters From Gladstone and Hobart".

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,017/76, December 12 1877, Hobart to Layard, *Izzeddin*, on way to Batoum. The Freeman here must be the historian E. A. Freeman.

Hobart's response was to agree.¹⁵² He reminded the former Foreign Secretary that he had previously disagreed with his policy of giving up Batoum and now was criticising the Treaty of Berlin. Hobart went on to give two reasons for his criticisms of the Gladstone administration. The first was that the policy of the Liberal Government to insist on an enormous rectification of the Greek frontier in favour of Greece convinced everyone in the Ottoman Empire that 'bag and baggage' was the official British policy and that Muslims were to be removed from Europe.¹⁵³ This led internal critics of the Ottoman government, who would have supported Europe in '...forcing the corrupt rulers of Turkey to change their ways', to unite behind it.¹⁵⁴ Second, Hobart criticised the naval demonstration describing it as a 'farce',¹⁵⁵ presumably on the grounds that ships couldn't enforce a territorial transfer. He went on to criticise the fact that the Sultan was being expected to force his own population to give in to European pressure.¹⁵⁶

We have already seen that Hobart used his connections with Britain to support his position within the Ottoman Empire. The last chapter suggested that the reason he provided a copy of his naval report to the British Admiralty was to gain their support for it. This chapter has already shown how he asked for support from the British Ambassador with the Sultan. In 1874 in a letter to the Foreign Secretary to request his support in being reinstated in the Royal Navy, Hobart argued that his removal from the British Navy had placed him under a 'cloud' which had made his job more difficult.¹⁵⁷ This version of Hobart's letter omitted a sentence in which he argued that his opponents in the Ottoman Empire used his removal to criticise him.¹⁵⁸ The Foreign Secretary forwarded Hobart's request to the Admiralty,

¹⁵² SP, November 19 1880, Hobart Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, p. 2.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ No.38 October 16 1874, Admiral Hobart Pasha to the Earl of Derby, Army and Navy Club, London, in *Correspondence Respecting Removal*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, ADM1/6551, October 16 1874, Admiral Hobart Pasha to the Earl of Derby, Army and Navy Club, London.

supporting it and arguing that he considered Hobart's restoration 'a matter of Imperial policy'.¹⁵⁹ This led to Hobart being restored shortly afterwards. He was again removed in 1877 and restored in 1885 for what would appear to be the same reason. At least this was the reason stated in Parliament during a debate on 13 July 1885. George Shaw Lefevre, who had been the Post Master General in the previous Gladstone Government, made a speech on behalf of the Earl of Northbrook, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty, in which he said that reasons of 'imperial policy' were even stronger now than they had been in 1874.¹⁶⁰ However, the letter from the Foreign Office to the Admiralty did not make this explicit, merely noting that the Foreign Secretary saw no reason not to restore Hobart.¹⁶¹ We might presume however, that deteriorating relations between Britain and Russia at this time probably played a role in this decision.

There were also occasions when Hobart was used by the British Embassy to get information. One of these occasions was eluded to in the previous chapter with reference to the Cretan affair. Another involved the death of *The Times* Correspondent, Charles Ogle, who was killed during the violence which took place between Ottoman forces and rebels in Thessaly in 1878. An investigation was carried out by a joint commission of representatives from the Ottoman and British Governments. Hobart was not involved in this investigation. However he had been consulted by the British Ambassador in Constantinople.

Hobart had complained to Layard about the activities of newspaper correspondents in a telegram from 22 March.¹⁶² He wrote that allegations of Ottoman massacres of Christians were exaggerated. In

¹⁵⁹ No.39, November 3 1874, Lord Tenterden to the secretary to the Admiralty, Foreign Office, in *Correspondence Respecting Removal*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁰ Hansard, HC Deb 13 July 1885, Vol 299, col 550.

¹⁶¹ TNA, ADM1/6767 No.3, June 1 1885, Author unclear, Letter to the Secretary to the Admiralty.

¹⁶² BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,019/65, March 22 1878, Hobart to Layard, Volo.

a later telegram, he referred to Ogle, claiming that he had been in contact with people from Athens.¹⁶³ Hobart reported the death of Ogle to the British Consul at Volo, and told him that Ottoman reports suggested that Ogle had been with the rebels when he was killed.¹⁶⁴ Layard told Lord Salisbury that he had sent a telegram to Hobart as soon as he had received the news concerning Ogle's death, asking Hobart to undertake 'inquiries' and inform him of what he found.¹⁶⁵ He also told the Foreign Secretary that Hobart had already sent two telegrams in which he had said that Ogle had been with the rebels during the Ottoman attack on Macrinitsa (a village in Greece) and that after his death exaggeration characterised the reports which came out of the region. Hobart's final involvement in this incident was reported to Salisbury in a telegram from the British Consul in Athens dated 9 April.¹⁶⁶ According to a report from the Greek Consul Hobart had suggested that an investigation be undertaken by the Consular body with the support of the Ottoman authorities. The British Consul had said that an investigation would only be possible if witnesses' personal safety and property were guaranteed. Hobart responded that this was not possible and that was the end of the matter as far as Hobart's involvement was concerned.

It is likely that Hobart was used by Layard because Layard trusted him. But that trust was not universal. One telegram suggested that Hobart and Ogle had a disagreement in which Hobart threatened to have the correspondent removed from the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁷ Another held him responsible for what happened to Ogle and alleged that he was trying to set up a commission of investigation which would be favourable to the Ottoman Government.¹⁶⁸ This may well explain why Hobart had no involvement

¹⁶³ No.3, April 2 1878, Mr Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, in *Correspondence Relating to Death of Mr. Ogle in Turkey*, Turkey No. 34, 1878, C.2015, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1878), p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Enclosure2, March 31 1878, Mr. Fitzgerald to Mr. Wyndham, in No.20 in *Correspondence Relating to death*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁵ No.28, April 9 1878, Mr. Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, in *Correspondence relating to Death* p. 14.

¹⁶⁶ Enclosure1 in No.29, April 9 1878, Mr. Wyndham to the Marquis of Salisbury, in *Correspondence Relating to death*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁷ No.9, April 2 1878, Anonymous, Athens, in *Correspondence Relating to death*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ Enclosure in No.37, April 16 1878, Mr. Wyndham to the Marquis of Salisbury, in *Correspondence Relating to Death*, p. 34.

in the commission that was set up. That commission determined that Ogle had been with the rebels and that he had probably been killed during their escape from the battlefield.¹⁶⁹

The foregoing would lead us to the conclusion that Hobart was quite willing to argue the case for the Ottoman Government in public and private even without being asked. By the same token he was also willing to criticise the British Government when he thought it was acting against what he believed to be British interests. This applied to both Conservative and Liberal Governments, although it should be noted that particular criticisms were reserved for Gladstone. Hobart was also happy to communicate with the British Embassy and provide them with information. Although it should be noted that this appeared to be the case particularly with Layard and not so much with other Ambassadors. We will see in the next chapter that there were many similarities between Hobart and Woods.

IV. Acting For The Sultan 1878-1886

It will be argued that there were four ways in which Sultan Abdülhamid II made use of Hobart initially and Woods later not related to the Ottoman Navy. First, to participate in his informal or personal diplomatic efforts, second to write pieces for British newspapers or periodicals, third to escort English speaking visitors in the Ottoman capital and fourth to participate in Ottoman commissions which were politically sensitive and created to investigate specific events. The first two will be treated alongside each other for reasons that will become clear.

¹⁶⁹ Enclosure 1 in no. 49, May 8 1878, Consul-General Fawcett to Mr. Layard, Volo, in *Correspondence Relating to Death*, p. 43.

Shortly before the Congress of Berlin began Hobart arrived in Britain. The precise date is not known: but an article appeared in *The Times* referring to Hobart's arrival at Marseille on 26 April.¹⁷⁰ We can safely assume that he was on his way to Britain. It has not been possible to find any instructions in the Ottoman Archives indicating whether the Sultan ordered Hobart to visit Britain and what to do when there. However, in the letter that Hobart wrote to the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield, he requested a meeting as Hobart had been instructed by the Sultan 'to take certain steps' and wished to explain them 'to your Lordship'.¹⁷¹ Hobart does not specify what these steps might be. However he does express a preference for a personal meeting. No reply has been located. But, a meeting may have taken place as there was a reference to a conversation with Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary, and Beaconsfield in a letter to Layard.¹⁷² According to the letter, this conversation involved Hobart attempting to persuade them of the importance of not allowing Russia to continue in control of any of Bulgaria.

A second letter dated 4 June included Hobart's ideas on how reforms in the Ottoman Empire should be managed. He wrote that the majority of the population, excluding the rulers, would welcome reforms.¹⁷³ He went on to write that to place them under the control of Russia would be 'madness'.¹⁷⁴ He also wrote that England should take a leading role as the Turks would welcome her interference.¹⁷⁵ If these two letters can be read together – they appear together in the archive and the content would indicate that they were written close together – can we then conclude that the second letter is a fuller outline of the first? This offers a tantalising prospect of the Sultan offering Britain influence over his government. Given what we know of Sultan Abdülhamid this is extremely unlikely to be the case. It is

¹⁷⁰ *The Times*, April 27 1878, p. 7 Column 4, "France, Paris, Friday, April 26, 9.30PM".

¹⁷¹ Oxford University, Disraeli Papers, 1878 Dep. Hughenden 70/2, Fols. 100-103, Files 111-112, Undated, Hobart Letter to Disraeli 1, Army and Navy Club.

¹⁷² BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,020/180, May 30 1878, Hobart to Layard.

¹⁷³ Oxford University, Disraeli Papers, 1878 Dep. Hughenden 70/2 Fols. 100-103, Files 111-112, 4 June 1878, Hobart Letter to Disraeli 2, Army and Navy Club, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

more likely that Hobart was expressing a personal view of the need for a stronger relationship between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, one that he expressed on many occasions in print, and that the second letter cannot be read as an indication of the Sultan's instructions to Hobart. If the above is an indication of the Sultan using Hobart as part of his personal diplomacy it shows the risk of an agent going beyond their orders.

This could be the end of the story. However, some idea of what the Sultan may have wanted Hobart to do may be deduced from newspaper articles and a letter to the Prince of Wales from November of the same year. There are a number of letters from Hobart in *The Times* for this year, but, for the purposes of this section two are particularly relevant. The first, appearing in the 18 June edition, concerned Batoum and argued that it should not be given to Russia. We should bear in mind that *The Globe* article had appeared just a few days earlier. The second appeared in the 14 September edition and dealt with the border between the Ottoman Empire and Greece, arguing that there should not be a large rectification of the frontier in Greece's favour. Perhaps the Sultan's instructions included something on either or both of these issues.

Taking the loss of Batoum first. Hobart questioned the transfer of the area to Russia given that the region was inhabited by Muslims.¹⁷⁶ He asked the following: 'We have been taught to believe that Russia waged war against Turkey solely in the cause of the ill-used Christians in Bulgaria. If this is so, it is hard to understand (at least to the uninitiated) on what grounds Russia demands territory inhabited solely by Muslims in Asia Minor.'¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ *The Times*, June 18 1878, p. 10 column 6, Letter from Hobart Pasha, "Batoum and its Territory", June 16.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Ten days later Hobart added a strategic argument to the religious one in a letter which appeared in *The Morning Post*. Hobart seemed to contradict the Prime Minister's assertion that only three ships could be anchored in the port; thus reducing the significance and the damage in allowing Russia to take control of it. Hobart claimed that upwards of twelve or thirteen ships could safely remain at Batoum if they were secured to the beach.¹⁷⁸ This would presumably strengthen the argument that Batoum was strategically important because of the number of ships that could potentially be stationed there. Although it should be said that in the earlier letter to *The Times* Hobart appeared to have contradicted himself.¹⁷⁹ In that letter he stated that '...no great harm to British interests would be done' if Batoum were transferred to Russia, at least strategically speaking. However, he did also state that making the port a free one would be a preferable option.

On the subject of the Graeco-Ottoman frontier, Hobart questioned the decision by the Great Powers to give Greece territory at all, arguing that just because Russia had torn the Ottoman Empire apart should not mean Greece should be allowed to tear a piece off as well.¹⁸⁰ The Ottoman Government may decide to offer territory to Greece, but it will only do so to prevent war. That territory could be in Thessaly but not Epirus where the population was Muslim. Finally, Hobart argued that Greece should not receive anything until it can govern the territory it already had better, and reduce its ambitions, which he describes as 'insane.' It should be remembered that earlier in the year Hobart had been on the spot commanding the ships which were supporting the military force sent to deal with the rebellious provinces and so would have had first-hand knowledge of them.

¹⁷⁸ *The Morning Post*, July 26 1878, p. 5 column 3, "Hobart Pasha, Batoum".

¹⁷⁹ *The Times*, June 18 1878, p. 10 column 6, Letter from Hobart Pasha, "Batoum And Its Territory", June 16.

¹⁸⁰ *The Times*, September 14 1878, p. illegible column 6, Letter From Hobart Pasha To the Editor of *The Times*, "The Eastern Question", September 13.

There is further private evidence to suggest that Hobart was involved in some kind of diplomatic activity. The Royal Archives contain a letter from Hobart to the Prince of Wales in which he apologised for his 'doings' becoming public knowledge.¹⁸¹ The letter went on to mention Hobart's meeting with the King of Greece and described him as speaking '...sensibly on the state of his kingdom.' Hobart told the Prince that both Layard and he would work to persuade the Ottoman Government to cede something to Greece. Are the doings referred to here the meeting with the King and the fact, much talked about in the press, that Hobart was carrying letters from the Queen and the Prince of Wales? In a letter to Layard, Hobart wrote that he was asked to deliver a letter to the King of Greece from the Queen and the Prince and to discuss the Greek situation.¹⁸² If the Sultan had asked Hobart to support Ottoman rights in Britain, it is possible that the letter from the Queen, or Prince of Wales, was the result and that the letter reflected Hobart's concerns. Hobart's concerns seem to fit perfectly with the Sultan's on this issue as it was in the Ottoman Empire's interest to cede as little territory to Greece as possible. But there are no written instructions that have been found in the Ottoman Archives to confirm this. There is a short note from the Ottoman Embassy in Athens confirming that Hobart met with the King of Greece and that border issues were discussed, although no specifics are mentioned.¹⁸³

The fact that Hobart also dined with the Queen at Windsor in May further adds circumstantial evidence to suggest that he might have been asked to deliver a note and that he was acting for the Sultan. In her journal, Victoria makes no reference to either. However she described Hobart as 'very interesting' and as telling her that if England were to be more forward she would be able to benefit from the support of 500,000 'Turks'.¹⁸⁴ He also told the Queen '...that there had no doubt been

¹⁸¹ RA, Vic/Add A/5/138, November 10 1878, Hobart Hampden Pasha to The Prince of Wales, Constantinople.

¹⁸² BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,020/301, After June 11 1878, Hobart to Layard. This letter is probably from September or October given that Hobart didn't leave Britain until September at the earliest.

¹⁸³ BBA, HR TO 7/70 October 8 1878, From the Ottoman Embassy in Athens to the Ottoman Foreign Minister and Grand Vizier Safvet Paşa, Hobart's meeting with the King of Greece.

¹⁸⁴ RA, Vic/Main/qvj/1878, May 4 1878, pp. 231-232.

treachery, but only in some instances.¹⁸⁵ There was no indication as to who or what was referred to by this.

Some of the foregoing is speculative given the lack of instructions. We might also assume that Hobart was asked to make use of his family name to put forward the Sultan's case. We will see later that there were occasions when Hobart was given definite instructions concerning what he should do as part of the Sultan's diplomacy. Separate to that however and given Abdülhamid's awareness of the importance of the press, it is fair to assume that if Hobart was given instructions in 1878 they might have included writing positive articles for the media in Britain. If they did he certainly did not disappoint.

Hobart continued to support the Ottoman Government's position in print in both 1879 and 1880. The first letter from 1879 is very similar to that from 1878 and repeated the arguments concerning Greece's ambitions.¹⁸⁶ Hobart was clear that in his view the frontier rectification as offered from the Ottoman Government was fair. Hobart pointed to Yanina (Ioannina, Greece) as a particular bone of contention. The Ottoman Government refused to cede the town because of its strategic importance and proximity to the border of a province with Albanian (Muslim) inhabitants. Hobart emphasised the importance of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Greece for the region and hoped it would be amicable. He went further and hoped for a future alliance. The idea of an alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Greece at the time must have read like a forlorn hope. He finished by using an argument based on fairness, asking foreigners to put themselves in the Ottoman Government's position of being asked to give up territory after territory and to feel sympathetic at her refusal.

¹⁸⁵ RA, Vic/MAIN/QVJ/1878, May 4 1878, pp. 231-232.

¹⁸⁶ *The Times*, June 17 1879, p. 10 column 2, Letter From Hobart Pasha, "The Greek Difficulty", Constantinople, June 6.

A second letter on the Greek issue followed in October. This letter seemed to be more positive in that Hobart now believed that the Great Powers were acting more fairly towards the Ottoman Empire. Hobart also wrote that more reasonable people were making themselves heard in Greece rather than Government, by what he terms 'mobocracy.' He continued to write about the importance of friendship between Greece and the Ottoman Empire because between them they would be able to block the advance of the Slavs. Presumably Hobart is here referring to Russian-backed nations and what he called the 'semi-civilised Bulgarians.'¹⁸⁷ The letter repeated Hobart's belief that, because the Ottoman Empire lost the last war, did not mean that she should lose territories to other powers.

The final letter on this subject to be used here was far less positive. Hobart opened by accepting that he would be criticised for what he was about to write. He characterised the latest proposed territorial adjustment as unfair to the Ottoman Empire as it removed all the strategic places, including the aforementioned Yanina and transferred a mixed population to Greece. He argued that Greece would have to maintain high expenditure on the military to keep the two provinces taken from the Ottoman Empire. Hobart wrote that there seemed to be a policy of removing territories from the Ottoman Empire in Europe and warned that those who have this policy should be careful not to be burned by it.¹⁸⁸ He repeated again his belief that removing territories was unfair.

In 1881 there were no letters from Hobart dealing with the territorial issue. However, a Reuters' Telegram printed in *The Morning Post*, and presumably other papers as well, referred to a 'statement' to which Hobart Paşa was 'authorised to give publicity' on the Ottoman attitude towards the cession

¹⁸⁷ *The Times*, October 25 1879, p. 4 column 5, Letter From Hobart Pasha, "The Greek Frontier Question, Constantinople, October 12.

¹⁸⁸ *The Times*, August 10 1880, p. 4 column 3, Letter From Hobart Pasha, "The Greek Question", Constantinople, August 2.

of territory to Greece.¹⁸⁹ This statement emphasised the Ottoman Government's belief that cession of territory was not mandated by the Treaty of Berlin but recommended. It further outlined that the Ottoman Empire had suggested a new line of demarcation, which was fair, but had not been accepted. Finally it alleged that Greece had been acting aggressively and that the Ottoman Government had not responded to these various provocations. There is a sentence in this piece which sounded like it was from Hobart: 'Europe, says the statement in conclusion, is too just to tolerate such a situation any longer.'

From whom was this statement authorised? No documents were found in the Ottoman Archives to support the view that he was ordered to make it. It is clear that the arguments made in this statement match Ottoman policy and so, despite the lack of any archival evidence, it would be logical to assume that Hobart was ordered to publicise the Sultan's position. The tenure of the statement fits with the letters referred to above. Hobart's references to fair play had become so well known that it appeared in a spoof article in the weekly magazine *Fun* in March 1877: 'in the interests of that fair play which I demand for the Turks, and of that English pension which I stick to...'¹⁹⁰ We have already seen that the territorial adjustment to Greece was eventually altered to make it more favourable to the Ottoman Government.

In 1881 and 1883 Hobart wrote to Queen Victoria's private Secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby. On the first occasion Hobart wrote that he had a message which he described as '...most private (not official in any way)...' from the Sultan.¹⁹¹ The letter then went on to say that the Sultan did not understand European etiquette. Presumably this was in preparation to the request that the Queen should write a

¹⁸⁹ *The Morning Post*, January 19 1881, p. 5 column 3, "The Greek Question, Reuter's Telegrams, Constantinople, January 17".

¹⁹⁰ A similar publication to *Punch, Fun*, March 21 1877, p. 108, "Hobart Pasha on Rumours".

¹⁹¹ RA, Vic/Main/h.26/132, June 28 1881, Hobart to Ponsonby, Alexandra Hotel, Hyde Park.

letter of friendship to be sent to the Sultan through Hobart. In an attempt to flatter the Queen's vanity perhaps, Hobart described the Sultan as always talking of her as a friend who is sympathetic towards him. The offer was declined by Ponsonby on the grounds that it was not within his responsibilities to ask if the Queen wished to convey a message privately to a foreign sovereign.¹⁹²

During this trip to Britain Hobart made a speech at a Conservative association meeting in Portsmouth to support the local Member of Parliament – Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. It is conceivable that this speech may contain hints as to what the Sultan might have wanted Hobart to convey to the Queen. Hobart's speech was written up in *The Times*.¹⁹³ In it Hobart referred to Anglo-Ottoman friendship. He made two points as to why friendship between the two powers was important for Britain. The first related to the position of the Sultan and Islam: The Sultan was the head of the Muslim religion, which extended to the very walls of China and throughout Hindustan (sic. India).¹⁹⁴ This was with the intention of reminding people of the influence the Sultan could have over Britain's Muslim subjects in India. The underlying text being that maintaining control there would be far harder if the Muslim population thought that the British Government were mistreating the Sultan's Government. The second point he made referred to the benefit of the Ottoman Empire as an ally if given the opportunity to reform: he said that '...the Turks were a noble race that, with a little consideration, would mount to its proper place and would prove a good ally in time of need'.¹⁹⁵ But whether this was simply Hobart stating his own view, or following the Sultan's orders is difficult to know.

The second letter to Sir Henry Ponsonby from 1883 says that Hobart had been asked to deliver a 'private message' from the Sultan.¹⁹⁶ Hobart described it as being not very important but that in order

¹⁹² RA, Vic/Main/h.26/137, June 30 1881, Ponsonby to Hobart, Windsor Castle.

¹⁹³ *The Times*, June 11 1881, p. 2 column 6, "Hobart Pasha At Portsmouth".

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ RA, Vic/Main/h.27/6, May 19 1883, Hobart to Ponsonby, Private, 17 Barclay Square London.

to discharge his responsibility to the Sultan and after speaking to the Prince of Wales he had decided to write to Ponsonby. Again Hobart is rebuffed by Ponsonby, who told him that he should contact the Ottoman Ambassador or the Foreign Office to find out the appropriate form for delivering such a message.¹⁹⁷

Clearly there are no actual details of what the Sultan's messages might have been. It is most likely that he was trying to establish a personal relationship with the Queen, a practice which he used within his own empire. It should also be remembered that Abdülhamid had met Queen Victoria during his trip to Britain in 1867. Also, it is possible that due to the difficulties with the Liberal Government under Gladstone the Sultan was perhaps trying to circumvent traditional diplomatic channels. By establishing a relationship with the Queen, the Sultan may have felt he could alter British policy. If that was the case, clearly it was unsuccessful. It should also be remembered that Gladstone, the Prime Minister at this time, was not popular with the Queen, so it might be that extra care was taken by her private secretary to avoid the Queen embarrassing herself with the Premier. After all, Hobart had attended a dinner at Windsor Castle in 1878 but not in 1881 or 1883.

Apart from Hobart's desire to improve Anglo-Ottoman relations, there are two possible issues that the Sultan might have wished him to discuss with the Queen. In 1881 Hobart wrote a letter to *The Times* expressing concern over France's seizure of the Ottoman province of Tunis and accused both government and opposition of being unfair towards the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁸ He wrote that the Ottoman Empire should not expect justice from the Great Powers, and that, because of this, he is not surprised that they have ignored the principle of the Sultan's sovereignty over Tunis, something they had all previously accepted. Hobart could not understand how English statesman could ignore France's

¹⁹⁷ RA, Vic/Main/h.27/7, May 21 1883, Ponsonby to Hobart Windsor Castle.

¹⁹⁸ *The Times*, 26 May 1881, p. 5 column 6, "Hobart Pasha, Tunis, Letter to the Editor".

seizure, as it gave her a potential naval base from which to threaten Britain's sea route to India. Hobart explained the lack of interest in Ottoman territorial integrity in Britain as being due to the financial problems and the lack of payments to the bondholders. He concluded by saying that, once repayments had begun again, '...then and not till then ... more interest be taken in the integrity of Turkey.'¹⁹⁹ This may have appeared as yet another example of the compensation policy in action. Certainly the German Government had encouraged France to occupy Tunis.²⁰⁰

In 1883 the issue was Egypt. Hobart's article criticising British policy on the Egyptian question appeared in *The Times* on 26 May, shortly after his request to Ponsonby was refused.²⁰¹ He opened by showing how Britain had become isolated from many of the Powers through her actions. Then he argued that the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire had become angry at Britain because 'rightly or wrongly' they believed she had '...taken forcible possession of one of the fairest gems in their Sovereign's crown.'²⁰² He further wrote that people in the Ottoman Empire looked on the behaviour of the British Government with '...amazement and regret.' He criticised the British Government for not maintaining its support in opposition for movements for liberation when in power and that this was something else that Muslims could not understand. Hobart was clear that the British Government would need a lot more soldiers to pacify Egypt, comparing the situation to France in Tunis. He argued that if Britain did not want to remain in Egypt indefinitely then an understanding with the Sultan would be necessary. Hobart made one other point which it is worth referring to here. He contradicted the idea that the Sultan refused to send troops to Egypt, and had therefore lost the right to have a say. He argued that when the fleets of France and Britain arrived in Egyptian waters, the French Admiral had threatened to sink any Ottoman ships attempting to land soldiers. Lord Dufferin (the British Ambassador) suggested to the Ottoman Government that she should send troops,

¹⁹⁹ *The Times*, 26 May 1881, p. 5 column 6, "Hobart Pasha, Tunis, Letter to the Editor".

²⁰⁰ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 75.

²⁰¹ *The Times*, 26 May 1883, p. 11 column 6, "Hobart Pasha, Egypt, Letter to the Editor, May 25".

²⁰² *IBID.*

but laid terms that were ‘...so offensive to the pride of the Sultan that he could but refuse to accept them.’²⁰³

But whether either of these issues were contained in the Sultan’s message cannot be known. One final remark on these incidents should be made here. Hobart’s comment that the Sultan did not understand how European etiquette worked is interesting. Did he mean that the Sultan did not appreciate that European diplomacy was no longer carried out directly between sovereigns and other heads of state? If that was his meaning, it was not entirely accurate. Relationships between people were still important – the meetings of king’s and emperors still mattered. However, it is accurate to say that Queen Victoria’s ability to have an effect on foreign policy was more limited than her ancestors’ had been. The Sultan on the other hand, as has already become very clear, firmly believed in personal relationships and his own position as the ultimate arbiter of the fate of his empire.

As a further example of the former, some consideration was given to sending a diplomatic suite to meet with Queen Victoria when she was on holiday in Italy in 1879 and so close to the Ottoman frontier. According to a coded telegram sent from Constantinople to Rome, the Sultan had planned to send Hobart and Rustem Paşas, accompanied by the Sultan’s son, to deliver a letter to the Queen.²⁰⁴ According to this telegram the Secretary at the British Embassy, Edward Malet, had persuaded the Sultan not to send the Prince given that the Queen was not on an official visit to Italy, describing her presence there as ‘incognito’;²⁰⁵ although one must express serious doubts about whether there was any prospect of the Sultan sending his son as part of this suite.

²⁰³ *The Times*, May 26 1883, p. 11 column 6, “Egypt, Letter to the Editor, May 25”.

²⁰⁴ TNA, FO78/2967 No. 280, April 1 1879, Hobart’s Mission to Queen and Promotion, Telegrams from Layard/Malet to FO, V. II, April-June 1879.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Hobart was at the same time made an Aide-de-Camp to the Sultan, presumably to make his role more official.²⁰⁶ He was also decorated with the *Osmaniye* First Class by the Sultan.²⁰⁷ It is not known whether the mission took place. However, given the existence of a letter from Hobart to the Sultan in the Ottoman Archives from Venice, in which Hobart wrote that he had left the capital on the Sultan's order, it may well have.²⁰⁸

Returning to 1883 and the subject of Egypt, a second letter followed in November.²⁰⁹ The purpose of this letter was to again contradict the notion that the Sultan had been unwilling to send soldiers to Egypt. The French Admiral's statement concerning forbidding access was repeated, and this time Hobart also claimed that British ships had been ordered to prevent Ottoman ships from approaching Egypt. In this letter he called the initial offer from Lord Dufferin 'humiliating.' But also gave further details on what it was. The landing place was to be restricted to a coastal strip between Alexandria and Port Said, dangerous due to the wind blowing from the sea to the shore and poor weather; the shore itself heavily fortified by the rebels; and the soldiers were to be commanded from the British ships. Continued negotiations which offered better terms were ended by Tel-El-Kebir. Hobart argued that the British Government were happy that the Ottoman Government was unable to send troops. He described the suggestion that the Sultan was unwilling as 'adding insult to injury.'²¹⁰ Hobart seemed to have believed that there was a view amongst some people that if Ottoman soldiers were allowed to go to Egypt they would join the rebels. He denied this and wrote that the commanders were in fact more worried that a few Ottoman troops would bring the rebellion to an end and remove the

²⁰⁶ TNA, FO78/2967 No.300, April 1 1879, Malet to Lord Salisbury, Pera.

²⁰⁷ TNA, FO78/2966, No.276, March 31 1879, Hobart's Mission to Queen in Italy, From Malet, Constantinople.

²⁰⁸ YEE, Y. PRK. MYD, 1/26, Lef. 3, May 9 1879, Hobart Paşa to the Sultan, Hotel Britannia Venice.

²⁰⁹ *The Times*, November 29 1883, p. 8 column 2, "The Turkish Intervention In Egypt", Letter to the editor, Hobart Pasha, Constantinople, November 21".

²¹⁰ Ibid.

opportunity for the Royal Navy to gain a success. He concluded by arguing that Britain would ease her position in Egypt by coming to an understanding with the Sultan and having Ottoman soldiers there as well. We have already seen that Abdülhamid had been concerned about sending troops to Egypt and whether he really would have is a question difficult to answer.

Hobart returned to the Egyptian question in three further letters in 1884. The first appeared in April.²¹¹ This was a response to a speech from Gladstone, which Hobart described as 'one of the most violent speeches that ever issued from the lips of a Prime Minister,' but where he made reference to the Sultan's rights. He saw this as positive in terms of the Prime Minister recognising that it was not in British imperial interests for any action on the part of Britain to lead to the carving up of the Sultan's dominions. Hobart described Britain's position in Egypt as 'daily becoming more complicated and embarrassing.' Although he did not wish to explore the current situation, the subtext was that the current government was responsible. He hoped that an agreement could be reached which would 'calm the justifiable irritation of the Porte towards England' and that the agreement would have to accept the rights of the Sultan.²¹² He concluded by arguing that Britain's only interest in Egypt after the disorders were over should be its position on the way to India.

In May a longer letter appeared in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* in which Hobart was less reticent. He described the Liberal Government's Egyptian policy as '...a gigantic and fateful error from beginning to end.'²¹³ He argued it was reactive not proactive and wasn't dealing with the original cause of the Egyptian difficulty.²¹⁴ For Hobart that was a growing tide of nationalism partly caused by the

²¹¹ *The Times*, April 17 1884, p. 9 column 6, Letter from Hobart Pasha, "Turkey and the Egyptian Question", Constantinople, April 11.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Hobart Pasha, "A Voice From The East On Oriental Questions", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 135: 824, (June 1884), pp.835-849, p. 836.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

appointment of foreigners – sometimes with little ability –instead of Egyptians.²¹⁵ He accused the Prime Minister of either being ‘ignorant’ or ‘prejudiced’ given that he had supported ‘nations for nationalities’ but not in Egypt.²¹⁶

Hobart’s solution was to work with the Sultan. He argued that British policy since 1841 had been to support the Ottoman Empire and although some mistakes had been made on its part they weren’t serious enough to warrant a change in British policy.²¹⁷ Britain’s support of the Sultan during the Russo-Ottoman War wasn’t sufficient and the policy of the British Government since 1880 had been ‘antagonistic’.²¹⁸ Hobart recommended that Britain should be supporting the Sultan to re-establish his suzerainty over Egypt.²¹⁹ Ottoman administrators could replace the European ones, with Ottoman soldiers for security.²²⁰ Abdülhamid might have agreed with Hobart on his comments about the lack of support from Britain during the war and the policy of the Liberal Government. He might not have agreed with him on sending soldiers or administrators to Egypt.

Hobart’s last comments were on the Sultan himself. He argued that insufficient understanding had been given to the way in which he succeeded to the throne and the impact that had on him.²²¹ His distrust of the existing statesman led him to replace them with younger men with whom he was personally acquainted – men who were loyal but not necessarily familiar with how to govern.²²² Nonetheless he had fulfilled his side of all agreements reached even if others had not.²²³ Hobart

²¹⁵ Hobart, “A Voice” p. 836.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 837.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 840.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 841.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 842.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 843.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 848.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

argued that reforms would continue and wrote that Abdülhamid would in a ‘...mild, kind, courteous way...’ stop those who opposed his reforms.²²⁴ The Sultan would certainly have approved.

The final letter appeared in December.²²⁵ Hobart’s reason for writing was that as others had failed to find a solution to the Egyptian situation, those not tied to a political party should help. He was again critical of the British Government, describing its policies as ‘short-sighted’ and leading to the current ‘mess.’ He described how despite British promises to respect the Sultan’s rights, the belief was growing in the Ottoman Empire that this was not true and that the ties binding Egypt to the Ottoman Empire were being loosened. The consequence of this, he wrote, was leading to a deep distrust of Britain among the Muslim people. Hobart’s solution was to make use of the religious influence of the Sultan, as for Hobart the problem was caused by religion. The alternative was for Britain to annex Egypt, thus breaching Britain’s agreements and annoying all the powers of Europe. For Hobart this would be a break in Britain’s traditional policy to maintain good relations with the Muslim people through the Ottoman Sultan. The consequence, Hobart believed, would be disastrous for Britain.

It is the Egyptian case that provides the most evidence for Hobart acting for the Sultan. Instead of hints, as has been explored for 1878, 1881 and 1883 -- not to mention those letters already referred to from 1884 which may have been similarly instigated by the Sultan -- we have definitive instructions for 1885. The mission of Hasan Fehmi Paşa to Britain in that year has already been discussed. Hobart was ordered to go to London to support his work and instructions were given to him on 13 January.²²⁶ The first three clauses of Hobart’s orders were all concerned with Egypt. Clause 1 ordered Hobart to extend the Sultan’s ‘greetings’ to the Queen and express his hopes for a settlement to the Egyptian

²²⁴ Hobart, “A Voice” pp. 848-849.

²²⁵ *The Times*, December 22 1884, p. 13 column 4, “Egypt, Letter to the editor, Hobart Pasha, Constantinople, December 8”.

²²⁶ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, January 13 1885, Instructions to Hobart Paşa.

question. Clause 2 thanked the Prince of Wales for the gift of a horse, repeated the Sultan's wish for an Egyptian settlement and asked Hobart to tell both Queen and Prince of his hopes for a restoration in Anglo-Ottoman relations. Finally, clause 3 told Hobart to 'assure' the Prime Minister, Gladstone, and the Foreign Secretary, Earl Granville, of the Sultan's 'goodwill for England' and his hope for a settlement to the Egyptian Question and that to assist the process of coming to an agreement the Sultan had sent Hasan Fehmi Paşa.²²⁷

It would appear from the above that Hobart's orders were limited to personal contacts, and generalities. Adding evidence to this was clause 4 in which Hobart was ordered to express the 'Sultan's personal greetings' to the leader of the Conservative opposition, Lord Salisbury. The orders do not indicate that Hobart was expected to support Hasan Fehmi's negotiations directly. They do not include any particulars concerning Ottoman negotiating positions. Clause 5 of his instructions took Hobart from the private world of personal diplomacy to the public debate of the newspaper column. Here he was instructed: 'To use the press to create a climate of opinion favourable to an Egyptian settlement, the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan. Under no circumstances to depart from these instructions.'²²⁸ However, newspaper rumours indicated that some people thought Hobart's orders were perhaps more detailed. The *Manchester Guardian*, quoting an article from the *Daily News*, said that Hobart was being sent to 'assist' the mission and that '...both are to do their utmost to complete the understanding between the two countries.'²²⁹

Taking the private messages first. Hobart wrote to Lord Salisbury in January from Sandringham where he had been staying with the Prince of Wales.²³⁰ He wrote that the Sultan had asked him to deliver a

²²⁷ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, January 13 1885, Instructions to Hobart Paşa.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ *The Manchester Guardian*, January 15 1885, p. 5 column illegible, "The Mission of Hasan Fehmi, From *the Daily News* of Today, Varna, Wednesday".

²³⁰ SP, January 1885, Hobart Pasha to Lord Salisbury.

message to Salisbury and requested a visit to Hatfield with his wife to deliver it. It is not known if this meeting took place. According to a piece in *The Manchester Guardian*, Hobart met with the Prime Minister on 11 February.²³¹ According to the announcement, Hobart had a 'long interview.' There is no indication of what was said. Hobart seems to have interpreted his orders in the same way as the newspapers did. In a note from Earl Granville to the Ambassador in Constantinople, the Foreign Secretary told him that Hobart had written on 21 January requesting a meeting which took place on the 28th.²³²

At the meeting, Hobart showed the Foreign Secretary a translation of his instructions, which Granville described as 'quasi-credentials,' which instructed him to see the Queen, the Prince of Wales, Gladstone and Granville, as the Sultan's Aide-de-camp. Hobart went on to say that the position of the Sultan was 'difficult' and that he believed that Britain's aim in Egypt was to reduce his authority as Caliph. Accepting that the British Government had said that they respected the Sultan's rights in the House of Commons, their practical actions by appointing British military advisors without consulting him belied the statement. Hobart then went on to say that the Sultan wanted assurances that Britain would evacuate, but that he was not looking for a definite date. Finally, the Sultan complained through Hobart that the *Khedive* had not been paying him '...the usual marks of respect due to him as sovereign.'²³³

Concerning the appointment of British officers in Egypt, the Foreign Secretary told the Ambassador that he had given Hobart the same explanations as he had done to Hasan Fehmi, which were contained in a despatch from 28 January.²³⁴ Granville then asked Hobart whether he was sure that the Sultan did

²³¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, February 13 1885, p. 5 column illegible, "Court and Official".

²³² TNA, FO195/1492, No.61B, February 9 1885, FO to Embassy, Confidential.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²³⁴ Despatch 45A, 28 January 1885, This document could not be found.

not want an evacuation date, to which Hobart responded in the affirmative.²³⁵ The meeting concluded with Earl Granville asking Hobart if his notes were an accurate account of their meeting, to which Hobart responded that if any official record were to be kept it was important that he should be ‘...very exact in what he said...’ and that he would write and send a memorandum.²³⁶ Three days later Hobart wrote to Granville saying that due to ‘jealousy’ from the Ottoman Embassy it would be better for Hobart not to see Granville except ‘privately.’²³⁷

Clearly Hobart went well beyond his instructions. The Sultan was insistent on a withdrawal date. Perhaps Hobart was not aware of this. Hasan Fehmi must have been however, and, in discussing the matter, Hobart risked undermining Fehmi. The fact that Granville asked Hobart to confirm this, and kept a written note, suggested that he too was surprised by this statement. Hobart’s rapid withdrawal would suggest that he realised that he had gone too far. As to the rest of the conversation, it is probable that the Sultan would not have been dissatisfied with it. It raises the subject of whether Hobart had been given verbal instructions from the Sultan which went beyond what was written.

The palace became concerned about Hobart’s activities in Britain. The first of the relevant telegrams seems to have disappeared, but it is possible to piece together its contents from the reply. Hobart apparently sent a telegram stating that important people in Britain asked the Sultan to be patient given their current difficulties.²³⁸ Were these difficulties related to the deterioration in Anglo-Russian relations? The somewhat caustic response from Osman Bey – the Sultan’s Principal Chamberlain – was to ask if Hobart had really been the author of the telegram, or whether it was ‘a bad joke.’²³⁹ Hobart’s response stated that there were people who he described as ‘persons of high position’ who wanted

²³⁵ TNA, FO195/1492, No.61B, February 9 1885, FO to Embassy, Confidential p. 4.

²³⁶ TNA, FO195/1492, No.61B, February 9 1885, FO to Embassy, Confidential, p. 5.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

²³⁸ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 35, Undated, Osman Bey to Hobart Paşa.

²³⁹ Ibid.

an alliance but who were worried about 'Turkish impatience.'²⁴⁰ Osman Bey responded with a request to know who these people were, and a warning that the palace had heard reports that Hobart had indicated the Sultan's willingness to send soldiers to Sudan with Britain. He was reminded to stick to his instructions.²⁴¹

The Foreign Ministry became concerned about Hobart's statements in early March and sent a telegram to Hasan Fehmi. It began by reminding Fehmi that he knew the reason for Hobart's presence in London. The next part of this sentence is difficult to interpret but seemed to suggest that the Foreign Ministry thought that Hobart was to discuss the Ottoman Government sending 10,000 troops to the Red Sea port of Suakin to support Britain.²⁴² Assim asked Fehmi to gently ask Hobart whether he had stuck to his instructions, why he had telegraphed the Sultan *en clair*, and who the person was referred to in his telegram of 24 February.²⁴³

Hasan Fehmi responded on 3 March.²⁴⁴ He initially wrote that he had carefully asked Hobart if he had kept to the language concerning the alliance and Suakin. Hobart responded that he had '...never used that same language which would be ... contrary to his personal opinion.'²⁴⁵ On the open telegram, Hobart said that he had not written it. Finally, he refused to identify the person referred to, arguing that he(the person) had only spoken in those terms because of Hobart's unofficial position. He did however, describe the person as '...one of the most respected statesman in England.'

²⁴⁰ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 38, February 24 1885, Hobart Paşa to Osman Bey.

²⁴¹ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 39, Undated, Osman Bey to Hobart Paşa.

²⁴² Assim Pacha to Hasan Fehmi Pacha, in Sinan Kunalp, (ed) *Ottoman Documents on the Eastern Question III, Egypt: From Ismail Pasha's Abdication to Hasan Fehmi Pasha's Mission to London 1879-1885*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009), pp. 589-590.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ YEE, Y.PRK.HR, 8/12, 16 CA. 1302 March 3 1885, Hasan Fehmi Paşa to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Confidential.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

These telegrams are somewhat confusing. They seem to suggest that Hobart had been instructed to explore the possibility of the Ottoman Empire's sending troops to Suakin. But the Sultan's written instructions previously referred to did not include this. It may well be that Hobart had been given separate written instructions by the Sultan that have not been found, that there were additional instructions given verbally, or that the Foreign Ministry had given Hobart instructions of its own. We have already seen that on occasion Ottoman Ministers attempted to follow a slightly different policy to that of the Sultan. Whether these telegrams indicate any or a combination of the above will have to wait for future research. On the identity of the person referred to, it might have been the Prince of Wales. There is no definitive evidence for this. Hobart had met with the Prince on various occasions and they were perhaps friends. More importantly, the prince was well known for not always being discreet. Hobart's assertion that the telegram *en clair* was not from him may have been an attempt to disassociate himself from it. There is no way to be sure.

There were another two sets of telegrams whilst Hobart was in Britain. The first couple date from early February. In the first, Osman Bey referred to an alliance between Britain and Italy and that this might lead to a change in Ottoman policy.²⁴⁶ This was not regarded as positive and the Sultan was said to be doubtful of the reports. Hobart responded with a denial that Britain and Italy were in any kind of alliance.²⁴⁷ Later in the month there were three more telegrams. The first appears to be lost. But from Osman Bey's response it would appear that Hobart had said that war between Russia and Britain was unlikely.²⁴⁸ Osman Bey asked for more information. Hobart's response came three days later in which he said that most people thought war was inevitable and that Britain wanted an Anglo-Ottoman

²⁴⁶ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 25, Undated, Osman Bey to Hobart Paşa.

²⁴⁷ YEE, K36/2475/Z150/XI, 31, February 14 1885, Hobart Paşa to Osman Bey.

²⁴⁸ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 89, April 20 1885, Osman Bey to Hobart Paşa.

alliance.²⁴⁹ This would appear to be the last communication from Hobart to the palace during his visit to Britain. From the telegrams above it would appear that Hobart was used to provide the palace with information, but also there were concerns that he was going beyond his orders, and that some of the information provided was questioned. Given some of the confusion in the telegrams there may have been some problems with translation or even falsification.

Hobart's involvement with the Egyptian question does not appear to have ended with the Hasan Fehmi mission to London. Hobart wrote a letter to Drummond Wolff during one of his visits to the Ottoman capital. Despite the fact that the letter has 1886 written on it, that cannot be correct as Drummond Wolff did not return to the Ottoman capital until 1887 – after Hobart's death. It is therefore more likely that the letter was written during the negotiations which led up to the convention of 1885. We have already seen that Hobart had spoken at a meeting to support Drummond Wolff's candidacy for Parliament in 1881. We may therefore conclude that they were personally acquainted. The letter which Hobart sent is more cryptic than most and particularly difficult to read.²⁵⁰ Hobart wrote that he had been told secretly that if Drummond Wolff was in any difficulty he should contact Hobart who would inform someone. The next word is impossible to read, but could possibly be the Sultan. This letter contains warnings about the need for secrecy. Hobart wrote that he had been warned '...not to invoke suspicion.'²⁵¹ The postscript contained a line that if they should meet at the Sultan's *Selamlık* Hobart would talk about hunting.²⁵² No other details are given, but the letter can only have been about Egypt.

²⁴⁹ YEE, K36/139/20/Z139/XVIII, 97, April 23 1885, Hobart Paşa to Osman Bey.

²⁵⁰ Lambeth Archive, MS3272, F. 83, 1886, Hobart to Wolff, Private.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

Returning to the Sultan's instructions to Hobart from January, we should now look at how he acted on the fifth clause. To be absolutely clear, Hobart was given three separate but linked instructions here. First: to support the mission of Hasan Fehmi in the press in order to encourage British public opinion in favour of an Egyptian settlement with the Ottoman Government. The second and third parts of this instruction were broader: to encourage a more positive attitude about the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan in Britain. It was noted that rumours of Hobart's instructions had appeared in the press, but they did not include anything specific concerning letters to newspapers.

A letter appeared in *The Times* on 3 February 1885. This was followed by two longer letters in the March and April issues of *The Nineteenth Century*. Taking the piece in *The Times* first, Hobart was clear that, in his view, the best way to deal with the Egyptian and Sudanese situations was to re-establish good relations with the Sultan, relations initially damaged by the Dulcigno incident. He wrote that '...if the Sultan of Turkey, in his just right as Caliph, ... did but lift his finger, and declare that England was acting the part of a friend in accord with him, ... one half of the followers of this rebellious *soi-disant* prophet would lay down their arms.'²⁵³ This was clearly a reference to the *Mahdi*.

This is precisely the sort of comment that the Sultan would have approved of. For Hobart, the cause of the trouble in the Sudan was religion and, if the Sultan as Caliph spoke out in favour of British intervention, the problem could easily be solved. But in order to do this, Britain would have to work with the Sultan and recognise his sovereign and religious rights in both Egypt and the Sudan. Hobart's final argument pointed to the danger of losing the goodwill of the 'great Mussulman race' by which he clearly meant danger to Britain's Indian possessions if Muslims ever believed that Britain was working against the Caliph.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ *The Times*, 3 February 1885, p. 8 column 3, "Egypt, Letter to the Editor, Hobart Pasha, London, February 2".

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

One final remark should be made on this letter. In the very first sentence Hobart wrote: 'My present unofficial position in England allows me to offer a few remarks on Egyptian questions...'.²⁵⁵ What was meant by this? Hobart wasn't an accredited diplomat. However, writing to the newspapers was clearly one of the things he was ordered to do. So why did he write this? Was he trying to confuse the reader into thinking he was not representing the Sultan and therefore his views were not biased? Perhaps it was simply a way of Hobart saying that he was not a diplomat and could be trusted. The letter did not make specific proposals on how Britain should work with the Sultan. A copy of Hobart's letter was forwarded by the Ottoman Embassy in London to the government in Constantinople alongside a covering note saying that it had had a beneficial impact on public opinion.²⁵⁶ It did not explain this last statement.

The first letter by Hobart in *The Nineteenth Century* was longer, at five pages, and therefore covered more subjects. The central point Hobart appeared to be arguing in this piece was for an Anglo-Ottoman alliance.²⁵⁷ He wrote: '...the men who have made England what she is have regarded an alliance with the Sultan as a political necessity...'.²⁵⁸ He did not specify who these were, but we must assume that one of them was Lord Palmerston – Prime Minister during the Crimean War and a proponent of the theory of the strategic importance of the Ottoman Empire to Britain. The rest of the piece is filled with reasons why an alliance would be beneficial. He expressed concerns on the security of India. Hobart's concerns on this topic were two-fold. First he argued that Britain had been alienating the Muslims of India and an alliance with the Sultan would help to repair the damage done.²⁵⁹ Presumably he was referring to the moral influence of the Sultan on the Muslims of India. He believed that they were dependant on the Caliph.²⁶⁰ He went on to external security and argued that the Treaty

²⁵⁵ *The Times*, 3 February 1885, p. 8 column 3, "Egypt, Letter to the Editor, Hobart Pasha, London, February 2".

²⁵⁶ YEE, HR.TO.. 61/31, February 7 1885, Hobart's Letter on Egypt Published in *The Times*.

²⁵⁷ Hobart Pasha, "Turkey and England", *The Nineteenth Century*, 17: 97, (March, 1885), pp. 547-551 .

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

of Berlin was accepted by the British people while not understanding how damaging it would be.²⁶¹ This should be read in the context of Anglo-Russian difficulties. Hobart went on to argue that the Ottoman Government would be able to provide considerable real assistance. He reminded his readers that the bravery of the Ottoman soldiers was well known: he described them as being '...unrivalled when well commanded.'²⁶² Hobart gave a figure of 500,000 Ottoman soldiers being available to Britain to use in time of war with Russia. He also wrote that this would mean Britain would not have to raise reserves or colonial soldiers.²⁶³ The implication here is that it would be cheaper to use Ottoman troops than British or colonial ones.

Hobart argued that the key to an Anglo-Turkish alliance was the mission of Hasan Fehmi Paşa. He went as far as to describe it as: '...Turkey's last efforts ... to arrive at a renewal of friendly feeling...'.²⁶⁴ The consequences of failure would be to throw the Ottoman Empire to the mercies of Russia. But he made little reference to Egypt or the Sudan. This was done deliberately, due to what he described as '...the sad state of affairs in these countries...' and his view that it was important '...to avoid saying anything that might tend to irritate the feelings of those who, while having certain vested rights in Africa, ought not to advance them at such a moment as this.'²⁶⁵ It can be presumed that the loss of Khartoum and General Gordon was part of the reason for this. Clearly he had little time for the policy pursued by the Liberal Government. The first sentences of the letter describe the position of the Government towards the East in general as an 'impasse' and towards Egypt as 'equivocal'.²⁶⁶ Clearly he wished to come across as reasonable and to suggest a way out of the mess that he believed the Liberal Government had made of things.

²⁶¹ Hobart, "Turkey", p. 548.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 550.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 547.

Hobart attempted to follow the part of his instructions related to improving the climate towards the Ottoman Empire throughout the piece. He interpreted this in terms of commenting on the Muslim inhabitants of the empire, and we may narrow this down further to the provinces of Asia Minor, Europe and the islands, those areas where he had personally visited. He did this in various ways. He described the Turks as ‘...God-fearing, sober, brave, unselfish people....’²⁶⁷ The peasantry was described as ‘...industrious, long-suffering, and good.’²⁶⁸ Perhaps the most interesting of Hobart’s comments concerned family life.²⁶⁹ He argued that, because of the Harem, women have more time to attend to their familial duties. Very few men have more than one wife, despite the fact that their religion allowed for it, and that Abraham and others of the Old Testament had many wives. Hobart, by making this argument here was attempting to make a connection between Muslims and Christians by showing the common Jewish ancestry. This is a common theme which appears in many articles by both Hobart and Woods; they tried to show that the Ottoman Empire was not so different from Britain. Another connection made by Hobart was the employment of foreign governesses and tutors by the more well-to-do members of Ottoman society. For those less well off the Sultan had taken a keen interest in the establishment of schools, something else British philanthropists would have understood.

On the Sultan, Hobart described him as ‘...one of the most remarkable men of his age...’ who if given the opportunity ‘...would prove himself in the eyes of the world a very great sovereign.’²⁷⁰ The problems Abdülhamid had, according to Hobart, were two-fold. He had received bad advice from former ‘confidants’, although none of them were currently close to the Sultan. Hobart reserved special

²⁶⁷ Hobart, “Turkey”, p. 548.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 551.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 549.

criticisms for the foreign diplomats, some of whom he accused of lying to Abdülhamid and others of criticising rather than encouraging the monarch.²⁷¹

The arguments presented in this letter go significantly further than Hobart's letter to *The Times*. Here Hobart argued for an alliance, not merely a satisfactory settlement of the Egyptian question. It would appear that in this letter Hobart went beyond what his orders required. Perhaps due to the space available he was able to express his own views more fully, so that whilst he did argue for an Egyptian settlement, as ordered, he went considerably further, and perhaps far beyond what the Sultan would have wanted.

Hobart's first letter received a response from a former British vice-consul in Asia Minor, Warlow Picton in the April edition of *The Nineteenth Century*.²⁷² Whilst agreeing with Hobart's views on the Turkish people, not their rulers, he disagreed with the Paşa on the benefits of an alliance.²⁷³ He mentioned Hobart's silence on the state of the Ottoman Navy and questioned his figure for the number of available soldiers.²⁷⁴ He asked how many soldiers would remain after the needed garrisons for the Ottoman borders in the Balkans and elsewhere. On the moral advantage, Picton disagreed. He argued that, although Indian Muslims might be spiritually interested in the Sultan, their main concern is their own survival.²⁷⁵ He questioned whether it would be in Britain's interests to allow Indian Muslims to transfer their loyalty from the Empress to the Sultan. Picton outlined two disadvantages to an Anglo-Ottoman alliance. The first was that Britain would have to pay, the Ottoman Treasury being empty '...as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.'²⁷⁶ The second disadvantage Picton gave, was that the first

²⁷¹ Hobart, "Turkey", p. 549.

²⁷² Warlow Picton, "An Anglo-Turkish Alliance II" *The Nineteenth Century*, 17: 98, (April 1885), pp. 583-589.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 583.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 584.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 586-587.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 588.

Ottoman shot would lead to the whole of the Balkans fighting against her, and by implication Britain. If this Anglo-Ottoman alliance were victorious, the Ottoman Government would insist on territorial compensation, which would then place Christians back under the rule of the Muslims. It perhaps goes without saying that Picton did not see this as a positive thing.²⁷⁷

Hobart did not respond to Picton's letter, however Woods did. His response appeared in the July issue of *The Nineteenth Century*.²⁷⁸ He began by redressing Hobart's silence on the navy. He described what it had done in the last war, and went on to describe how it had been improved through the development of the use of torpedoes, including the Whitehead and Pole, as well as better guns.²⁷⁹ The navy therefore would not be an inconsiderable element to an alliance. On the possible strength of the Ottoman army, Woods argued that it was not the peace-time strength that it should be judged on, but on what could be called up in time of war. Here he gave a figure of 500,000 just in the first reserve, made up of men over 35.²⁸⁰

On the cost to Britain, Woods proposed that Britain should pay, as there are always two sides to any bargain. He further wrote that it would be cheaper than raising her own forces, and that Britain had traditionally paid for the militaries of others in European conflicts, so this would be nothing new.²⁸¹ On territorial compensation to the Ottoman Empire, Woods responded in two ways. First, he argued that there were provinces which were removed unjustly and where the population would prefer Muslim rule. It is to be presumed here that Woods was referring to areas with large Muslim populations. He also argued that there would be no need to change the position as far as Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia was concerned, apart from to ensure that Bulgaria lived up to her obligations under

²⁷⁷ Picton, "Anglo-Turkish", p. 589.

²⁷⁸ Woods Pasha, "The Armed Strength of Turkey", *The Nineteenth Century* 18: 101, (July 1885), pp. 111-123.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

the Treaty of Berlin and maintained her neutrality in any future war. She would only be divested of territory if she broke that latter requirement.²⁸²

The letter is however more than just a response to Picton. Woods agreed with Hobart on the need for an alliance; he used the word 'indispensable' for both Britain's position in India and across the world.²⁸³ He gave four reasons for the importance of an Anglo-Ottoman alliance. Like Hobart, he believed in the moral value of an Ottoman alliance for the Muslim subjects of the Queen in India. Again, like Hobart, he believed in the strategic importance, both in terms of the Ottoman Navy and Army and in terms of the opportunities to attack Russia, that an alliance would allow. The final reason Woods gave is commercial. In an alliance with the Sultan, Britain would have the opportunity to benefit from the potential economic developments in western Asia.²⁸⁴ It is possible to see a fifth benefit to an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, European stability. This is not stated by Woods. However it can be inferred. He believed that the reason the Ottoman Empire had been attacked so much was that she had no allies. Each time this happened it threatened the peace of Europe. With an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, no one would dare attack the Sultan.²⁸⁵ This letter from Woods was the first major piece by him arguing for an Anglo-Ottoman alliance in print. There is no evidence to suggest that he was instigated to write it.

Returning to Hobart, his second letter appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* in the same edition as Picton's response. It repeated the importance of an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, although this time Hobart concentrated on the threat to Britain from Russia. He wrote that the 1877-1878 war was fought by the Russians to gain strategic advantage and with it they would now be able to launch attacks through

²⁸² Woods, "Armed Strength", p. 120.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 123.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

the port of Batoum in the east and the Kilia branch of the Danube in the west.²⁸⁶ The former was to threaten the Ottoman capital and India.²⁸⁷ The only slight positive was the supposed agreement of the Russians to maintain the port as a commercial port. This, Hobart argued, they had not done, having militarized it, and were now in the position to outflank any army. Hobart also claimed in this piece to have predicted that if Batoum was allowed to go to Russia, it would become ‘...a place of prodigious strength.’²⁸⁸ If he did make this prediction, it certainly was not in any letter that has been located. Perhaps there is a little exaggeration here given the growing tensions between Russia and Britain over the Afghan frontier.

He went on to argue that the only way Britain could attack Russia was in alliance with the Ottoman Government.²⁸⁹ Without it the British fleet could not enter the Black Sea in the case of an Anglo-Russian war. In alliance with the Sultan the fleets of the two powers would be able to destroy Batoum together and land an army on Russian territory.²⁹⁰ He reiterated his view that the Turks were Britain’s ‘old and natural allies.’²⁹¹

In this letter Hobart also referred to the fact that the Russians were trying to subvert the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. He argued that this was only due to their interest in the strategic importance of the provinces where they lived.²⁹² He pointed out that within the Russian Empire the government had been pursuing a policy of Russification and argued that this was why the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire tended to prefer the rule of the Sultan.²⁹³ Furthermore Hobart believed that

²⁸⁶ Hobart Pasha, “An Anglo Turkish Alliance”, *The Nineteenth Century*, 17: 98, (April 1885), pp.575-582.

²⁸⁷ Hobart, “Anglo-Turkish”, p. 575.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 579.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

autonomy for the Armenians was impossible. He argued that there was 'no large town which contains a population exclusively Armenian'.²⁹⁴ Hobart compared the Armenian people to the Jews in that they were now scattered across the world. He concluded by arguing that autonomy for the Armenians would be as foolish as offering autonomy to the Jews in Britain.²⁹⁵ We will see in the next chapter how Woods made similar arguments concerning Armenian autonomy.

This final letter in *The Nineteenth Century* clearly reflected the deteriorating Anglo-Russian situation and demonstrated Hobart's long-standing opinion on Anglo-Ottoman friendship. Like the previous piece he went well beyond what the Sultan would have wanted. Nonetheless these three pieces – the one in *The Times* and the two in *The Nineteenth Century* – taken together were clearly Hobart's way of following his instructions. There is one final letter from Hobart to *The Times* from September in which Egypt is again discussed.²⁹⁶ It would make sense to refer to this here as it followed in the same year as those previous ones and came at a time of heightened diplomatic activity due to the situation in Eastern Rumelia and continuing tensions over Afghanistan. It also appeared during Drummond Wolff's mission to the Ottoman capital. In this letter, Hobart stated that 'England' had got itself into a 'mess' and that the only way out of it would be to 'swallow one little humiliation pill.' By this, Hobart meant for the British Government to accept that it had made mistakes and to ask the Ottoman Government to assist in bringing the situation to an end. His solution was to recognise the Sultan's suzerainty over Egypt, implement the laws, use the force on the ground to deal with the military situation and accept the advice of a British Commissioner, in return for which Britain would evacuate. This section looks as much of a suggestion to the Ottoman Government as to the British one. Again Hobart wrote that he was not officially inspired. In this case it is harder to be sure, but given the orders

²⁹⁴ Hobart, "Anglo-Turkish", p.578.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ *The Times*, September 24 1885, p. Illegible, Column 4, "Sir H.D. Wolff's Mission, Hobart Pasha, Constantinople, September 18".

he received earlier in the year and the fact that this letter fits in with the previous two so well this may again be considered a protest directed to the British people.

The letter concluded with a warning to the British Government. Hobart argued that the Ottoman Government's distrust of Britain was legitimate given her treatment in recent years and that all the foreign embassies in the Ottoman capital were busy making the most of any damaging reports to try to ensure that the mission failed. He argued that the British Embassy did not have access to the same information as others and that, this time when the conference met, there would not be a bombardment to confuse everyone. This was a reference to the initial stage of British military intervention in 1882. We may presume that Hobart meant Britain would be left isolated.

As in the other pieces, Hobart was pushing for an Egyptian settlement and a broader improvement in Anglo-Ottoman relations. Again he held the British Government responsible for the deterioration in relations and suggested a course of action. If we bear in mind the policy of the Sultan as outlined in the first part of this chapter, we can see that Hobart is not quite singing, as it were, from the same hymn sheet. He firmly believed in an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, something that the Sultan was not so keen on and this was a position he had held for many years.

The Egyptian question was the last in which Hobart acted for the Sultan. So far we have concentrated on Hobart's work in print and as a participant in the Sultan's personal diplomatic efforts in Britain. There were two other functions which he served as Aide-de-camp and it is to these that we shall now turn. The first was as a sort of guide for English speaking visitors to the Ottoman capital. Although guide is hardly a suitable word to describe what he did. It involved escorting English speakers around the capital, introducing them to the Sultan if they were considered to be important enough, attending

dinners at the palace – presumably to assist in the smooth running of the conversation – and conveying personal messages from the Sultan. In Hobart’s memoirs he made the remark that as an Aide-de-camp to the Sultan he had ‘important duties.’²⁹⁷ Hobart’s memoirs do not provide much information on these duties, presumably due to their sensitivity. However, he described how ‘European ladies’ were often invited to attend dinner parties at the Sultan’s residence, Yıldız Palace.²⁹⁸ He wrote that they ‘...must have thoroughly enjoyed the delicious music and the pleasant entertainments.’²⁹⁹

This suggests two things. One, that Hobart himself must have attended those dinners, and two, that one of his roles was to represent the Sultan to European visitors. On the first, there is quite a lot of supporting evidence. We have already seen that Hobart complained about not being invited to a dinner in March 1879. There is no way of knowing whether this was the first occasion that Hobart was meant to have attended a dinner. But, given Hobart’s frustration, it is possible that it was not. In a letter to Layard from 1879 he described attending a dinner with a number of other people, which prevented him having a private conversation with the Sultan.³⁰⁰ Newspaper articles also reported Hobart’s attendance at other dinners. *The Manchester Guardian* reported a dinner at which Hobart was present in 1880.³⁰¹ *The Morning Post* had a similar report from 1883.³⁰² Also at that dinner were the British Ambassador, Lord Dufferin and the retired Vice-Admiral Lord John Hay. This latter dinner also had Woods as one of the guests. A final example of Hobart’s attendance at a dinner at the palace will be sufficient. *The Morning Post* reported that Hobart along with Sir William White, the

²⁹⁷ Kephæet, *Hobart*, p. 212.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,027/293, Unknown Date bound at the end of January-July 1879, Hobart to Layard, *Candide*.

³⁰¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, July 8 1880, p. 5 column illegible, “European Action in Turkey, The Frontier Difficulties, Mr. Goschen’s Warnings to the Sultan, By Telegraph, From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, Tuesday Night”.

³⁰² *The Morning Post*, November 8 1883, p. 5 column 3, “Turkey, Reuter’s Telegrams, Constantinople, November 7”.

Ambassador in 1885, ate with the Sultan in November.³⁰³ Clearly this was something that Hobart did throughout Abdülhamid's reign.

On assisting with conversations the above certainly suggests that his attendance at dinners when non-Ottomans were present was for this reason. But, there is some evidence which would lead us to conclude that there was more to this than just dinner parties. First, Hobart was present at at least two *Selamlıks*. These were the Friday or feast day prayers that the Sultan attended in state. Usually on the conclusion of the religious observances, he would meet with various dignitaries. Hobart told Layard that he had been present at the *Selamlık* in a letter from April 1880.³⁰⁴ Another example of Hobart being at the *Selamlık* was printed in *The Morning Post* from November of the same year.³⁰⁵ On this occasion the piece stated that the Sultan met Hobart after the conclusion of the ceremonies. One reason for Hobart's presence at the *Selamlık* may have been to introduce fellow English speakers to the Sultan. We will see in the next chapter that this was one of the things that Woods did and, although there is no direct evidence of Hobart doing this, the below may be suggestive.

In another letter to Layard, Hobart wrote about the benefits of the Sultan meeting with the mystic Laurence Oliphant.³⁰⁶ Hobart justified the meeting on the grounds that Oliphant could be '...useful or exceedingly dangerous'.³⁰⁷ He suggested that, if Layard were to recommend it, the meeting would take place as the Sultan was prepared for the request and had met other less important people due to Ambassadorial request. He also stated that, if he were not busy he would have managed the

³⁰³ *The Morning Post*, November 16 1885, p. 6 column 2, "The Servo-Bulgarian War, Reuter's Telegram, Constantinople, November 15".

³⁰⁴ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,034/106, August 6 1880, Hobart to Layard, Cark.

³⁰⁵ *The Morning Post*, November 15 1880, p. 5 Column 3, "Turkey, Reuter's Telegrams, Constantinople, November 14".

³⁰⁶ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39033/306, No Date but bound at the end of May 1880 and labelled before May 6, Hobart to Layard, Private.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

meeting himself. It is not known if Oliphant got his meeting. Later in the same year Hobart wrote to Lord Salisbury telling him that when the Sultan had asked him to bring some British subjects to meet him, Goschen became extremely unhappy, arguing that only he could present them.³⁰⁸ The list of people included Lord De la Warr, W. H. Smith, Sir A Borthwick, and John Pender.³⁰⁹ It should be noted that three of the four were current members of parliament, whilst the fourth was the owner of *The Morning Post* and was elected to the Commons in 1885.

The second function was to sit on important or potentially diplomatically controversial commissions. His presence on these commissions was an attempt to reassure foreigners that they were fair. An example of Hobart being used in this way took place in 1880. In February the Russian Military Attaché Colonel Commeraoff was murdered whilst out riding in the Ottoman capital.³¹⁰ According to Layard's account a Bosnian named 'Veli Mehmed' (Veli Mohamed) was quickly arrested after a fight.³¹¹ Clearly given the victim and the recent Russo-Ottoman War this was an extremely sensitive case.

According to both Layard's account and an article in *The Manchester Guardian*, which given the byline may have been written by Woods, Hobart was made a member of the commission which was set up to examine the mental state of the criminal.³¹² According to the same source the commission found that Veli Mohamed was insane and he was therefore confined in an asylum and not executed. In Layard's account of this event, he was critical of the Sultan for not executing Veli Mohamed, arguing that the reason for not doing so was a desire on the part of the Sultan to avoid angering his Muslim subjects. Layard went on to argue that, whilst he accepted that the murderer was insane, it was still

³⁰⁸ SP, November 19 1880, Hobart Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople.

³⁰⁹ The text here is W. E. Smith, I think it is more likely to have been the Conservative politician and owner of the stationer.

³¹⁰ Kunalalp, *Queen's Ambassador*, pp. 665-667.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 666.

³¹² *The Manchester Guardian*, December 3 1880, p. 8, "The Murder of a Russian Colonel at Constantinople, By Telegraph, From Our Own Correspondent, Constantinople, Pera, Thursday".

necessary to send out a strong signal by having him executed.³¹³ It did not appear to have occurred to the Ambassador that the Sultan might have been applying the same standard as was used in Britain, that being that someone adjudged to be insane when committing a crime could not be executed for it. If the Sultan's intention in appointing Hobart to this commission was to try and reduce the pressure on him it doesn't seem to have worked. It has not been possible to find any documents in which Hobart commented on his role in this case.

The above appears to be the only case in which Hobart served on this kind of commission. Another one-off seems to have been when Hobart was sent to inquire after the health of Captain Selby RN., who had been seriously injured by an Albanian shepherd whilst hunting.³¹⁴

IV. Reforming the Ottoman Navy: cutting costs 1878-1886

The previous chapter argued that the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz witnessed expansion of the Ottoman Navy. The bankruptcy of 1876 clearly meant that the Ottoman Government had to gain control of its finances and control expenditure. There appears to have been a decision on the part of Sultan Abdülhamid II to cut expenditure on the navy. The previous chapter referred to McCarthy's table which showed expenditure on the navy.³¹⁵ It shows that between 1876-1909 the Ottoman Government spent roughly 1,453,143,315 Turkish Pounds on the navy. Again as with the figures for the preceding period there are years missing from his table which probably means the expenditure was higher. It should be noted that based on McCarthy's figures over the thirty-three years of Abdülhamid's reign average expenditure on the navy was 44,034,645 Turkish Pounds compared to 51,408,904 Turkish

³¹³ Kunalalp, *Queen's Ambassador*, p. 666

³¹⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, February 20 1882, p. 8 column 2, "The Attack on Captain Selby, Constantinople, Saturday".

³¹⁵ Justin McCarthy, *The Arab World, Turkey and the Balkans: (1878-1914) a Handbook of Historical Statistics* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), pp. 180-187.

Pounds over the sixteen years from 1860-1876. This would not appear to be as big a difference as might be initially thought. However, these averages hide a trend during Abdülhamid's reign. Between the financial years 1876-1877 and 1897-1898, the Ottoman Government spent between sixty and seventy million Turkish Pounds five times on the navy. In the previous sixteen years expenditure had never dropped lower than seventy-five million in a single year. Between the financial years 1898-1899 and 1908-1909, the last year of Abdülhamid's reign there was an initial trend of increasing expenditures with over one hundred million Turkish Pounds being spent in the year 1900-1901, however expenditure rapidly dropped to just over fifty million in 1903-1904, the lowest figure over the entire period. It would appear therefore that expenditure increased at particular times, and then was quickly reduced. This was clearly not the case during the reign of Abdülaziz.

Separate to the perfectly understandable reason of financial retrenchment outlined above others have given alternative motivations for the Sultan's cost cutting. It was argued during Abdülhamid's reign that fear of the navy's possible involvement in a constitutional revolution was the reason it was starved of funds.³¹⁶ Given the Sultan's concerns around revolution this motivation cannot be ignored. However, like with so much else concerning the Sultan it did not play as large a role as claimed. Another logical reason for a reduction in expenditure was a reasonable conclusion which has already been drawn from the Russo-Ottoman war: that however much money had been spent on the Ottoman Navy, it had proven unable to prevent the empire's defeat. Logically therefore money might be better spent elsewhere and particularly on the Ottoman military. Yasamee writes that forty per cent of the Ottoman budget was spent on the military and that this budget was never cut.³¹⁷ He also argued that a defensive attitude characterised the Sultan's thinking, which meant that although funds

³¹⁶ Arthur Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era 1880-1905* (London: Frank Cass, 1940) p. 153.

³¹⁷ Feroze Yasamee, "Abdülhamid II and the Ottoman Defence Problem" *Diplomacy and State Craft* 4: 1, (Routledge, Taylor and Frances Group, 1993), pp.20-36, p. 21.

for the fleet were restricted torpedoes and related technology continued to be invested in, as we will see shortly.³¹⁸

Within a few months of the end of the war, attempts to renew the Ottoman Navy began. An article in *The Manchester Guardian* from November 1878 dealt with what Hobart was meant to have told the Sultan concerning his ideas on the reform of the Ottoman Navy.³¹⁹ In order to save money, Hobart recommended the retirement of a number of officers. He suggested the removal of ships that were out of date and those that remained should be modernized with new equipment including torpedoes. He argued that the reduction in size would better prepare the navy for the modern world. He also wanted to reform the commissariat system, but the article was not specific on what this meant. Hobart further argued that transporting troops had led to a deterioration in naval discipline, but that despite this only two ships had been lost due to torpedoes. The article concluded by saying that the Navy Minister supported Hobart's recommendations.

Earlier in this chapter a deterioration in the relations between Hobart and the Sultan was referred to dating from this period. In January 1879, Hobart appealed to Layard to inform the Sultan that he '...was not under the influence of strong drinks when he told him the truth in the interest of his Navy, or His Majesty and his Empire.'³²⁰ Unfortunately the letter did not specify what Hobart had told the Sultan. Clearly whatever it was had not pleased Abdülhamid. We can assume that it had something to do with Hobart's views on the navy. It is also very likely that Hobart may have been expressing frustration over

³¹⁸ Yasamee, "Abdülhamid II", p. 23.

³¹⁹ *The Manchester Guardian*, November 30 1878, p. 8 column 2, "The Turkish Navy, Constantinople, Thursday".

³²⁰ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,024/253, January 14 1879, Hobart to Layard.

two projects, a port and a bridge referred to briefly in a letter to Layard from the previous November.³²¹

In March, Hobart expressed concerns that foreign employees like him were being ignored by the Ottoman Government. He wrote to Layard saying that 'H and his officers' had been invited to a dinner at the palace and, although many admirals had been invited, he had not.³²² The H in this letter was probably Hasan Hüsnü Paşa: who became Minister of the Navy in 1880. Hobart held him responsible because he '...hates all foreigners like poison.'³²³ According to the same letter, the Sultan asked a British representative at the dinner, Edward Malet, where Hobart was. Hobart did not hold the Sultan responsible for his exclusion from the dinner describing him as: 'Poor wretch, he cannot do as he wishes.'³²⁴ In April Hobart wrote that he had seen the Sultan a great deal and described him as 'kind.'³²⁵

Hobart's next report on the Ottoman Navy was sent to the Sultan in either late 1879 or early 1880.³²⁶ He argued that, given Russian naval developments and the Greek Government's purchase of a new ship, the Ottoman fleet would find itself outmatched. He argued that these new vessels were better armed, and capable of travelling and manoeuvring at higher speeds than any of the Ottoman ironclads except for *Mesudiye*. Hobart complimented the Sultan on what he had already done which had allowed the Ottoman Navy to catch up technologically and suggested that the funds for new ships could be found by selling the hulks of the older vessels. He argued that it was not necessary to keep them as transports as the navy had other suitable vessels for that purpose. Hobart wrote that he thought he could find buyers in England or France and that it would be possible to get between

³²¹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,023/5, November 2 1878, Hobart to Layard.

³²² BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,025/182, March 20 1879, Hobart to Layard.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,025/278, April 28 1879, Hobart to Layard.

³²⁶ YEE, Y.PRK.MYD, 1/70, 1297, 1879/1880, Letter from Hobart Paşa to the Sultan on Naval Reforms.

500,000 and 600,000 Turkish Pounds. There is no indication that the Sultan responded to this letter. However, given the Sultan's disillusionment with Britain it is possible that he may not have been keen on selling the ships there. The letter is interesting because of the issue of transports. Given that the ironclads had been used during the Russo-Ottoman War to transport soldiers, and Hobart's own alleged assertion in the previous year it is difficult to understand. It may be that Hobart was using the age of the ironclads concerned as a way of forcing the Ottoman Navy to use other ships in future. The other interesting part of Hobart's recommendations was the suggestion concerning raising funds. Clearly he understood the difficult financial position of the Ottoman Government and made suggestions accordingly.

A second letter from Hobart followed in February 1880.³²⁷ In this letter he complained to the Sultan that although a commission had been set up to reform the Ottoman Navy along British lines neither he nor any other British employees of the Ottoman Government were appointed. He commented that the members of the committee had no idea of what was necessary. He then went on to express concerns about the length of time it was taking the dock to construct a ship due to financial problems saying that unless the parts of the ship already ready were protected they would deteriorate. His final paragraph concerned the formation of an Ottoman Shipping Company. He wrote that a lot of capital had been raised in England and France to set up this company. Hobart criticised the alternative *Shirket-i-Hayriye* which he wrote did not have the capital and might take six years to get it, delaying the Sultan's wishes. Hobart's comments here were not disinterested.

Eight months earlier in June 1879 Layard had sent a letter to the Foreign Office concerning the Sultan's desire to reduce the size of the navy and create a Steam Navigation Company similar to those in Russia,

³²⁷ YEE, Y.PRK.MYD, 1-43 Lef. 1, February 5 1880, Hobart Paşa to the Sultan.

Austria and France.³²⁸ According to Layard, Hobart had been asked to produce a proposal and find out if English financiers would be interested. Along with Layard's letter was a copy of the report Hobart had drawn up. It was a detailed report of 39 pages. The first part of the report examined foreign transport companies and argued that private ones worked better than government run ones. Hobart then went on to argue that given the Ottoman Empire's extensive coastline it should have had a company before now. Various arguments were then made against the current system. Hobart pointed out that anyone travelling within the Ottoman Empire had to use a foreign run company. This was clearly a way of encouraging the Sultan's patriotism. He made the practical point that the money for transport went to foreign countries and that this was not sensible given that the empire could find itself at war with any one of them. Recognising that money would clearly be a problem Hobart argued that due to the empire's significant resources the company could be established with foreign capital. Advantages of the company would include a way of providing practical experience for Ottoman sailors in preparation for entering the navy. This would mean a decrease in reliance on foreigners in the navy. The company would mean that foreign posts could be eliminated and this would mean that the empire would be able to gain income from controlling its own internal postal service.³²⁹

The rest of this report concerned Hobart's ideas about the responsibilities and regulations governing the company which he proposed to call "The Ottoman Privileged Society for Steam Ship Navigation". On the legal aspects of the company's formation, Hobart suggested that it should be formed within six months of the imperial decree approving its establishment, that when formed it should be capable of taking on all its responsibilities immediately, that its contract should be for fifty years and that the company should be subject to Ottoman law and carry the Ottoman flag. The company would have a

³²⁸ TNA, FO78/2952 No.503, June 16 1879, Layard to Marquis of Salisbury, Constantinople, Confidential.

³²⁹ Ibid., pp. 1-10.

base at Constantinople with other bases across the empire and the right to establish trading posts wherever it wanted.

Hobart estimated that the company would require capital of 1,200,000 Turkish Pounds in gold which he suggested could be raised either through stocks or bonds. The company would have the right to increase its capital in the future as it chose. The government would use only the company for transportation, the military being exempted. During the contract the Ottoman Government would agree to charter no one else either foreign or Ottoman. The company would have the right to carry the government's post. The company would be exempted from import taxes for its own materials and all anchorage dues. If the government were to construct a quay at Constantinople during the first year of the contract the company would have the right to use it. If not, the company would be gifted land on which to build facilities; these would have to include certain government facilities such as a port authority and sanitary checks. It would have the right to charge to access the quay.

Two or three pupils from the Naval College would be employed on each ship, including as engineers, and after they had passed their exams they would become captains and engineers. The company would be entitled to use the imperial arsenal for repairs but would only be charged half the commercial price. The company would purchase suitable ships from the state ferry surface, the price to be worked out through nominees. It would be paid in stocks. What was not purchased could be kept by the government but not used for commercial purposes. The company would arm each of its ships with a torpedo. It would have direct access to the coalfields and pay no more than the government. If the government did not have sufficient tugboats it would have to use the company's and pay for the privilege. The government and company would not be expected to pay to dock at each other's facilities, the only exemption being the company's main facility. Hobart inserted a section making it clear that the government could not insist on requiring the company to do something that

might be to its detriment. In wartime, the government could requisition company facilities but would have to pay half the commercial price and would have to rectify any damage done to company property. The Ottoman Government would have the right to nominate a commissioner who would be able to monitor the company, but no other Ottoman official would be able to interfere with the company's work. Renewal of the contract would take place during the final three years and, if unsuccessful, the company could be liquidated after negotiations. The final part of the report concerned the breakdown of employees. Hobart argued that most first and second rated captains should come from the Dalmatian coast with Turks making up the rest, first mechanics Europeans with the rest Turks, helmsmen would have to be Europeans and general workers Turks.

No reference to this document was found in the Ottoman Archives. There are things within Hobart's report which may well have caused the Sultan disquiet. The length of the contract and the loss of control to a largely foreign owned company are two examples. After this report was presented there appeared to have been a delay. In a letter from Hobart to Layard in which a meeting with the Sultan was discussed, he referred to the Sultan asking for his report seeming not to know it had been submitted some weeks earlier.³³⁰ In the same letter Hobart wrote that the Sultan had asked him to provide a copy of the report to 'dressy'; this is likely to be Dreyse Paşa who acted as an intermediary between the Sultan and the French Embassy.³³¹ It may well be that the Sultan was trying to draw the French into the process to try to make it easier for him to refuse it without actually doing so. A letter from Layard from December indicated that the Sultan was still interested in the idea and that Hobart was a participant in the commission set up to look at it.³³² This letter referred to Hobart being warned by the French Ambassador that, if French capital was not involved, he would use his influence at the palace to prevent the scheme. This was dealt with through an agreement between the two. At the

³³⁰ BL, The Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,027/291, Date Illegible, Hobart to Layard, Pera.

³³¹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 39.

³³² TNA, FO78/2963 No.1085, December 8 1879, Layard to Salisbury, Constantinople.

same time the Austrian Lloyd Steam Company wanted to create the company themselves and incorporate it in to their current operations fearing that it might damage their business. According to Layard, the Sultan refused this. There was one more note from Hobart to Layard in 1879 on the scheme.³³³ Here he referred to a meeting of the commission at which it was decided to adjourn until the Austrian proposals were looked at. He expressed concerns that influences at the palace were working against the scheme, mentioning 'Osman' and it is likely that this was the War Minister and hero of the siege of Plevna. This letter concluded in a tone which can best be described as sorrowful when Hobart wrote '...this is very bad and takes all the heart out of one while trying to help this unhappy country.' This appeared to be the end of the matter so far as Hobart was concerned.

During the 1880s, the Ottoman naval authorities seem to have undertaken a lot of research into torpedoes. It has already been noted that Woods had taught subjects related to torpedoes in the Naval College and been given responsibility for defensive torpedoes during the Russo-Ottoman war. *The Morning Post* announced in November 1882 that Hobart had been appointed to the presidency of a commission instructed to discover the best kind of torpedo to prevent ships from entering the Bosphorus. The telegram (from Constantinople and dated the previous day) announced that experiments would begin the following day.³³⁴ A letter appeared in *The Times* from Hobart on 27 December 1882 in which he described the recent experiments.³³⁵ He initially described the problems of the currents in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which made existing torpedoes useless. In describing the experiment, he wrote that the Lay torpedo had successfully been guided to a distance of a mile, manoeuvred between two stationary boats, taken a little further and then returned to its starting point. The observers who witnessed the experiment commented that the torpedo was too visible and slow, it had travelled at nine knots - but that its navigation was excellent. Hobart went on to write that

³³³ BL, The Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,030/233, No Date, Hobart to Layard, Pera.

³³⁴ *The Morning Post*, November 9 1882, p. 5 column 1, "Reuter's Telegram, Constantinople, November 8".

³³⁵ *The Times*, December 27 1882, p. 5 column 2, "Letter to the Editor of *The Times*, Hobart, Constantinople, Dec. 18".

Lay had promised to increase the torpedo's speed to twelve knots and ensure that the torpedo was lower in the water.

Although this letter does not refer to Woods by name it is inconceivable that he was not a member of this commission and therefore present at the experiment. A piece from 'a Naval Correspondent' appeared in the same issue of *The Times*, which also described the Lay trial.³³⁶ It confirmed Hobart's letter and wrote that neither of the two Ottoman officers who had steered the torpedo had done so previously and that anyone who could steer a ship would be able to direct the torpedo. Was the author of this letter Woods?

Returning to Hobart's letter, he concluded by referring to General Berdan (Hiram Berdan a former Colonel in the United States Army and inventor) who had arrived in the Ottoman capital with a design for a torpedo of his own. According to Hobart's account, he had been given all the necessary support to construct a prototype and prepare a model to be tested. A year later, in November 1883, a piece appeared in *The Times* which referred to the Berdan experiment.³³⁷ It announced that the result of the experiment had been kept secret but that according to a 'reliable' person Berdan had been congratulated on its speed and accuracy.

In Woods' memoirs he referred to a veritable mania for anyone with any kind of idea to come to the Ottoman capital and attempt to sell it to the Ottoman authorities.³³⁸ He included General Berdan in this category. Woods was unconvinced of the General's idea, going so far as to describe the torpedo

³³⁶ *The Times*, 27 December 1882, p. 5 column 1, "Torpedo Experiments in the Bosphorus, From a Naval Correspondent, Constantinople, Dec. 15".

³³⁷ *The Times*, November 13 1883, p. 5 column 4, "Turkey, From Our Correspondent, Constantinople, November 10".

³³⁸ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 192.

as ‘absurd,’ but due to his backing could not prevent the prototype from being constructed.³³⁹ Woods noted that the Ottoman Government provided all the materials necessary. He described what happened during the torpedo’s maiden voyage at which he and Hobart were both present:

We were in a steam launch ready to follow the torpedo when started, but instead of our following it, the blessed thing after going some thirty or forty yards away turned round and followed us. It seemed to be chasing us with fiendish glee, fizzing merrily as we dodged about from starboard to port to keep out of its way.³⁴⁰

One can only hope that the torpedo was not armed. If Woods was accurate here no wonder the result was kept secret.

In 1886 *The Morning Post* reported that Hobart was to undertake training exercises with the newly purchased torpedo boats.³⁴¹ The report indicated that both defensive and offensive tactics would be used during these exercises. A fortnight later, a piece appeared in the same paper which contained a summary of Hobart’s report on the exercises.³⁴² Hobart wrote that the Swartzkopff torpedo had performed better than the Whitehead, but that it was harder to manoeuvre. He also wrote that the ‘Bullivant netting’ was the best form of torpedo defence. He noted that this was the same type of defence as used by the British and Russian navies. The above indicates that clearly the Ottoman Government’s resistance to torpedoes in the first half of the 1870s had been replaced with a real interest in them. The 1885 and 1886 torpedo experiments must have been connected with the heightened Anglo-Russian tensions.

³³⁹ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 193.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ *The Morning Post*, February 16 1886, p. 5 column 4, “The Eastern Question, Reuter’s Telegram, Constantinople, February 15”.

³⁴² *The Morning Post*, March 2 1886, p. 5 column 4, “Turkey, Reuter’s Telegram, Constantinople, February 28”.

Returning to a more traditional aspect of the navy, there is some evidence to suggest that both Hobart and Woods played a part in the Ottoman Government's debates over military involvement in Egypt. Woods provided the most detailed account of the first part of this story. He wrote that when Britain first asked the Sultan to send troops, Hobart was told by someone at the palace that the French had said that they would fire on any ships attempting to land troops.³⁴³ Hobart and Woods then worked on a document, which Woods translated into French to present to the Sultan. This document presented their joint views that the French would never attack an Ottoman squadron approaching Egypt because of their concerns over British reactions. They went so far as to say that if they were given command they would guarantee to land the Ottoman troops. According to Woods, the Sultan was unconvinced and '...preferred to trust to his diplomacy'.³⁴⁴ Unfortunately this French document was not found.

The second part of the Ottoman Government's consideration of sending troops to Egypt came in September of 1882. A letter from the correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that Hobart had told both the Ottoman Government and the British Ambassador that it would be extremely difficult to land troops at 'Aboukir Rosetta, or Damietta' on the Mediterranean coast.³⁴⁵ This piece does not explain the reason for Hobart's view; however, an article in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* from 1885 did. In this Hobart argued that the coastline was exposed and that 'so heavy a sea runs' that landing troops would be 'out of the question.'³⁴⁶ This gave the Sultan a reason, if he needed one, not to send troops. A final remark from Woods on his impression of this would seem to indicate Britain's real view on Ottoman involvement. He wrote in his memoirs that the British Ambassador,

³⁴³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, v2, pp. 128-129.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ *The Manchester Guardian*, September 4 1882, p. 6 column 2, "The Anglo-Turkish Military Convention, Constantinople, Sunday Night".

³⁴⁶ Hobart, "A Voice", p. 839.

Lord Dufferin, always seemed to disappear when the Ottoman Government wanted to discuss sending troops to Egypt.³⁴⁷

This chapter has argued that after the 1877-1878 war Hobart's role began to change with the priorities of the new Sultan. His decision to cut expenditure on the Ottoman Navy and change naval emphasis led to a decreasing work load in this field. Hobart's report on the proposed Steam Navigation Company illustrated that the Ottoman Navy had not yet managed to remove the need for foreign officers. It should be remembered that this was something he had commented on as early as 1869. Something else which can be inferred from the 1879 report, was continued problems with the lack of experience of naval recruits and his hope that the establishment of a transport company would help with this. Woods' and Hobart's joint report to the Sultan on taking Ottoman troops to Egypt would suggest that at least in the early 1880s there was still an Ottoman fleet capable of sailing. At the same time the Sultan's style of rule, attempting to work through personal contacts, gave Hobart new functions. We have seen that these were connected with the Sultan's press policy, personal diplomacy and management of his own image. The next chapter will show how after Hobart's death in 1886 Woods took over these functions.

³⁴⁷ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 128-129.

Chapter 5. Woods Paşa 1886-1909

The previous chapter referred to a letter which Woods wrote to *The Nineteenth Century* in reply to Picton's response to Hobart's call for an Anglo-Ottoman alliance. That letter was unusual as most of Woods' public letters came after Hobart's death. It is the contention of this chapter that Woods took over from Hobart. This chapter will begin by outlining the various Bulgarian crises of 1885-1888, then the Musa Bey affair, the Armenian problems of the mid-1890s and finally the re-occurrence of problems on Crete and the short Graeco-Ottoman War of 1897. Following this, the chapter will turn to examining Woods' functions as Aide-de-camp. Finally, the chapter will return to the Ottoman Navy.

I. From The Bulgarian Crises to the Graeco-Ottoman War 1885-1897

The previous chapter showed how Sultan Abdülhamid tried to remain neutral in international diplomatic questions and particularly where Britain and Russia were opposed to each other. A further example which exemplifies this was that of the various Bulgarian crises between 1885-1888. It is not necessary to outline all these in detail but a brief summary is important in order to understand Woods' comments on the subject. During the night of 17-18 September 1885 Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia were united after a revolution in the latter.¹ Ottoman officials were arrested and Prince Alexander entered the province. Technically the Sultan had the right to send troops into Eastern Rumelia to protect it from external aggression, however the dangers involved were considerable.

¹ Feroze Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996), p. 153.

Similar to the Egyptian question, Anglo-Russian rivalry would become central to the problem. The Russian Government opposed the unification with the British Government supporting it.² Britain was supportive, hoping to diminish Russia's standing in the principality and replace her there and at the same time increase her influence in the Ottoman capital. The Sultan, whilst appearing to support the Russian position in opposition to that of Britain, remained concerned that it was Russia herself who could most damage the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans.³ Abdülhamid hoped that by appearing to support Russia he could ensure her continued support for the Berlin settlement. He avoided sending troops fearing that this would lead to Russian military intervention. Hence the Ottoman circular to the powers in late September requesting that they use their moral authority to restore the legal state of affairs.⁴ At the same time the Ottoman Empire's military position deteriorated as both Greece and Serbia mobilised hoping to gain territory in compensation for that seized by Bulgaria.⁵ The Sultan requested that the Great Powers use their influence with both countries to hold them back.⁶

As far as Eastern Rumelia was concerned Great Power agreement proved impossible and the Sultan attempted to find a solution through direct negotiations with Prince Alexander in January 1886.⁷ His initial proposals which were agreed with the Prince were not acceptable to Russia. Eventually a less bold agreement was reached by which the Prince of Bulgaria would be appointed Governor General of Eastern Rumelia; that his term would be renewed every five years subject to the approval of the great Powers; and that they would be involved in reorganising the province's internal laws. Prince Alexander then withdrew his support but eventually accepted after all the Great Powers and the

² Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 154.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-178.

Sultan had agreed. Later in 1886 he absorbed the assembly of Eastern Rumelia into the Bulgarian Parliament, a clearly illegal act.⁸

In August and September Prince Alexander was first overthrown, then restored and finally abdicated.⁹ The Sultan was not unhappy to see him gone. But replacing Alexander proved difficult as over the following year disagreements amongst the Great Powers made it impossible to choose a successor. In July 1887 the Bulgarian Grand National Assembly having lost patience elected Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg.¹⁰ They had received some indications that the Ottoman Government would not oppose his election.¹¹ However, Russia opposed the election strongly and for that reason when Ferdinand eventually entered Bulgaria he did so without Great Power or Ottoman support.¹² The international indecision continued until Russia came forward with an innocuous protest which the Ottoman Government had to send, which would simply say that Ferdinand's behaviour was illegal. As the Ottoman Government had already done this earlier there wasn't much of an issue in doing it again.¹³ The death of the Kaiser in March 1888 drove the Bulgarian situation from the diplomatic stage and Ferdinand remained unrecognised.

The second issue we need to examine is that of the trial, acquittal and eventual exile of Musa Bey. The following is largely based on the book by Musa Sasmaz.¹⁴ A few remarks on Sasmaz's work is necessary. It is the only work which examines the life of Musa but unfortunately it suffers from a number of weaknesses. The account appears to be an attempt to clear the name of the Kurdish chief rather than to investigate to what extent he was guilty of the allegations made against him. One major flaw is the

⁸ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p.181

⁹ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 241-242.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 244.

¹³ Ibid., p. 253.

¹⁴ Musa Sasmaz, *Kurt Musa Bey Olayı* (Istanbul: Kitapevi, 2004).

lack of a description of the Ottoman legal system, whether it was followed in Musa's case, and if not to explain why. This leads to some confusion over what Musa was actually charged with and when. It also makes it difficult to evaluate the court proceedings. Slight confusion is created over basic information like the year in which Musa was born. Sasmaz states that he was born in either 1854 or 1855.¹⁵ Later when examining the court proceedings Sasmaz provides evidence from Musa stating that he was thirty-one at the time.¹⁶ If the latter was correct he would have been born in 1858. Sasmaz does not attempt to explain the contradiction. The general impression left by Sasmaz's book is confusion. Nonetheless it is the only source which attempts to look at the life of Musa Bey.

According to Sasmaz, Musa was from an important Kurdish family in the vicinity of the city of Muş – his father had served as an Ottoman Governor.¹⁷ He had been murdered in 1885 as part of a blood feud.¹⁸ Musa was personally wealthy and had served as Governor of Muş.¹⁹ In 1883 he had come to the attention of the consular community due to an alleged attack on two American missionaries.²⁰ Musa was held responsible despite the fact that one of those who was assaulted could not identify him as one of the attackers.²¹ The British Consul in the area, Consul Eyres, thought that even if Musa was not guilty, he should still be punished in order to send out a message to the local Muslim population.²² Musa was arrested but later released due to lack of evidence.²³ Other allegations were made against him and as a result of all of these the Ottoman Government began to monitor him.²⁴

¹⁵ Sasmaz, *Kurt.*, p. 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Sasmaz wrote that according to Ottoman documents, Musa had become of interest to the international community again due to his arrest of an Armenian priest Bogos Natanyan.²⁵ He handed this priest over to the Ottoman authorities who wanted him for sedition.²⁶ However, newspaper articles had alleged that Musa was responsible for various crimes against Armenians including torture and murder.²⁷ The British Ambassador, Sir William White, raised the Musa Bey situation with the Sultan in May 1889 and was informed that he would be coming to the capital to answer the charges against him.²⁸ He was not arrested due to the fact that he had 11,000 armed men, whereas the local authorities only had 520.²⁹ It was thought that he would be more likely to come as a result of a personal invitation from the Sultan.³⁰ Sasmaz also suggests that Bahri Paşa – described as the brother of one of Musa’s wives in one place and the uncle in another – was involved in persuading Musa to come to the capital.³¹ It was at this Paşa’s residence that Musa lived under virtual house arrest throughout his stay in Constantinople.³² Musa may well have thought that he was secure given that in his own land he had close ties with the local authorities – lending the Governor money and hosting important religious figures at his home.³³ This could have led to a blind-eye being turned to his activities and a self-confidence on the part of Musa.

Musa arrived in Constantinople, to the surprise of the British Ambassador, in June.³⁴ A protracted period then followed whilst his accusers were also brought to the capital at the expense of the local authorities.³⁵ Musa wrote a letter which was published in many of Constantinople’s papers in which

²⁵ Sasmaz, *Kurt*, p. 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26 and 63.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

he defended himself against the allegations and told his readers that he was a servant of the Sultan and had done good service in the last war.³⁶ Allegations appeared in *The Times* accusing the Ottoman authorities of arresting Armenian plaintiffs.³⁷ The *Dragoman* at the British Embassy denied the claims.

It was decided that the trial should be public. The Sultan told White in a meeting on 23 August that it would begin shortly.³⁸ The initial phase of the trial began in September. During this phase of the proceedings decisions were taken concerning which of the various charges had sufficient evidence to be tested in court. There were contradictions in the evidence. One example of this involved the alleged kidnap of an Armenian girl. London based Armenians claimed that Musa's brother was responsible whilst those in the Ottoman capital stated it was Musa.³⁹ By November decisions were reached on which charges should actually be tested in court.

The trial finally opened on 23 November and Musa was charged with arson and murder.⁴⁰ Over the next few months hearings took place examining all the individual cases. Some of these charges were dropped due to lack of evidence.⁴¹ Musa bey was eventually acquitted of all the rest.⁴²

The trial received criticism from the *dragomans* at the British Embassy. They argued that the prosecutor had not had Musa Bey's alleged accomplices brought to the capital, that he had improperly usurped the role of the President of the Court and that his questions attempted to confuse the plaintiffs.⁴³ They complained about the President of the Court whom they accused of not being able

³⁶ Sasmaz, Kurt, p. 57.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 61.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-94.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 253-254.

⁴² Ibid., p. 252.

⁴³ Ibid., 152.

to manage the case.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most serious accusation was that the judgement had been pre-determined.⁴⁵ It was claimed that pressure had been put on the plaintiffs' representative by the Minister of Justice prior to the beginning of the hearings.⁴⁶ One of the Sultan's representatives was alleged to have applied pressure to the President of the Court.⁴⁷

The British Ambassador noted that the consistent application of pressure on the Ottoman Government and the Sultan had annoyed both.⁴⁸ He said that some thought it was foreign interference in an internal legal matter whilst others argued that to punish Musa would lead to Armenian revolutionary activity and further problems.⁴⁹ Sasmaz argues that Musa had become a matter of prestige for the British Government,⁵⁰ but that Lord Salisbury had recognised that no result had been achieved. But the pressure may have had some effect as Musa was not released after the conclusion of the final case in February 1890.⁵¹ In fact it was indicated to the British Embassy that he would not be permitted to return to his land.⁵² It was at this time that Musa escaped the capital.⁵³ He was captured and brought back. In October he was exiled to Arabia.⁵⁴ His family were sent to join him there. Musa Bey remained in Arabia until the outbreak of World war I.⁵⁵

The above leaves many questions unanswered not least of which is why the Sultan chose to exile Musa given his acquittal. If the *Dragomans* were correct and that pressure had been applied to ensure Musa

⁴⁴ Sasmaz, *Kurt*, p. 253.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

was released why did this not happen? Unfortunately Sasmaz's account does not help us. We will see later that Woods took a different view as to what happened.

We should now turn to the Armenian crises of 1894-1897. Chapter three described how one of the clauses of the Treaty of Berlin referred to reforms which the Ottoman Government promised to make in the Armenian inhabited provinces. These were to be monitored by the Great Powers. At the same time the Cyprus Convention allowed Britain a specific role in those reforms and we saw how Britain had attempted to put pressure on the Sultan in 1879, pressure which he successfully resisted. Between 1879 and 1889 there had been continued efforts on the part of Britain to persuade the Ottoman Government to reform in a way that she preferred. To give a couple of examples: in 1881 the British Government attempted to organise an international agreement on reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces.⁵⁶ This had little success. In 1885 the outgoing British Ambassador presented a note on Armenian reforms without first seeking the approval of his own government, thus doing damage to Anglo-Ottoman relations.⁵⁷

The Sultan continued to reform the empire according to his own choices, and some of this was described in chapter two. His reforms tended to strengthen the empire and technological improvements such as railways and telegraphs helped in this process. In so far as the Armenian inhabited provinces of Eastern Asia Minor were concerned these reforms included changes to the law regulating provinces in 1883.⁵⁸ These were largely based around the theory that corruption was the problem and so efforts were designed to counter this. They included improving the quality of local administrators by encouraging employment on the basis of merit and changing the powers of the

⁵⁶ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵⁸ Musa Sasmaz, *British Policy and the Application of Reforms For The Armenians in Eastern Anatolia 1877-1897* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2000), pp. 111-112.

various layers of administration. But the crucial point was to reform all parts of the empire and not allow for certain provinces to have special regulations.⁵⁹ Administrators continued to be employed on the basis of 'influence and intrigue' rather than merit and in general came from areas outside the eastern provinces.⁶⁰ Two further changes which took place between 1883-1890 strengthened the powers of the provincial governors. They were permitted to imprison or exile in 1885 and use the local military without consulting the central Government by 1890.⁶¹

A year earlier in 1889 reports began to appear in the British press concerning attacks on Ottoman Armenians in eastern Asia Minor. Three leading figures in the campaign should be mentioned. Two of them responded to letters from Woods, and the third was referred to in a letter by Woods. Minasse Tcheraz (Minasse Cheraz) had been the secretary of the Armenian delegation which attended the Congress of Berlin to argue for autonomy in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. He later became the editor of the Armenian newspaper *L'Armenie*.⁶² He had met with the Under Secretary at the Foreign Office in 1889, in which meeting a potential governor for Erzurum acceptable to the Armenian community was discussed.⁶³ A letter written by Tcheraz in 1890 to the *Daily News* was criticised along with other similar accounts by George Pollard Devi, the British Vice-Consul at Van.⁶⁴ The Consul described their accounts as 'erroneous and false'.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Sasmaz, *British Policy*, pp. 111-112.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, p. 118.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶² Justin McCarthy, Ömer Turan Cemalettin Taskiran, *Sasun The History of an 1890s Armenian Revolt*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2014), p. 311, note 27.

⁶³ Arman J. Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question from the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003), p. 156.

⁶⁴ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 47.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

Garebed Hagopian (Karapet Hagopian) established the Armenian Patriotic Association in 1888.⁶⁶ According to Kirakossian the organisation was called the Armenian Patriotic Union and Hagopian as its chair had written a letter to Lord Salisbury in 1885 requesting the subject of Armenian reforms be taken up by the Ambassadors discussing the Bulgarian situation.⁶⁷ This was declined by the Foreign Office. He had been responsible for a number of letters to the British press. Members of Parliament had questioned the veracity of some of the information which came from the Association.⁶⁸ Hagopian was also a vice-president of the Anglo-Armenian Association established in 1893 by the Member of Parliament James Bryce. This organisation had a number of members of Parliament in its ranks including the future Foreign Secretary Edward Grey and Francis S. Stevenson who actually ran the organisation.⁶⁹ He too responded to one of Woods' letters as we will see later in this chapter.

Garebed Thoumaian had been a professor at the American College at Merzifon until he was tried for sedition by an Ottoman court and found guilty.⁷⁰ Doubts were expressed about his guilt by both British and United States diplomats. Due to British pressure instead of imprisonment he was exiled from the Ottoman Empire and went to live in Britain.⁷¹ There he participated in the Armenian campaign alleging that the Turks persecuted the Armenians because they were jealous of the latter's accomplishments. To prove the use of torture he displayed chains and cannonballs which, he argued, he had been made to wear when imprisoned. According to a consular report however, this was untrue. Both a British consul and Thoumaian's own brother-in-law had visited him in prison and had seen no signs of this.⁷²

Between 1894-1896 eastern Asia Minor was convulsed by a series of violent incidents involving Armenians, Kurds and the Ottoman military. Like the crises in Crete and Bosnia Herzegovina and

⁶⁶ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 87.

⁶⁷ Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy*, p. 145.

⁶⁸ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-94.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

Bulgaria already discussed, part of the reason for the troubles was a desire on the part of some Armenians for separation from the Ottoman Empire. Armenian revolutionary organisations based outside the Ottoman Empire supported groups within to agitate for this. Separate to this however, were the traditional problems between the settled Armenian population and the nomadic and semi-nomadic Kurdish population. Arguments over migration and grazing rights easily developed into fighting, particularly when the Armenians were the clients of one or another Kurdish tribe. Also important was the Ottoman Government's desire to settle the Kurdish nomads and the need to find land. One final ingredient which complicated the situation here was the Muslim immigrants from Russia and their impact on the communities into which they were settled.

One example of the events which took place during this period has been selected for description for two reasons. First, Sasun was the subject of letters written by Woods. Second, the events there have been discussed fully in a recent book by McCarthy. The Sasun *Kaza* (subprovince) was a difficult area to penetrate. The central Government's ability to control the area was limited, few taxes were collected and the local population resisted efforts to register them.⁷³ This meant that no one really knew what the actual population was in the 1890s.⁷⁴ McCarthy gives the figures from the 1911 census – corrected to account for the undercounting of women and children – which he argues were more accurate as the area had been brought under greater central control by that year. The figures were 9,800 Muslims to 8,600 Armenians.⁷⁵ Bearing those figures in mind: there was one source which provided figures for the *Kaza* from the early 1890s which was quite accurate.⁷⁶ Vital Cuinet's work gave figures of 10,370 Muslims and 8,389 Armenians. These were thought to be based on Ottoman figures. All other figures were wildly inaccurate.⁷⁷

⁷³ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The Armenian population here had been involved in the semi-nomadic Kurdish tribal conflicts taking the part of their local lords against other Kurdish tribes.⁷⁸ In 1893 an agreement between the two main tribes which had traditionally been in conflict was made.⁷⁹ In the same year violence occurred between Kurdish tribes and the Armenians. In 1894 these conflicts increased and grew in intensity. What complicated the situation was the involvement of the Hunchak Party from outside the empire.⁸⁰ This was a socialist revolutionary party which used violence as a tactic to try and attain its ends. Their strategy was based on that of the Bulgarian revolutionaries in 1876. They hoped that by killing Muslims they could cause reprisals on local Armenians which would then be reported in the newspapers of the Great Powers.⁸¹ This would then lead to intervention by those Powers and the creation of an independent Armenia.⁸² Arms had been smuggled into the region from across the Russian frontier in the years leading up to 1894.⁸³

In 1893 and early 1894 Ottoman officials were attacked by local Armenians at the Devil's Bridge in Sasun. Initially a local governor had attempted to collect taxes but had been attacked and forced to withdraw across the bridge. This was then destroyed and attempts were made to repair it.⁸⁴ This would have appeared to the central government as rebellion.⁸⁵ In 1894 the Ottoman Government sent soldiers under the command of Colonel Ahmed Tevfik to deal with the situation. By his account there were around 900 soldiers.⁸⁶ There were two key battles, one in August where there were thought to be 600 Armenian combatants and a smaller one in September which led to the capture of the leaders

⁷⁸ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 11.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

of the movement.⁸⁷ These were later tried, most being found guilty and either sentenced to death or imprisonment, but a few were found innocent.⁸⁸

The first account of what had happened in Sasun appeared in a short piece from the Constantinople Correspondent of *the Daily News* on 12 November.⁸⁹ This alleged that twenty-five villages had been destroyed with thousands dead. Other newspapers carried *The Daily News'* account the following day. On 17 November *The Daily News* had another article from their Constantinople Correspondent which alleged that the Armenians had been attacked by Kurds, that they had fought back, and the Ottoman Governor of Bitlis had responded with brutal military force.⁹⁰ The same paper included a letter forwarded by the Secretary of the Armenian Patriotic Association which included graphic details and a call for British intervention.⁹¹ This account was also republished in other papers. The stories developed through the inclusion of allegations that the *Hamidiye* had participated in the massacres.⁹²

A campaign similar to that of the 'Bulgarian Horrors' then followed. Both the Anglo-Armenian Association and The Armenian Patriotic Association participated. Despite the fact that the statements of the latter had previously been questioned, this time they were accepted. Public pressure forced the British, French and Russian governments to send observers to attend the Ottoman Commission of Investigation, which was sent to find out what had happened in Sasun. Journalists were not allowed to go to the region, which McCarthy describes as a 'mistake' as it meant that journalists could not report the commission's work and therefore made things up.⁹³ A further problem was that when the European delegates sent their report to their countries' Ambassadors it bore no resemblance to the

⁸⁷ McCarthy, *Sasun*, pp. 34-36.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 38.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 49.

evidence given to the Ottoman Commission.⁹⁴ The Ottoman Commission's report didn't make it into the press.

Sasun was just one example of a series of clashes which spread across the empire and culminated in a serious riot in the Ottoman capital and a terrorist takeover of the premises of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in 1896. Unlike the crises of 1875-1878 and like the Cretan affair of 1866-1869 the clashes did not lead to foreign military intervention. There are a number of reasons for this. Russia – the traditional supporter of separatist movements in the Ottoman Empire – was concerned that the Armenian movement would have an impact on her own population. Furthermore, the Russian Government was more interested in her far Eastern expansion and wanted no complications in the west.⁹⁵ Through Russia's Dual Alliance with France in 1894 she had gained backing for her position.

Britain's Liberal Government had been sending notes of complaint since it came to power in 1892.⁹⁶ It had also moved a part of the Mediterranean Fleet closer to Constantinople, presumably in an attempt to intimidate the Sultan.⁹⁷ Towards the end of 1894 Gladstone had made a speech which caused concern in Constantinople.⁹⁸ It is likely that the speech referred to was made to a group of Armenians who had come to visit Gladstone at his home on his eighty-fifth birthday.⁹⁹ In it the former Prime Minister called for the Great Powers to act.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ McCarthy, *Sasun*, p. 121.

⁹⁵ Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 54.

⁹⁶ William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 158-159.

⁹⁷ David Steel, *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 321.

⁹⁸ Sasmaz, *British Policy*, p. 144.

⁹⁹ Richard T. Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1999), p. 572.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

When Lord Salisbury returned to government in 1895 he attempted to follow Gladstone's suggestion. He used the example of the recent troubles to argue that the Ottoman Empire was 'beyond recovery'.¹⁰¹ In a letter to the British Ambassador to the Sultan, Sir Phillip Currie, he outlined a proposal for putting an end to the Armenian problem. Salisbury proposed the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Russia would get Asia Minor, Britain the Arab inhabited provinces, Austria territory up to Salonica, Italy Albania and France Tripoli. We have already noted that Russia's position was to oppose any proposal tending to alter the situation in the Ottoman Empire. Germany, although initially showing some interest, quickly changed her mind. The Kaiser told Salisbury that he did not believe the Ottoman Empire was finished. He also said that any attempt to partition the Sultan's dominions would lead to a European war.¹⁰² He further argued that the only beneficiary from a war would be Britain herself, who would watch from the sidelines as the rest weakened themselves.¹⁰³

As Salisbury was unable to gain international support for his partition plan he considered unilateral action. A riot in the Ottoman capital in mid-1895 had led Austria to propose sending ships from all six Great Powers to Constantinople and the transfer of the city to a committee made up of the Powers' Ambassadors. This proposal was rejected by Russia.¹⁰⁴ Salisbury then asked the British Cabinet to approve the unilateral use of the Royal Navy.¹⁰⁵ The cabinet refused after hearing from the First Sea Lord that the ships would be at too great a risk.¹⁰⁶

A final attempt by Salisbury to bring about international agreement was made in mid-1896. He wrote a circular to the Great Powers arguing that only through concerted action on the part of the

¹⁰¹ Steel, *Lord Salisbury*, p. 321.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

international community would the massacres come to an end.¹⁰⁷ He argued that Britain was not interested in territory but only in putting an end to the bloodshed and ensuring the peace of Europe – which was being placed at risk by the disturbances.¹⁰⁸ He argued that the Great Powers should act without the Sultan's approval if necessary. This clearly implied the use of force and again Russia supported by France refused.¹⁰⁹ For the purposes of this thesis that was the end of the Armenian problem. A more dangerous situation would take diplomatic attention away from the Armenian Question in 1897.

It has already been shown that Graeco-Ottoman relations were never too far from crisis point. One of the causes on this occasion was Crete. After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Sultan made alterations to the Organic Law of Crete as established in 1868 by Ali Paşa and issued them in the Halepa Convention.¹¹⁰ Under the new rules the Governor General would be appointed for five years. This position could be held by either a Muslim or a Christian, but the deputy had to come from the other religious community.¹¹¹ The local assembly was constituted of 49 Christians and 31 Muslim members – who would meet once a year and be able to use any excess taxes to fund local needs.¹¹²

In 1889 violence broke out in Crete. It was argued by the Christian rebels that the Sultan had not been implementing the convention.¹¹³ The Greek Government was warned not to send supplies to the rebels and Britain and France both made it clear that the Great Powers would not intervene on behalf of the Christians.¹¹⁴ The Sultan gave amnesty in November and promised reform.¹¹⁵ In 1895

¹⁰⁷ Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815-1914*, (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 200-201.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 213.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 213-214.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 214.

violence again broke out, but unlike in 1866, this time the Ottoman Government wanted outside support to put an end to the troubles.¹¹⁶ It was the navies of the Great Powers who set up the blockade of Crete in order to prevent supplies from reaching the rebels. Rodogno gives three reasons why the Ottoman Government welcomed foreign intervention here and not in the eastern provinces. The population of the island was majority Christian, foreign intervention had happened before and Russia and Austria both opposed Greece's absorption of Crete fearing that it would upset the Balkan balance.¹¹⁷ Rodogno notes that the Sultan's request might well have been a 'shrewd' way of involving the Great Powers on his own terms. Yasamee provides a complementary reason for the Sultan's action: he was not prepared to risk too much where Ottoman sovereignty was 'nominal'.¹¹⁸ Given the cuts in expenditure on the Ottoman Fleet as outlined in the previous chapter, the Sultan would have known that an Ottoman blockade would have been impossible. He probably took a perverse pleasure when hearing that even the blockade of the Great Powers was unable to prevent all supplies from reaching Crete.

In mid-1896 an agreement was reached between all concerned which was designed to put an end to the troubles but before it could be fully implemented violence again erupted.¹¹⁹ In February 1897 a Greek naval squadron entered Cretan waters and soldiers were landed.¹²⁰ The Great Powers landed soldiers to take control of parts of the island.¹²¹ As Rodogno points out, this was aimed at the Greek intervention not the Ottoman Government.¹²² The Great Powers recognised that it was their responsibility to protect the local Muslim population.¹²³ Violence continued due to the insufficiency of foreign troops.¹²⁴ Separate to the fighting in Crete, in April the Greek Government organised a

¹¹⁶ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, pp. 214-215.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 42.

¹¹⁹ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, pp. 215-216.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 216.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 216-217.

¹²² Ibid., p. 217.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 218.

rebellion across the border in Ottoman Thessaly and Epirus, and mobilised.¹²⁵ The Ottoman Government declared war and defeated Greece within thirty days. The Peace of Constantinople returned the situation to what it had been prior to the outbreak of the war but assigned a one hundred million indemnity which Greece had to pay.¹²⁶

As a result of the Greek loss in the war she was forced to accept Ottoman suzerainty over Crete. However, the Cretan problems continued and by August of 1898 a decision was taken to remove all Muslim officials and replace them with Christians.¹²⁷ As a consequence further violence broke out during which some British soldiers died attempting to stop the fighting.¹²⁸ The Sultan was then presented with a joint note informing him that if all Ottoman soldiers had not left Crete by a set date the Powers would implement the wishes of the majority of the population.¹²⁹ By the end of November the last Ottoman soldier had left. Prince George became the High Commissioner of Greece despite Ottoman opposition.¹³⁰ The writing was clearly on the wall for Ottoman sovereignty of Crete. We shall see how Woods responded to all of these issues later in this chapter.

II. Woods on his employment and the Ottoman Empire

In many ways Woods' views were the same as those of Hobart. On the Ottoman Turks he wrote: '...I love the Turks much more than I do any other races of the near East...'.¹³¹ He went on to write, '...the Turk has been as much sinned against as sinning'; and on the believed superiority of Christianity: '...Christian virtues in the past often received more due observance from the Moslem Turks than from the so-called Christians.'¹³² His memoirs also contained a number of anecdotal stories indicating that

¹²⁵ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, p. 220.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 221.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 222.

¹³¹ Woods, *Spun yarn*, V2, p. 287.

¹³² Ibid.

he had learned at least some Turkish, which allowed him to integrate into the Ottoman world more thoroughly. In Woods' account of his promotion to Vice-Admiral and Aide-de-camp he described how the Navy Minister, Hasan Hüsnü Paşa, had been trying to force him to resign due to his friendship with palace officials and his fears that Woods was telling them what he was doing. In a brief encounter between the two of them, Hasan expressed the view that Woods had escaped his efforts to have him resign in the single word 'kurtuldu' (escaped).¹³³ His memoirs also include accounts of staying in the homes of friends and being served his morning coffee by their daughters.¹³⁴

Like Hobart, Woods believed that Anglo-Ottoman friendship was important for Britain. He wrote: 'I was and am still an adherent of the old traditional policy: keep friends with Turkey.'¹³⁵ The reason for this was the threat that Woods believed Russia posed to both the Ottoman and British Empires. Linked to this was the belief that Russia could best be threatened by Britain through the Black Sea. Added to this was Woods' belief that British rule in India, with its Muslim population, was benefited by friendship with the Caliph.

The importance of close Anglo-Ottoman ties is further demonstrated through Woods' decision to pass information to the British Government via the Embassy. In a letter to Layard from July 1878, Woods informed the Ambassador about Ottoman ship movements.¹³⁶ On behalf of the current Governor of the Naval College, he invited the Layards to attend a banquet to be given for the senior officers of the British Mediterranean Fleet, arguing that his predecessor had visited the Naval College on a number of occasions. He also wrote '...that the naval college has to a certain extent always enjoyed the protection of the Embassy...'.¹³⁷ On another occasion Woods provided a chart of the region around

¹³³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 86-87.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹³⁶ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS, 39,021/61, July 14 1878, Hen F. Woods to Layard, Constantinople.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Batoum showing the routes the Russian Army had taken during its siege and the Ottoman defensive positions.¹³⁸ According to the note with this map, Woods had provided it to General Sir C. Dickinson who had forwarded it to Layard on 12 June. The same note indicated that the map had been made by an Ottoman officer. Given Woods' claims about his ability to draw he may well have been the author of the map. Given current preparations for the Congress of Berlin the map may have proven useful to the British Government. There is a further letter in which Woods thanked Layard for some help which he provided.¹³⁹ The letter is not specific however on what the help might have been.

One final document which Woods sent to the British Government should be mentioned here. It is perhaps unique in Woods' correspondence. In 1896, Woods wrote a document entitled "Project for a Reformed Administration in Crete".¹⁴⁰ It had no covering letter, no specific date; there is no explanation as to why Woods decided to write it and send it to the British Government. There is also no indication that it was copied to the Ottoman Government, or forwarded by Britain. The document was written during a period of increased tension on Crete.

The proposal outlined Woods' ideas on the government of the island. He began by making suggestions on the structure of the local government beginning with the Governor. He was to be a European who had been employed by the Ottoman Government for a long period of time and who would accept Ottoman nationality.¹⁴¹ Woods believed a Protestant would be more acceptable to the Orthodox population of Crete than a Catholic. Woods described Muslim Governors as being 'satisfactory' but that the Cretan population had been promised a Christian Governor. Previous Orthodox Governors had been expected by the Orthodox 'agitators' to support them in their efforts to join the island to

¹³⁸ TNA, MPK1/492.

¹³⁹ BL, Layard Papers, ADD MSS 39,033/290, May 30 1880, Woods to Layard.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, FO195 Miscellaneous, 1896, Woods Pasha, Project for a Reformed Administration in Crete.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

Greece. The Ottoman Government had been concerned by at least one of these Governors. A Protestant, European Governor would be able to participate in Orthodox religious festivals because, in Woods' view, there was little difference between them. To balance the Protestant Governor, Woods recommended that the Sultan should appoint a Muslim deputy, but one not from the island. The deputy Governor was to chair what Woods termed the 'Legislative Council'.¹⁴² This body was to be made up of six members, three of whom would be appointed by the Sultan in the proportion two Muslims to one Christian, none of whom were to come from the island. The other three, in the proportion two Christians to one Muslim, were to be elected from the Assembly. The Assembly was to be elected under the existing system, based on population distribution across the island.

Woods went on to describe the powers assigned to the three branches of Government. The Governor would have command of the naval and military forces stationed on the island.¹⁴³ As the Sultan's representative, he would have the right to veto any decisions made by the Legislative Council or Assembly which would damage the interests of the Muslim community. The deputy Governor would be in charge of the police and Gendarmerie, and chair the Legislative Council.¹⁴⁴ Two of the three elected members of the Council were to be responsible for finances and Public Works. Two of the three members appointed by the Sultan were to have responsibility for religious affairs, not governed by the church, and the Education Department.¹⁴⁵ The last two members were to be in charge of customs and act as Secretary-General of the Council respectively. The Council had the right to look at anything submitted to it by the Assembly, or questions it decided to examine itself. It would also act as a high court and in order to do this it would be joined by what Woods termed 'the High Legal

¹⁴² TNA, FO195 Miscellaneous, 1896, Woods Pasha, Project for a Reformed Administration in Crete, p. 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ There is an illegible word here but part of the role may have been to protect Muslim religious buildings, *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Luminaries.¹⁴⁶ This court would meet at least once a year and would be made up of the Governor General, and one Christian and one Muslim member.¹⁴⁷ Proposed laws would have to get a majority.

Woods then recommended locations where the military could be stationed and reiterated their subordination to only the Governor who could use them in times of need. The central Government was limited to paying for the military and naval forces, the island having to make a contribution for this purpose. This was to be based on the island's financial resources.¹⁴⁸ The customs duties were to be the same as in the rest of the empire. However the local administration was permitted to raise other taxes to pay for measures designed to improve the conditions on the island. These would require approval by the Assembly, the Council and the Governor. Woods went on to recommend a general disarming of the population, excluding shepherds and those living in secluded locations.¹⁴⁹ Anyone arriving on the island would have to hand over arms to the authorities.

Finally Woods recommended the removal of the current system by which officials on the island were elected. He wrote that it had led to 'quarrels and disturbances' and that those elected were hardly ever capable of performing their functions.¹⁵⁰ He recommended that appointments, apart from minor ones, should be made by the Governor on the advice of the departmental heads, taking into account the distribution of the population. The Governor would be able to suspend an official on the basis of a petition and the Legislative Council would investigate.¹⁵¹ No one could be appointed without being

¹⁴⁶ TNA, FO195 Miscellaneous, 1896, Woods Pasha, *Project for a Reformed Administration in Crete*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. The word prior to "General" is missing, however given the context Woods' comments seem to be referring to the court.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

able to do the job and Woods suggested the use of examinations to prove ability.¹⁵² Finally, Woods wrote that the rights of Muslim landlords could not be interfered with.¹⁵³

This is a fascinating set of proposals. It would appear that Woods was in a not so subtle way suggesting himself as a Governor of Crete. By 1896 he had been in Ottoman service for twenty-seven years, which probably made him the most senior European employee. Whether any of the proposals were feasible is open to question. Given that within two years effective Ottoman control over Crete was removed when the Governorship was given to the Prince of Greece, and Ottoman military forces were withdrawn, it is unlikely. Given the growth of nationalism, it is inconceivable that Woods would have been acceptable to those on Crete who desired union with Greece. There were a couple of anonymous pencilled comments on the report. The first reads: 'A little late!'¹⁵⁴ The second asks in red ink 'should he be thanked?' and a response 'certainly not.'¹⁵⁵ That perhaps gives us an idea of the Foreign Office's view of Woods' ideas.

Finally, although there are few private documents from Woods, and it is therefore difficult to see his changing view on the British Government's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire over his long career, his memoirs do provide clear indications. Like Hobart, he opposed the cession of Batoum in 1878, writing that he made the case against it through a number of anonymous letters to various British newspapers.¹⁵⁶ On Gladstone, Woods rhetorically asked what had happened to his 'bag and baggage' policy and described him as '...throwing away – the traditional friendship of Turkey,' which was accepted by Germany.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² TNA, FO195 Miscellaneous, 1896, Woods Pasha, Project for a Reformed Administration in Crete, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., back of final page.

¹⁵⁶ Woods, *Spun yarn*, V2, pp. 44-45.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 146.

One of the interesting differences between Hobart and Woods was the fact that Woods seemed to be less known in Britain. It has not been possible to locate any comments about him in Parliamentary debates. This probably meant that he did not receive the same level of criticism that Hobart got. Chapter three explained how Woods was able to maintain his Royal Naval pension in 1877 when Hobart was not. The lack of information makes it difficult to know how the British Government saw his employment. There is a letter from Layard which did make a similar argument for Woods as had been made for Hobart. This letter was a covering note that went with Woods' request to be allowed to keep his position at the Naval College in 1877. In it Layard wrote that 'Mr. Woods has no doubt claims to some consideration from Her Majesty's Government.'¹⁵⁸ He went on to describe Woods' various roles which had improved the safety of shipping in the Bosphorus. He concluded with the remark that Woods had '...rendered many important services to Her Majesty's Embassy and Consulate, and to our shipping and commercial interests.'¹⁵⁹ Given the information which Woods provided to the British Government, the chart already referred to and his report on the navy (referred to in chapter three), clearly this was the case. We should also bear in mind his Knighthood granted in 1902 – which could be read as a sign of approval for his long-term service in the Ottoman Empire. Also like Hobart, Woods was quite prepared to criticise the British Government as we will see shortly.

III. Acting for the Sultan 1886-1909

We must confront one major issue at the outset. It was not possible to find any orders from the Sultan to Woods asking him to defend the empire in print or to convey private messages. Nothing equivalent to Hobart's orders in 1885 or his private letters from 1878, 1881 or 1883 were found. However, there is much that is suggestive and given Hobart's orders it is difficult to accept that Woods was not asked

¹⁵⁸ TNA, ADM1/6422, June 27 1877, Layard to the Earl of Derby, Therapia.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

to do the same. Woods offers us hints in his memoirs. For example in 1887, when the Drummond Wolff negotiations came to an end with the Sultan's refusal to sign the convention, Woods wrote in his memoirs that the Sultan had planned to send him to London to request that they be continued with Sir William White, the British Ambassador, in Wolff's place.¹⁶⁰ He also stated that the Sultan told him the basis on which negotiations would continue and that Woods was to go straight to White to get his views. White returned a positive response, but the Sultan changed his mind. Given the use of Hobart in Egyptian discussions in 1885, it is plausible that the Sultan might have considered Woods in a similar role.

In 1887 Woods participated in a debate concerning an alleged event which took place some eleven years earlier. In order to understand Woods' involvement, it is necessary to provide a little background. In 1876, two Canons, Malcolm MacColl and Henry Liddon, toured the frontier between Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. They travelled down the river Sava on an Austrian steamer. What they saw became the subject of a historical dispute, which has never been, and perhaps never can be, resolved. In a letter to *The Times* published on 28 September 1876, Canon MacColl described seeing a man impaled on a pole just outside a military blockhouse.¹⁶¹ MacColl made a number of other claims: that any Christian from Bosnia found armed was impaled, that this was a regular Ottoman practice and that it was being undertaken by the regular Ottoman Army and not irregulars (*Başıbozüks*). He claimed that Christians were killed in this way because of their religion. In conclusion, he said that due to the out of the way nature of this frontier the 'Turk' was able to continue '...his unbridled passion for cruelty...'. This was used as a cry to encourage Britain to react against the Ottoman Empire. Special note should be taken of the generalisations used here: this was not an appalling, unusual incident, but an example of a regular occurrence.

¹⁶⁰ Woods, *Spunyarn* V2, pp. 176-177.

¹⁶¹ *The Times*, September 28 1876, p. 8 column 6, "An Oriental People in Europe, Malcolm MacColl, Belgrade, September 21".

The Ottoman Embassy responded to these claims by publishing a note from the Ottoman Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary in *The Times* on 4 October.¹⁶² The official Ottoman report was forwarded in the hopes that it would counter the claims made by the empire's critics. Three more letters led to another intervention on the part of the Ottoman Embassy.¹⁶³ Although the letter itself was only marginally to do with impalement, here the Ambassador argued that impalement had ceased to be Ottoman practice since the 1839 publication of the Rescript of the Rose Chamber. The rest of the letter was concerned more generally with the crisis in the European provinces of the empire and the claim that the problems were caused with the intention of creating these outrages and that those responsible shouldn't be exonerated.

In the same edition of *The Times* Dr Liddon responded to the first of the Ottoman Ambassador's letters.¹⁶⁴ Here he confirmed that they were travelling down the Sava, that they saw the poles, that someone was on one of those poles, and that various companions confirmed what they had written. However, there is a significant difference between what Liddon wrote and what had been stated by MacColl. No reference was made to Ottoman soldiers impaling Christians, nor the commonness of this practice. In fact, the letter says that the thing on the pole might just have been a scarecrow, although this is likely to have been meant ironically. Liddon's letter concluded by saying that Ottoman reports could not be relied upon, arguing that Ottoman officials would attempt to hide what he termed '...Turkish barbarities from ... civilised Europe.'¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *The Times*, October 4 1876, p. 10 column 5, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, Musurus, Imperial Ottoman Embassy, London, Aug. 4 1876".

¹⁶³ *The Times*, October 6 1876, p. 6 column 3, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, Musurus, Imperial Ottoman Embassy, London, Oct. 5".

¹⁶⁴ *The Times*, October 6 1876, p. 6 column 3, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, H.P. Liddon, Hotel Windsor, Paris, Oct. 4".

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The debate continued in the pages of *The Times* with MacColl having another letter published on 9 October.¹⁶⁶ Here he confirmed that Liddon's claim of a scarecrow was meant ironically, but goes on to say that, as there was no cultivated land in the vicinity, this was impossible. He poured scorn on the letters from the Ambassador and continued to claim that the impalement was undertaken by the regular Ottoman Army.

The Foreign Office entered the debate by requesting that a number of documents be published. They appeared in *The Times* on 20 October.¹⁶⁷ The correspondence was introduced by Andrew Buchanan, the British Ambassador to Austria-Hungary. He wrote that Count Andrassy, the Austrian Chancellor, had told him that impalement could not have taken place on the Bosnian frontier without Austrian officials knowing about it; thereby suggesting that it could not have taken place at all. He went on to suggest that the impaled body that Liddon claimed to see was perhaps a corpse placed in chains, as he had seen done during the British rule in Corfu.

In a telegram, Consul William Holmes from Bosnia described the claims as 'astounding' and said that he had not heard of any such thing taking place, that no other consuls had, nor the Ottoman authorities.¹⁶⁸ He went on to write that no such claim had appeared in any of the Slavic newspapers, who were most critical of the Ottoman Empire, and it was impossible that they could have happened without becoming public knowledge. He went on to write that Mr. Stuart Glennie, who will be referred to shortly, had just arrived from Serbia and had not heard of impalements either, having travelled

¹⁶⁶ *The Times*, October 9 1876, p. 6 column 5, "Impalement, Malcolm MacColl, 12, Chester-Terrace, S.W., Oct. 7".

¹⁶⁷ *The Times*, October 20 1876, p. 6 column 1, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, Andrew Buchanan, Vienna, Oct. 14,".

¹⁶⁸ *The Times*, October 20 1876, p. 6 column 1, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, W.R. Holmes, Bosna Serai, Oct. 5, 1876".

along the frontier. On the contrary, he was rather impressed by the behaviour of both the regular and irregular soldiers. Mehmet-Ali Paşa is given as an example of a general in command of military forces who would not allow impalement, although in his case, because he was of European origin. The Governor General told him that he had not heard of the two Canons and it was impossible for any Englishman to travel along the Bosnian frontier without him hearing about it -- Mr Stuart Glennie's movements had been telegraphed to him. In the final section of the telegram, Holmes stated that there was nothing he could say if Liddon saw an impaled man. If he was only told about it, Holmes believed he was the victim of a lie with the intention to add evidence to the belief in Britain in the '...barbarous conduct attributed to the Turks and in hostility towards them.'¹⁶⁹ Holmes did not believe the story and wrote that it was likely to be the head that was on the pole and asked if Liddon counted that as impalement.

A further letter from MacColl appeared in the edition of *The Times* from 21 October.¹⁷⁰ Again the same claims were made, but on this occasion the evidence of a Roman Catholic priest and his Bishop, Strossmayer, were used to support the claims. Additional details were given including the fact that the victims were impaled facing Austria, that is, towards Christian Europe. Bishop Strossmayer is described as having a 'European reputation' in order to strengthen his *bona fides*.

Liddon returned to the debate on 23 October.¹⁷¹ Whilst maintaining what he and his companion had seen, he made the following responses to those who had claimed the opposite view. Slavonic newspapers were not likely to comment on something that had been common until recent times. That all the other evidence presented from Austria, British Consuls etc. was of a negative nature and did

¹⁶⁹ *The Times*, October 20 1876, p. 6 column 1, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, W.R. Holmes, Bosna Serai, Oct. 5 1876."

¹⁷⁰ *The Times*, October 21 1876, p. 8 column 3, "Alleged Turkish Atrocities, Malcolm MacColl, Oct. 20".

¹⁷¹ *The Times*, October 23 1876, p. 11 column 2, "Turkish Atrocities, H. P. Liddon, Christ Church, Oxford, Oct. 20".

not disprove what he and MacColl had seen. However he went further in expressing his views. I quote as it is relevant to the reliability of the two gentlemen:

Impalement would doubtless be deplored by English officers who can consent to touch the pay of the Moslem, but these gentlemen can hardly hope to control the barbarians whom they undertake to serve. Cruelty is natural and appropriate in the administrative system of a Power which beyond any other has traced its history in human tears and blood, and which, at this moment, in Europe alone, condemns eight millions of Christians to a life of utterly intolerable wretchedness.¹⁷²

Perhaps this gives us a key to the origins of the claims made. We see again generalisation and a belief that any Muslim Government is necessarily going to be a government which practices abuse of Christians. We also see condemnation of those who work for the Ottoman Government -- Hobart and Woods -- and also the attempt to devalue contradictory evidence. A further letter appeared from Liddon on 30 November -- in which a letter to him was included -- which described an alleged impalement from a witness who saw it, although this letter also said that impalement was no longer common.¹⁷³ This was the last of the letters on this subject in 1876.

It may be asked why Hobart or Woods did not participate in this debate? Hobart was involved in naval preparations for a war that everyone now expected. We have seen that he had been undertaking naval exercises in the Aegean at roughly the same time. This may mean that he either was not aware of the discussion around impalement or that he did not have the time to respond. Woods was a subordinate of Hobart's and we have seen that he did not seem to write letters until later in his career.

The debate re-emerged in 1887 and it was into this controversy that Woods stepped. This time it began with a series of three letters by Canon Isaac Taylor in which he argued that Muslim

¹⁷² *The Times*, October 23 1876, p. 11 column 2, "Turkish Atrocities, H. P. Liddon, Christ Church, Oxford, Oct. 20".

¹⁷³ *The Times*, November 30 1876, p. 7 column 6, "Turkish Atrocities, H.P. Liddon, Christ Church, Oxford, Nov. 28".

proselytization was more successful than Christian in Africa and India and explained why this was, in his view.¹⁷⁴ Canon MacColl responded on 7 November in which he made the following comment: 'Islam has been an unmitigated curse to the lands and peoples where it has ruled.'¹⁷⁵

Canon Taylor then responded ten days later in what can be best described as a sarcastic dismissal of MacColl. He argued that, as Canon MacColl could not tell the difference between 'scarecrows and beanstacks' and impaled Christians and could only see 'dens of profligacy,' others, who have just as much right to comment, may describe 'virtue and piety.'¹⁷⁶

On 21 November, Canon Liddon responded by saying that he saw the impaled body, that there was no cultivated land nearby and so it could not have been a scarecrow, that a bean pole was not likely, and that where people did not want to believe something they would find a way of not doing so.¹⁷⁷ Three more letters appeared on 23 November, the first from MacColl in which the whole story was repeated again. The only difference between this account and earlier ones was that this one included more details: for example, the fact that the corpse had hair and that it had its hands bound behind its back. This account also included the corroboration of Bishop Strossmayer that impalement was still practised, including members of his own 'flock' which included a pregnant woman. The letter concluded with a criticism of Consul Holmes, who first suggested that those who claimed to have seen an impaled man had seen bean stalks, then that they had been fooled; and finally that it was someone who had climbed the pole to watch the boat pass. MacColl demanded to know why Consul Holmes had denied the impalement, especially as reports from him including evidence from the Catholic

¹⁷⁴ *The Times*, October 26 1887, p. 4, column 5, "Islam (I), Isaac Taylor", October 31 1887, column 2, "The Progress of Islam (II), Isaac Taylor", and November 07 1887 p. 13, column 1, "The Progress of Islam (III), Isaac Taylor".

¹⁷⁵ *The Times* November 7 1887, p. 13 column 1, "The Progress of Islam (III), Malcolm MacColl, November 3".

¹⁷⁶ *The Times*, November 17 1887, p. 13 column 3, "The Progress of Islam (IV), Isaac Taylor".

¹⁷⁷ *The Times*, November 21 1887, p. 6 column 4, "Canon Taylor on Islam, H.P. Liddon, Christ Church, Oxford, 19 November".

Bishop, presumably Bishop Strossmayer, had been forwarded to the Ambassador at Constantinople and then published in Parliamentary Blue books.¹⁷⁸

Stuart Glennie's letter, which appeared beneath this one, disagreed with Liddon as he himself had been on the Sava at roughly the same time and saw nothing. He also wrote that Consul Holmes' report was based on his evidence.¹⁷⁹ Canon Liddon responded on 24 November, in which he said that, whilst the Ottoman Government had tried to suppress impalement, the Ottoman Empire was loosely governed and some local elites continued to use it. He used the Hejaz in the 1850s as an example of this. He finished this letter by writing that, when he had met Consul Holmes, he had interpreted the twinkle in his eye as a criticism of some of the methods used to condemn their evidence.¹⁸⁰

Hobart Paşa's name was introduced to the debate in a letter from Colonel Cecil Jonson, which appeared on 25 November.¹⁸¹ Here he described the claims of both Canons as '...oft-refuted, oft-pulverised...' and wrote that Hobart had told him that someone on that steam boat had admitted to fooling the two Canons. He himself had written a book about the area describing the people and explaining that fishermen and those looking after cattle stood on poles in order to better undertake their jobs.

¹⁷⁸ *The Times*, November 23 1887, p. 4 column 5, "Bean Bag Versus Impalement, Malcolm MacColl".

¹⁷⁹ *The Times*, November 23 1887, p. 4 column 5, "Bean Bag Versus Impalement, J. S. Stuard Glennie, Athenaeum Club, Nov. 21".

¹⁸⁰ *The Times*, November 24 1887, p. 7 column 6, "Bean Bag Versus Impalement, H.P. Liddon, Christ Church, Oxford, 23 November".

¹⁸¹ *The Times*, November 25 1887, p. 10 column 3, "What the Canons Saw, E. Cecil Johnson, Colonel, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., Brighton, Nov. 22".

Woods entered the debate on 29 November.¹⁸² There were two stated reasons for doing this: ‘justice’ for the Ottoman Government which Canon Liddon defamed, and to respond on behalf of a friend, Consul Holmes, who was now dead and so could not speak for himself.¹⁸³ Woods began by utterly denying the common practice of impalement. Woods accepted that cruelties had been committed at the period in question but wrote that this was inevitable when intercommunal violence was encouraged. He drew a comparison with Ireland and said that no one blamed the British Government for what nationalists had done. He went on to write that the Turks were not the only ones committing outrages. Presumably Woods meant Muslims here? He claimed that crimes that went beyond their’s, were committed by Christians. He expressed sorrow that Liddon participated in what he terms the ‘...atrocious agitation versus common sense...’ under the influence of Gladstone, and that he went on his tour in order to find evidence for what he already believed.¹⁸⁴ Given that both the current ‘enlightened’ Sultan and his father, were ‘noted for... gentleness and clemency...’ no one would have dared use impalement as a punishment.¹⁸⁵ Woods then proceeded to describe how he had fooled an English lady about an impalement when, in fact, it was a fisherman standing on a pole. As the train passed on its way to Izmit, all they could see was the top of the pole with the man, which looked very much like an impaled man. Had the carriage not reverberated with laughter, the shocked look on the lady’s face would never have left her. Woods was convinced that Liddon was fooled in a similar way by a beanstalk. Woods concluded by saying that he too saw the twinkle in Mr. Holmes’ eye when the subject was raised but that he put it down to what he termed ‘the rightful cause’: that Canon Liddon had been fooled.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² *The Times*, November 29 1887, p. Illegible column 5, “What The Canons Saw, Letter From Woods Pasha, November 27”.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*,

¹⁸⁶ *The Times*, November 29 1887, p. illegible column 5, “What the Canons Saw, Woods Pasha, November 27”.

Liddon responded directly to Woods on 2 December.¹⁸⁷ The letter opened with what can only be an ironic remark: 'Sir, - Everybody must admire the chivalrous fervour with which Woods Pasha defends the Government which has decorated him and whose service, I have no doubt, he adorns.'¹⁸⁸ He commented that he was better positioned to interpret the twinkle in Holmes' eye, as Woods was not present. He wrote that the Hejaz was an example of a distant province where the Sultan's writ may not have been fully followed, Bosnia being another. He accepted that this was not made properly clear in 1876. He agreed with Woods on Ottoman soldiers largely behaving very well and that Christians sometimes behaved extremely badly. He concluded by saying that the question was, did he and Canon MacColl see what they thought they saw. Woods could believe what he wished, but Liddon asked him to accept that people would believe what they wanted. Woods did not respond to this, presumably because he felt it would be a waste of his time.

This debate has been gone through at some length, partly because it was clearly a controversial subject and a number of different people participated in the two discussions. A large number of letters appeared in *The Times*, with the debate probably being carried on in other papers as well. Only a selection from *The Times* has been used here. It is an interesting discussion because, whilst on the surface the discussion is simply about whether someone was impaled on the bank of the Sava during a time of great upheaval in an Ottoman province in 1876, it also brings up issues around attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire, Islam and the widely held belief of the superiority of Christians. Bearing in mind the original claims by MacColl, and to a lesser extent, Liddon that the impaled person on the bank was impaled by Ottoman soldiers, and that this was to be expected from the Ottoman Empire, Liddon's view seems to have changed over time. The final letter in this series seems to accept that the Ottoman authorities may have had nothing to do with the impalement. Did his anti Muslim/Ottoman

¹⁸⁷ *The Times*, December 2 1887, p. 10 column 4, "What The Canons Saw, 3, Amen-Court, E.C., Nov. 29, H.P. Liddon".

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

views soften over time? Canon MacColl continued to maintain that the Ottoman authorities were directly responsible. Woods, who would have known what the central government felt about impalement, contradicted this completely. Although this in itself does not necessarily mean that impalement was not practised, it is perfectly plausible that something condemned by the central government may have been practised in distant provinces. He went further however in saying that what they saw was not in fact impalement at all.

How do we judge between the claims of MacColl, Liddon and their supporters on the one hand and Woods, Hobart, et al. on the other? Only by assessing the credibility of the people concerned. A hint as to how credible MacColl and Liddon might be when it came to the Ottoman Empire has already been gleaned through their generalisations and their, and particularly MacColl's, insistence on the Ottoman military being responsible. This is something he clearly could not have known given that, by his own admission, he did not leave the boat in which he was travelling. He could not have known whether the military post was occupied by regular troops, irregular ones, or even how high up the military chain of command the impalement order went. He also could not have known if the body that he saw had been impaled, or placed on the pole subsequent to execution.

A further piece of evidence comes from a letter from Bishop Strossmayer to Gladstone. It should be remembered that Bishop Strossmayer was used to add weight and validate what the two Canons had seen. Strossmayer wrote:

Besides, it is not a question whether this or that event took place in this or that form, but mainly whether it is possible that Christians should remain under the rule of the Koran and its fanatical followers free from tyranny and every kind of cruelty. Every thinking man must answer this question with a decided 'No.'¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ R Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question And The Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable and Co, 1911), p. 429.

If that was the true issue, and for many not just those nationalists who were bound to think this, but Christians in Britain too, it made it far easier to discount anything that an Ottoman official said, bearing in mind the Ottoman report, or Hobart or Woods Pasha. To people such as that the arguments made by Hobart and Woods that the Ottoman Empire was unjustly treated, and that it had the right to exist would have meant nothing at all. The evidence of MacColl cannot be accepted alone. His antipathy towards the Ottoman Empire, and Muslims meant that he was completely unreliable when it came to describing anything that happened within the empire. Liddon's supporting evidence was always difficult as it never quite agreed with MacColl's. It is therefore likely that either nothing was seen, or that it was likely a corpse hung on a pole, or a head stuck on a pole, not someone impaled.

No evidence was found to suggest that Woods had sent his letter as a result of an order from the Sultan. In the same year Woods' memoirs refer to messages which he was asked to deliver to Lord Salisbury and the Prince of Wales by the Sultan.¹⁹⁰ Although he does not provide a date, it is possible to narrow the time-frame down to late 1887 or early 1888. The reason for this is that he wrote that it was the same visit in which he purchased a copy of *The Nineteenth Century*. That particular issue was to cause the Sultan concern which would lead to Woods writing to the Prime Minister. We will return to that issue shortly. What the private messages were which Woods was asked to deliver are not made clear in his memoirs. We might assume however that in addition to personal greetings, Bulgaria and possibly Egypt may have been included.

Let us now turn to the article which appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*. This was the first example where evidence exists to suggest that the Sultan made use of Woods in a similar way to Hobart. In Woods' memoirs, he referred to an article written by the ex-Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Sir

¹⁹⁰ Woods, *Spun yarn*, V2, p. 165.

Henry Elliot.¹⁹¹ Woods described the article as ‘...a most damaging action for our interests in Turkey...’ and one reason he gave was the fact that Elliot clearly knew what was taking place just prior to the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz.¹⁹² Worse still, Woods reported Elliot as accusing Sultan Abdülhamid of being involved in the murder of his uncle. Woods wrote that he had discussed the article with the Ottoman Ambassador in London, Rustem Paşa but that they had not thought it was particularly significant. According to Woods, it had made no impact in England. In the Ottoman capital however, the article had been translated by, as Woods’ described it, ‘...our political enemies in Turkey...’ and sent to the Palace along with a report arguing that the British Government were planning to depose the Sultan and the proof was that Elliot, who had clearly been involved in the deposition of the Sultan’s uncle, would not have written in the way he had done without official approval.¹⁹³

Woods was wrong on one count, Elliot did not in fact accuse Abdülhamid of being involved in the murder of his uncle. Elliot stated clearly that he accepted the verdict of suicide as given by the committee of doctors who examined the ex-Sultan’s body.¹⁹⁴ However, what Elliot did do was publicly criticise Abdülhamid. He described the trial of those who were thought to be responsible for the death of Abdülaziz as ‘iniquitous...’ and designed to rid the Sultan of certain individuals.¹⁹⁵ Elliot further wrote that the accusers had come forward for financial gain and that they continued to receive a pension from the Palace. Elliot concluded his article by writing that the prospects for improved government in the Ottoman Empire had gone and that this was due to the Sultan regaining absolute power.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Henry Elliot, “The Death of Abdulaziz and of Turkish Reform” *The Nineteenth Century*, 23: 1888, pp. 276-296.

¹⁹² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 165-166.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹⁹⁴ Elliot, “The Death”, pp. 285-287.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

Returning to Woods' memoirs: on his return to Constantinople, he discovered that all copies of *The Nineteenth Century* were being confiscated and sent to the Palace and that, as one copy was out of the reach of the person deputed to collect them, Woods' copy was taken in its place. This should perhaps have warned the Paşa that the Elliot article was taken more seriously than either he or the Ottoman Ambassador had thought. During his first meeting with the Sultan, Woods was asked to explain why Elliot had written the article. Woods wrote that he was able to '...reassure the Sultan in a great measure...' and was asked to write a private letter to the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury.¹⁹⁷

This example is different from any other as it has been possible to find Woods' letters to Lord Salisbury and Lord Salisbury's reply. The first is dated 24 February 1888 and, although Woods did not specifically state that he was writing on behalf of the Sultan, we can assume that is the case given the content and the way in which he signed himself, 'Woods Paşa Vice Admiral Aide-De-Camp Of The Sultan.'¹⁹⁸ We can also assume that both Woods and Lord Salisbury knew that the Sultan would be awaiting a response. There is a further reason to think that the Sultan was behind this letter. Woods was clear that if Lord Salisbury were to write a few lines he had 'reason' to think that the problem would be over. Given the two meetings he wrote that he had had with the Sultan, the reason can only be because Abdülhamid had made it clear that he wished Woods to write to the British Prime Minister.

Woods began his letter by telling Lord Salisbury that he had two recent interviews with the Sultan where the subject of Elliot's article was discussed. He felt that he had been able to soothe the mind of Abdülhamid by telling the Sultan that the article had had no impact in England and explaining that Elliot had no official relationship with the current British Government.¹⁹⁹ Woods told the Prime

¹⁹⁷ Woods, *Spunyarn*, v2, pp. 166-167.

¹⁹⁸ SP, Woods/1, 3M/E, February 24 1888, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

Minister that the article had been described by another Ambassador as preparing the British people for another revolution in the Ottoman Empire. In their recent meeting, Woods had emphasized to Salisbury his view of the importance of Anglo-Ottoman relations in economic and political areas. He hoped that Lord Salisbury would be able to remove the current difficulty by writing a brief note to the Sultan.²⁰⁰ Woods concluded by saying that he appreciated that it was a slightly unusual request but that, as the Prime Minister was aware, diplomatic relations were slightly different in the Ottoman capital than elsewhere. Woods suggested that any letter that Lord Salisbury decided to write could be sent through the British Ambassador, Sir William White, or via Woods himself.²⁰¹

Lord Salisbury's reply was dated 2 March, and showed a degree of frustration with the whole subject, presumably as a result not only of the article being brought up by Ottoman diplomats (official ones that is), but also annoyance that Elliot wrote the article in the first place. Salisbury wrote that Elliot's article was the most discussed diplomatic incident over the past three weeks.²⁰² He also stated that, had the government known that Elliot was going to publish such an 'injurious' article, they would have done their best to see that it '...never saw the light.'²⁰³ He regretted its publication and said that the government's plan was to ensure that any diplomat receiving a pension in the future would be prevented from publishing anything that would damage the relationship between Britain and its 'old ally.' The Prime Minister concluded by adding that, given the freedom of the press in Britain, which the Sultan understood, the British Government was not responsible for Elliot's article.²⁰⁴ This letter also included a rather interesting detail. The Prime Minister wrote that Elliot had been asked to write

²⁰⁰ SP, Woods/1, 3M/E, February 24 1888, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, pp. 2-3.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁰² SP, Woods2, 3M/E, March 2 1888, Salisbury to Woods Pacha, F.O., Private, p. 1.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

a 'statement' from which a few lines were being sent to the Ambassador so as to '...disabuse the Sultan's mind upon this subject.'²⁰⁵

Woods responded to this letter on March 17. He thanked the Prime Minister for the 'confidence' shown in him and said that it had a good effect on the Sultan who was now completely satisfied with the 'irresponsibility' of the British Government for the Elliot article and with its action thereafter.²⁰⁶ Thus ended the diplomatic hiatus over an article published by an ex-diplomat in a periodical that may not have been read by too many given its lack of impact. No Ottoman sources were found to corroborate Woods' account of this incident. This is not unexpected given that Woods' memoirs indicated that the instructions were delivered verbally. From Lord Salisbury's response to Woods' letter, we can deduce that he accepted Woods' correspondence on behalf of the Sultan. We should also take note of the meeting which Woods said he had with Salisbury in Britain. Was this meeting similar to Hobart's in 1878 with the then Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary?

This final letter from Woods on the subject of the Elliot article also demonstrated the problem in this kind of informal contact. Woods reported a conversation between himself and the Sultan on Bulgarian affairs. According to Woods the Sultan asked him what he thought would be the result if Prince Ferdinand were asked to withdraw from Bulgaria and if he thought the British Government would support the request.²⁰⁷ It should be remembered that the Russian Government had suggested this as part of its efforts to regain control of the principality and that Britain opposed the removal of the Prince, hoping to encourage a counterweight to Russia in the Balkans. Woods' response to the Sultan was very circumspect saying firstly that Prince Ferdinand and the Bulgarian people would probably

²⁰⁵ SP, Woods2, 3M/E, March 2 1888, Salisbury to Woods Pacha, F.O., Private, p. 1.

²⁰⁶ SP, Woods3, 3M/E, March 17 1888, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Private, Constantinople, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

refuse. He went on to say that it was important for the Sultan to '...maintain his reserved attitude.'²⁰⁸

Woods went on to tell the Prime Minister that he had told the Sultan about the remarks Salisbury had made during their meeting on the alliance between Germany, Austria and Italy and the support it received in Britain. Woods' letter then becomes somewhat opaque. He wrote that the views of '...the three last mentioned powers...' would become clear shortly and that the Sultan should wait in order to avoid annoying any of them.²⁰⁹ The letter is, however, unclear as to the three powers Woods meant. Working in reverse the powers were England, Austria and Italy, who had signed the Mediterranean Agreement the previous year. If we look at the three powers as connected in the text, they made up the Triple Alliance.

The key piece of advice that Woods gave, and it appeared to be the same as Lord Salisbury's, was to wait and see what the Great Powers did. This certainly fitted into the Sultan's own views. Whilst divided opinion existed, it was wisest to remain uncommitted. We are then left with the question of why Woods decided to inform the Prime Minister about this part of the conversation with the Sultan. The first part, concerning the Elliot article, could be argued to be under instructions. Was the second also? Was it the Sultan using Woods to let Salisbury know his thinking? Or was it Woods letting Salisbury know that the Sultan valued him? Or maybe it was simply Woods letting Salisbury know about a conversation. There was certainly no reply to the letter. That was perhaps due to the fact that the Bulgarian issue became less important soon afterwards. Another possible explanation might be the Prime Minister's attitude that the Ottoman Empire was bound to collapse soon and therefore the Sultan's view was not particularly important.

There are two more letters from Woods in the Salisbury Papers. Before moving onto the next example of informal contacts, it would be useful to deal with these. Neither seemed to have received a reply

²⁰⁸ SP, Woods3, 3M/E, March 17 1888, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Private, Constantinople, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

and neither was referred to in Woods' memoirs. More importantly neither seemed to have been written at the instigation of the Sultan. The first of these, from June of 1888, thanked the Prime Minister for the honour bestowed upon Mr Smythe. Woods' memoirs refer to a Sir Frederick Smythe who was given a knighthood in the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.²¹⁰ Despite the fact that Woods got the Jubilee part wrong, we can presume the same person is meant. For the purposes of this research however, the significant part of this letter concerned Woods' desire to be likewise honoured for, as he put it, '...the position I hold out here and ... my political services during the late war...'.²¹¹ Is this another example of an Englishman in the Sultan's service believing that their standing with the Ottoman Government would be enhanced by preferment at home? There can be no other explanation for the request and given Salisbury's lack of response clearly had no impact on the Prime Minister.

The final letter comes from a year later, in June 1889. This letter is interesting because of the information it contained concerning the Ottoman Navy and the defences of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Woods gave two reasons for his letter. First, 'the kind reception' given by the Prime Minister to his letter concerning Elliott's article. Second, to inform Lord Salisbury about certain issues which Woods believed were important in Britain's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.²¹² He explained that, due to his concerns over a possible Russian '*coup de main*' at the Bosphorus which could take place during the next crisis in international relations, he had written a report which he gave to the Sultan directly. As a result of this report, Woods wrote that a committee was set up, made up of both naval and military representatives, with him as a member, which had approved his recommendations. The report of this committee was then approved by the Sultan and orders were issued. Woods did not indicate what was contained within either reports or orders.

²¹⁰ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V1, p. 289.

²¹¹ SP, Woods4, 3M/E, June 5 1888, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople.

²¹² SP, Woods5, 3M/E, 12 June 1889, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Confidential, Constantinople, p. 1.

Woods then went on to describe a private meeting which he had with the Sultan on the previous day. Woods wrote that due to the quality of his spoken Ottoman Turkish there was no interpreter present and therefore no one knew the subjects discussed, although the fact of the meeting was known.²¹³ However, there is some reason to believe that this may not have been the case. In a letter to the Sultan from July 1890 Woods asked for an interpreter so as to prevent him making mistakes.²¹⁴ The conversation opened with the Sultan thanking Woods for his report on the Bosphorus defences. He told him that he had always been 'solicitous' about the empire's naval defences and paid attention to the various committees he had set up. Little had been done due to the difficult financial situation of the empire, which the Sultan said Woods understood, and only in a few cases, where the expenditure was small, had things been done, due to the opposition of the Treasury. Abdülhamid described the Finance Ministry as '...a powerful obstacle to progress.'²¹⁵ The Sultan said that he had issued orders for the purchase of a couple of ships and hoped that the money would be found. The Sultan then went on to comment on views of his defence policy referring to the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, arguing that it was incorrect to say that he concentrated on the Dardanelles in order to block Britain whilst ignoring the Bosphorus due to a leaning towards Russia.²¹⁶ Rhetorically, he asked '...how can I forget the blood that has been shed on account of her ambition.'²¹⁷ The Sultan also said that there could not be any real friendship between his empire and Russia because the latter had done so much to 'destroy' the empire through regular wars.²¹⁸ He told Woods that his recommendations on the Bosphorus would be implemented. But that it was also important to defend the Dardanelles as well saying:

²¹³ SP, Woods5, 3M/E, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Confidential, Constantinople, p. 1.

²¹⁴ BBA, Y.PRK TKM, 18-14 Lef 1, July 6 1890, Woods to Sultan.

²¹⁵ SP, Woods5, 3M/E, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Confidential, Constantinople, p. 2.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

'I am the Guardian of a house with two doors to it; – must I not see that I have a strong lock with a good key to each.'²¹⁹

The Sultan referred to France, Austria and Italy as powers who all had fleets in the Mediterranean. He also used the example of Greece, which he argued was constructing new ships.²²⁰ The Sultan concluded his remarks on the defences by referring to the torpedoes, torpedo boats, and the fleet and land batteries, which could all be used to protect the Bosphorus.²²¹

Woods provided Salisbury with some information on Ottoman torpedo defences. He told the Prime Minister that the static torpedoes were kept at Constantinople along with torpedo boats as well as the supply of Whitehead and Schwartzkopf torpedoes.²²² He went on to write that there were enough static mines to protect the Bosphorus, that they could be deployed quickly with only a little training and that they could be set up to explode on contact or via observation.²²³ Woods described the torpedoes stored at the Dardanelles as '...little better than dummies.'²²⁴

Woods told Salisbury that he had advised the Sultan that the fleet could not compete with a Russian squadron at sea, but that it could support the land-based batteries. He recommended the purchase of a couple of fast ships which could be used to monitor the Russian coast in times of heightened tension. They could then return to warn the Ottoman high command of the approach of a Russian fleet. Woods expressed concerns that, despite what the Sultan had said concerning the purchase of ships, financial difficulties might prevent it. He asked the Prime Minister if it might not be possible to

²¹⁹ SP, Woods5, 3M/E, June 12 1889, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Confidential, Constantinople, p. 3.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 4.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

find a way to help the Ottoman Government to purchase these ships and suggested that the tribute from Cyprus or Egypt might be used as a guarantee, avoiding the need to raise a loan.²²⁵

During the meeting, the Sultan referred to the way in which his rule was seen in Britain. He argued that he had 'many enemies' and that they were seeking to increase the 'mistrust' with which his reign was viewed in Britain.²²⁶ He went on to say that there were people in Britain such as 'the former Elchi (Ambassador) Elliot' who could be used as the tools of the Sultan's 'enemies,' who were to be found amongst both Muslims and non-Muslims.²²⁷ The Sultan told Woods that this was despite the fact that his goal was the prosperity of all Ottomans of whatever religion and the maintenance of peace.²²⁸ The consequence, argued the Sultan, of the distrust was '...the Egyptian situation, and this ever recurring Armenian question.'²²⁹ In the Sultan's view, all the calls for reforms were attempts to place what he termed the 'Hammals (porters)... over the Muslims.'²³⁰

This letter raises a number of questions. Did the Sultan want Woods to pass on some or even all of the remarks made in this conversation? He described the Sultan as speaking 'very openly.'²³¹ But as this was Woods' interpretation of the Sultan's remarks, we cannot assume that is what the Sultan intended. There is nothing in what the Sultan said however, that was particularly surprising. Given his preference for personal diplomacy, it is very possible that he did wish Woods to tell Lord Salisbury his views on Russia and Britain. The Sultan's views on reform proposals must have been well known to the Prime Minister and the specific mention of Egypt and the Armenian issue were clearly meant to indicate where the Sultan's biggest concerns lay. It is also very likely that what the Sultan said

²²⁵ SP, Woods5, 3M/E, June 12 1889, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Confidential, Constantinople, pp. 4-5.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 2.

concerning the Ottoman Navy and defences was already known through Embassy reports. More important, however, is the commentary Woods provided. One cannot but think that the Sultan would not have been pleased with the information on the location and status of defensive torpedoes and particularly the view expressed concerning the weakness of the torpedoes stored at the Dardanelles. One thing that is clear is that Woods believed that in writing this letter to Lord Salisbury he was doing his duty to both the Ottoman Government and Britain. We have already seen that Woods favoured an Anglo-Ottoman alliance and clearly this letter was designed to assist with that. But we must also say that by 1889 the likelihood of such an alliance was extremely slim.

Later in the same year Woods became involved in the Musa Bey dispute. In a letter to *The Times* from September, he adopted an interesting argument when he wrote that the people of Anatolia continued to have attitudes from an earlier time and used this to explain the seizure of Armenian girls by Musa and others. He wrote that ‘...the exploit in question was but carrying out the oriental idea of the wife being “captive to the bow and spear”’.²³² He went on to claim that Armenian women regularly converted to Islam and that for this reason what had happened to the woman seized by Musa Bey was not so bad. This was a brave argument to follow as Woods did not deny that the events took place but sought to diminish the significance placed upon them. In order to add proof to his arguments, he wrote that the claims made, that Armenian witnesses who had come to Constantinople to give evidence had been arrested, were completely untrue and that they were residing with the Armenian Patriarch.

In Woods’ memoirs he described the Kurdish chief as ‘...a freebooter of the Rob Roy type who did a good deal of raiding amongst the Armenians of Kurdistan...’.²³³ Woods explained the Sultan’s inability to deal with Musa by arguing that ‘...just as in Scotland in the old days, the King’s writ was only effective

²³² *The Times*, September 18 1889, p. 4 column 6, “Justice for Turkey, Woods Pasha, Constantinople, Sept. 9”.

²³³ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 171.

as far as it could be carried on the spears of his soldiers...'.²³⁴ There is some logic to Woods' explanation especially considering the lack of Ottoman soldiers in the area. Woods described Musa as being lured to the Ottoman capital, imprisoned, acquitted, not released due to the pressure of the British Ambassador and finally escaped with the support of his friends.²³⁵

It was at this point that Woods wrote that he was sent by the Sultan to Sir William White with a message.²³⁶ At first the Ambassador was so outraged at Musa's escape that he would not listen to what Woods had to say, and so Woods told him a story concerning another brigand who had seemingly escaped justice but was caught and punished. By the end of the story White had calmed down sufficiently to listen to Woods deliver the message. Abdülhamid gave his word to the Ambassador that Musa Bey would be punished, that the same man who had been sent after the brigand in the story was now going after Musa and the Sultan asked for a few days. White agreed to wait and Musa Bey was in fact returned to Constantinople and then sent into internal exile in the Hejaz.²³⁷

In a letter to *The Morning Post* in April 1890 Woods sought to explain why Musa had been acquitted.²³⁸ He drew attention to what he saw as the unfairness of the comments on the recent trial. He argued that the Ottoman Empire was not the first country where, despite best efforts to bring someone to justice, they had escaped. In fact Musa, according to Woods, had not completely got free. He argued that, given the evidence, Musa Bey might have been acquitted in a British court. He then went on to argue that the way in which evidence was taken from the witnesses during the trial was comparable

²³⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 171.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid., pp. 171-172.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ *The Morning Post*, April 22 1890, p. 5 column 7, "The Sultan of Turkey, Woods Pasha, April 18".

to other trials across Europe. He compared it favourably to the ways in which juries were unfairly pressurised in both Ireland and the United States.

A response from Minasse Tcheraz, the editor of *L'Armenie*, criticised Woods for suggesting that Musa Bey would have been acquitted by a court in his own country.²³⁹ Tcharaz quoted from a vice-consular despatch which reported the alleged deeds of Musa and his followers. He concluded by asking rhetorically if the acquittal of Musa Bey was '...an outrageous provocation to the Armenians?'²⁴⁰ He went on to say that this would mean that the '...cat when at bay becomes a tiger. The Armenians accept the challenge, and when parasites, in and out of Turkey, are lulling the Sultan in his lethargy would become a tiger the patriots are waking.'²⁴¹ This last was clearly an indication of violence to come.

Clearly Woods was prepared to accept that Musa was certainly guilty of something. The explanation in the first letter from 1889 was probably interpreted as an excuse by many readers. In both the article published shortly after the trial and in his memoirs, he tried to show the similarities in the Musa case with events and people with which his readers would have been familiar. This was clearly an attempt to diminish the otherness of the Ottoman Empire. Whether the pressure from White was the real reason Musa had not been released, or if it was down to a calculation on the part of the Sultan to increase central control of this region by removing a local potentate, is open to question.

Returning to Woods acting as a messenger between the Sultan and White, one final example will suffice. Woods referred to rumours that the Royal Navy had made a landing on the island of

²³⁹ *The Morning Post*, May 1 1890, "The Armenian Question, Minasse Tcheraz, April 28".

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Mitylene.²⁴² In this case the Sultan sent Woods to White to find out what was really going on and, as White knew nothing, Woods himself suggested the reply to be given to Abdülhamid -- that being that the landings were simply a couple of sailors as part of a naval gunnery exercise. The Sultan accepted the reply given by Woods on behalf of the British Ambassador and, fortunately for Woods, it turned out to be accurate. There is some evidence to suggest that military exercises took place in the vicinity of the island. An article appeared in *The Standard* in September 1891 which described White being asked by the Ottoman Foreign Minister to explain the landings, and him responding that it was probably an extension of the usual manoeuvres.²⁴³ The first of these two stories fits into the pattern of the Sultan initiating a private communication. The second is interesting because Woods himself, through his knowledge of the Royal Navy was able to provide the answer and, because he was trusted by White, he was able to give it as coming from the Ambassador.

So far the evidence presented has been in private letters to Lord Salisbury and Woods' own memoirs. It was possible to find some evidence in the Ottoman Archives to suggest that Woods had been asked to do something by the Sultan. There are three letters from Woods to Abdülhamid dating from 1890, 1894, and 1895, respectively, which indicate that Woods had been ordered to do a number of things when in Britain. Although none of these letters specify what those orders were, it is possible that press management was one of them. In 1890 Woods wrote to the Sultan informing him of his return to Constantinople and writing: 'in respect to the several orders that Your Imperial Majesty was pleased to give me ... I ... desire that Your Imperial Majesty would grant me the honour of being received in order that I might personally present ... my report.'²⁴⁴ There is no written report or summary of that meeting, if it ever took place. However, over the previous year Woods had published a number of pieces. We have already referred to two of these above in which Woods sought to explain what had

²⁴² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 172-173.

²⁴³ *The Standard*, September 16 1891, p. 5 column 2, "The Reported Occupation of Sigri, Through Reuter's Agency, Constantinople, September 14, Evening".

²⁴⁴ BBA, BOA. Y.PRK, TKM. 118-14 LEF 1. July 6 1890, Woods Paşa to the Sultan.

happened with Musa. Other subjects covered included the Armenian and Cretan situations. A debate took place and so despite the fact that the first letter appeared prior to Woods' arrival in Britain in 1890 it would make sense to deal with these articles and their responses chronologically.

The first of Woods' letters was sent from the Ottoman capital in September 1889.²⁴⁵ In it he sought to remind readers of the importance of friendship with the Ottoman Empire and to speak out against what Woods termed 'the new atrocity campaign.'²⁴⁶ The reason he chose to write at that moment was the support given to the Armenian cause by Gladstone and other politicians. This cause appeared to Woods to have the intention of destroying the Ottoman Empire. Woods described the claims of outrages as 'specious tales of outrage and wrong.'²⁴⁷ He thought that many of those who were supporting the campaign were doing so to damage Lord Salisbury, who was Prime Minister at the time. But he also thought that there were people who were genuinely concerned about justice and also people who did not know much about the Ottoman Empire, and it was to these that Woods was writing.

For Woods the cause of the difficulties in those provinces inhabited by Armenians was not Muslim oppression of Armenians but crime. He pointed out that the Ottoman Government was not the only one which had difficulty in dealing with this and referred to what he termed '...the exploits of "Jack the Ripper" and the abduction of young girls to feed the vice of the continent...' and asked how the Ottoman Government could be expected to maintain law in a distant province on the frontier, where people could easily vanish into a foreign state, when the London police were unable to do the same in the capital.²⁴⁸ He went on to say that, in fact, the Ottoman Government had sent military

²⁴⁵ The *Times*, September 18 1889, p. 4 column 6, "Justice for Turkey, Woods Pasha, Constantinople, Sept. 9".

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ The *Times*, September 18 1889, p. 4 column 6, "Justice for Turkey, Woods Pasha, Constantinople, Sept. 9".

expeditions to the region to try and deal with the situation and that, as a result, some of those responsible were now imprisoned.

On the claims made that the Ottoman Government had failed to implement the clauses of the Treaty of Berlin as far as reforms in Asia Minor were concerned, he made two points. First, that when clauses that were beneficial to the Ottoman Empire were not enforced it was hardly fair to criticise the Sultan for not implementing others. Second, he argued that, in fact, reforms had taken place: roads and other communications had been improved and reforms had occurred in the judicial system. Woods argued that independent people had reported improvements in prosperity and trade which were not reflected in the current agitation.

Woods pointed out that the Sultan could not be expected to collude in measures which would allow provinces on the Russian frontier to be easily conquered. He further argued that Abdülhamid had employed Armenians in significant positions and so could not be accused of being a fanatic. He finally wrote that the example of Crete further emphasised the problem with autonomy. It had not helped the tranquillity of the island but rather had increased the desire for separation.

This letter received a response from Garebed Hagopian, introduced earlier in this chapter in the discussion on the events in Sasun. Hagopian sought to diminish Woods' letter by writing that he wrote as he did because of his position as an Ottoman Employee and the concern that if he did not he would lose his job.²⁴⁹ He suggested that Woods did not really believe what he wrote arguing that 'supposing he spoke and wrote as his conscience prompted him, would his Rear-Admiralship be worth 24 hours

²⁴⁹ *The Times*, September 26 1889, p. 7 column 3, "The Armenian Question, G. Hagopian, London, Sept. 23".

purchase?’²⁵⁰ He concluded by writing that ‘a gentleman of culture and education’, whom he had met near to Windsor, had thought that Woods’ letter was ‘unconvincing’ and that ‘fair minded Englishmen’ would think the same.²⁵¹

Given the foregoing characterisation of Woods, it is hardly surprising that Hagopian disagreed with Woods on almost every specific issue. He denied Woods’ claim that the people behind the current agitation were paid, that the intention was to destroy the Ottoman Empire and that they were attempting to discredit the current Conservative Government. He argued that there was sufficient evidence in the most recent Blue Book to prove that ‘crime and oppression’ were the cause of the complaints of Armenians and he accused Woods of being ignorant of these facts.²⁵² He poured scorn on Woods’ claims on reforms in the Armenian inhabited provinces and denied the claims of improvements in the judicial system. On the claims of financial prosperity and industrialisation made by Woods for Asia Minor, Hagopian denied that they extended to the Armenian inhabited regions. Finally, on Crete, Hagopian argued that there must have been something wrong on Crete for the powers to insist on further reforms.

It is clear that the two protagonists are speaking completely different languages. For Woods, British interests dictated that maintenance of the Ottoman Empire was essential. He believed with his employers that Armenian complaints and the campaign that went along with them were overt attempts to bring about a similar situation to that which existed in 1876 and led to a war in which the Ottoman Government lost a large proportion of its European territories. Hagopian in using terms like “Armenia and the Armenians” would have appeared to have been supporting Armenian nationhood

²⁵⁰ *The Times*, September 26 1889, p. 7 column 3, “The Armenian Question, G. Hagopian, London, Sept. 23”.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

even if later in the letter he described the Armenians as ‘patriotic’ and argued that the reforms they wanted would strengthen the ‘...state with which they have been so long connected.’²⁵³ But Woods made his position more difficult by attempting to make a more nuanced argument rather than sticking to a simple mantra.

Woods did not respond to Hagopian’s letter. His next letter appeared in *The Times* on 2 April 1890.²⁵⁴ The immediate cause of this letter was an announcement printed in *The Times* of 29 March which stated that two committees, “The Greek” and the “Eastern Question Association,” both made up of Members of Parliament, had decided to amalgamate ‘for the purpose of paying watchful attention to the proceedings of the Porte in Armenia, Macedonia, Crete, &c.’²⁵⁵ Woods argued that this was in fact a euphemism for encouraging ‘discontent and disaffection amongst the Christian subjects of the Sultan’ and that it would be viewed inside the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere as ‘a section of the Great council of the British nation – an infinitesimal one, it is true, and of no particular weight – is seen to have formed itself into an association for the avowed purpose of carrying on hostile proceedings against a friendly Power.’²⁵⁶ He went on to say that Members of Parliament should be concerned with their own constituents and not supporting ‘foreign intrigue.’²⁵⁷ We have already seen that foreign interference was something that both Woods and Hobart referred to on a number of occasions.

Woods referred to his letter from the previous year in which he argued that the agitation was causing ‘mischief’ and was not in either Britain’s ‘commercial and political interests’ to damage the Ottoman Government, opening the way for the expansion of Russia.²⁵⁸ He wrote that the ‘surveillance’ was not

²⁵³ *The Times*, September 26 1889, p. 7 column 3, “The Armenian Question, London, Sept. 23, G. Hagopian”.

²⁵⁴ *The Times*, April 2 1890, p. 7 column 4, “The Armenian and the Cretan Questions, Woods Pasha, March 31”.

²⁵⁵ *The Times*, March 29 1890, p. 7 column 5, “The Affairs of Turkey”.

²⁵⁶ *The Times*, April 2 1890 p. 7 column 4, “The Armenian and Cretan Questions, Woods Pasha, March 31”.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

necessary as the 'humane' Sultan himself was interested in the welfare of his Christian subjects.²⁵⁹ But the Sultan could not be expected to favour one community over another, nor bow to foreign pressure. The Treaty of Berlin, which according to Woods had encouraged a false expectation on the part of the Christian subjects of the Porte, was responsible for the deteriorating situation. The people behind the scenes wanted to prove that all Ottoman rule was impossible and so new atrocities were found, the previous ones no longer suiting the situation. Woods finished by warning that if people were not careful, something far worse would take the place of the Ottoman Sultans.

On this occasion, Woods himself sent a translated copy of his letter to the Sultan with an explanation.²⁶⁰ He wrote that he thought the attention drawn to the new committee, whose intention was to support those intending to disturb the peace of the empire, would have a beneficial result.²⁶¹ The final sentence of this letter informed the Sultan that he would '...continue to spare no effort to counteract the designs of those working against the interest of the Empire.'²⁶² Clearly this does not prove that the above article was written on the instigation of the Sultan, but it is suggestive, if we remember the letter earlier referred to in which he requested a meeting.

Hagopian responded to this letter and made similar arguments to his previous response to Woods.²⁶³ He again tried to discredit Woods by referring to his recent decoration by the Sultan and the fact that it had been six months since Hagopian had responded to Woods' earlier letter. He wrote that Woods was not aware of the facts of the situation, that any reforms that had taken place had occurred due

²⁵⁹ *The Times*, April 2 1890, p. 7 column 4, "The Armenian and Cretan Questions, Woods Pasha, March 31".

²⁶⁰ YEE, Y.PRK.TKM, 17/16, 9 S. 1307 March 31 1890, Woods Paşa to the Sultan.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ *The Times*, April 5 1890, p. 13 column 1, "The Armenian Question, April 2, G. Hagopian".

to foreign pressure and that, without continued pressure, no improvement would happen. Hagopian asked the following of Woods:

If the Sultan is, as you represent, anxious for the welfare of the Christians living under his sway, why does he not fulfil his own Imperial promises repeatedly made, and at once, by introducing a different regime in Armenia, satisfy the claims of our compatriots?²⁶⁴

He then went on to argue that reforms should receive the approval of the powers before implementation. The letter concluded by stating that reforms implemented in the way insisted upon by him and other Armenians and their supporters would be a ‘...veritable blessing to Armenia and a source of safety and honour to the Ottoman Empire.’²⁶⁵ In the foregoing we see the essential difference between Hagopian and Woods and by extension the Sultan. The Sultan was distrustful of anything that referred to nation, or that allowed for foreign interference further than what was strictly legal and could not be avoided. There is a clear undertone of nationalism in Hagopian’s response to Woods.

Woods’ next effort to defend the empire was not long in coming. His second letter in *The Times* from 1890 appeared a month later in May. This letter was in response to an article and letters concerning Crete, which had appeared two days earlier.²⁶⁶ Most of Woods’ letter was concerned with his own experiences of the island. However, there are some similarities to the previous letter. First, credit was paid to the current Sultan for the increase in education to the Muslim subjects of Crete. This contradicted what was previously written and Woods referred to a speech by Vambery from the previous year to support his case. Woods argued that the Muslims were taught the Koran no more than children in Britain were taught the Bible, and Muslim children were taught a great deal more

²⁶⁴ *The Times*, April 5 1890, p. 13 column 1, “The Armenian Question, April 2, G. Hagopian.”

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *The Times*, May 29 1890, p. 12 column 4, “The Cretan Question, Woods Pasha, London, May 28”.

than the Koran. He further reported that many of the Muslim children from Crete went on to attend the schools in the capital and, later, to fill positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy.

Woods argued that the Cretan crisis would be solved if people from Britain would stop encouraging 'disaffection and revolt' which led some Cretans to believe that there would be foreign intervention.²⁶⁷ He reminded readers that the reason that the 1866-1869 events had lasted so long was that the blockade was broken by both warships as well as the Greek Government. His point was that people should remember that when discussing whether the Ottoman Government was capable of maintaining control of the island. As in the previous article, Woods held foreign interference responsible for the problems and also argued that the Ottoman Government was treated unfairly.

We have already referred to part of Woods' letter to *The Morning Post* which appeared in the 22 April 1890 edition.²⁶⁸ Woods called the Parliamentary committee 'the Foreign Revolutionary Committee' and described their activities as 'treasonable' against the Ottoman Empire.²⁶⁹ He described the contributions of some of its members in a recent debate in the House of Commons as 'ill-judged'.²⁷⁰ Woods made specific reference to the comments of Sir George Campbell on the Sultan which he summarised as describing him as 'an incapable ruler'.²⁷¹ He argued that if the Sultan was viewed without prejudice, a different picture would emerge. Woods used phrases like 'clear-sighted statesman' and 'adroit ruler of men' to describe him.²⁷² He believed that the Sultan's cautious attitude to international affairs, when others were encouraging him to take action, had been the reason why war had been avoided. Woods also believed that Abdülhamid had been able to rejuvenate the

²⁶⁷ *The Times*, May 29 1890, p. 12 column 4, "The Cretan Question, Woods Pasha, London, May 28".

²⁶⁸ *The Morning Post*, April 22 1890, p. 5 column 7, "The Sultan of Turkey, Woods Pasha, April 18".

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² *Ibid.*

Ottoman Empire and make it better prepared for a future attack. Woods accepted that this may not be believed in Britain where what he called 'the enemies of Mohammedan rule' had been predicting the collapse of the Empire, '...the wish being father to the thought.'²⁷³ This part of the article was clearly a defence of the Sultan against what Woods saw as unwarranted criticism. We know from his published memoirs that this was Woods' private view as well so it will not have exercised any great strain on his conscience, although it also will not have done much for his reputation in Britain.²⁷⁴

Linked to the above, Woods argued that both the German and Russian Governments had a better idea of the true state of the internal situation of the empire and the German financial investment proved confidence in the Ottoman Government. He argued that the real reason for the difficulties faced by the Sultan since the 1877-1878 war, was never discussed in Britain. It could be assumed that he meant foreign intrigue, whether Russian prior to 1876 or now with the Armenian question from Britain.

On the Armenian-inhabited provinces, Woods continued his familiar arguments. He first contradicted the commonly held view that the Ottoman Government had promised autonomy similar to that in Mount Lebanon and Crete. What was promised was to improve the security situation and this would be easier to do if there was less foreign intrigue. He then contradicted the idea that the disturbances would lead to Russian intervention due to Christian solidarity. Woods argued that Armenians, far from leaving the Ottoman Empire for Russia, were going in the opposite direction. Furthermore he stated that Russian diplomacy was taking advantage of Britain's constant complaints concerning the Armenian Question and their own silence on the same issue.

²⁷³ *The Morning Post*, 22 April 1890, p. 5 column 7, "The Sultan of Turkey, Woods Pasha, April 18".

²⁷⁴ Woods devotes a chapter to Abdülhamid in the second volume of his memoirs, Chapter XI and pages 109-110 outline how he believed the Sultan was responsible for the size of the territory left to the new Turkish state after the First World War.

This letter from Woods received a response from Minasie Tcheraz, a part of which has already been referred to earlier in this chapter.²⁷⁵ He began by telling readers that Woods had neither responded to his letter in *The Times* or that of Hagopian in *The Morning Post*. He went on to say that the Parliamentary group Woods had written about could only offer moral support and that it would be ‘...the action of the Armenian patriots, exasperated by the injustice of diplomacy and by the atrocities of the Moslems’ that would soon lead to the Armenian Question becoming what he termed of ‘burning importance.’²⁷⁶ He did not clarify what was meant by this.

Whilst he did agree with Woods’ interpretation of what the Ottoman Government had not promised to do in the Armenian inhabited provinces, he did not agree that the security situation had improved. Tcheraz used the example of a consular despatch, which argued that the Ottoman Government had done nothing to improve the situation in Asia Minor since 1878. He disagreed with Woods’ assessment of the Sultan asking whether it was ‘clear sighted’ of the Sultan to alienate ‘...Armenia, a country peopled with Christians and contiguous to Russia?’²⁷⁷ On Russia he argued that if they remained quiet on the Armenian Question it was not because they were disinterested. Tcheraz did not specify what he meant by this, but presumably Russia in his view did not interfere so as to allow the Sultan to continue to cause disaffection in his provinces by his own inaction. He disagreed with Woods’ assessment that Armenians were moving from Russia to the Ottoman Empire. On Woods’ claims that the Ottoman Empire was stronger now than before the Russo-Ottoman War, Tcheraz demonstrated how Russia had also strengthened through the militarisation of Batoum and the development of a railway ending at the frontier. According to Tcheraz, Germany’s interest in the Ottoman Empire was purely for the purposes of finding colonies. Britain on the other hand had the special responsibility

²⁷⁵ *The Morning Post*, May 1 1890, p Illegible column illegible, “The Armenian Question, Minasie Tcheraz, April 28”.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

from 1878, presumably granted by the Cyprus Convention, which explained its responsibility for the Armenian issue.

The above indicated that Woods was willing to participate to a certain extent in debates in the newspapers. He argued against foreign interference in the Ottoman Empire, that reforms had continued to take place and rejected criticism of the Sultan. In addition to writing to newspapers there is some evidence to suggest that Woods was conveying messages from the Sultan to people in Britain. There were three examples of this found. On 9 March 1890 Woods wrote to Sir Charles Dilke, the former Liberal MP and Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, asking for an interview as he had a message from the Sultan.²⁷⁸ The Ottoman Archives contain a letter to the Sultan from Woods asking for an interview so that he could give the Sultan a report and inform him concerning the private communications from the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince of Wales.²⁷⁹ There is nothing to indicate what the report or communications might have contained. However, given the articles already quoted it is at least possible that either or both Armenia and Crete were part of the Sultan's message. There is a further document in the Ottoman Archives which lists Members of Parliament who were invited to meet Woods on 13 and 22 May.²⁸⁰ The invitation appears to have come from Sir Edmund Lechmere, a Conservative Member of Parliament, and the document indicated who had either expressed interest or had actually attended.²⁸¹ To indicate who expressed interest or attended, the letter 'X' was used. Some had one, others had two. Presumably the ones with two actually met with Woods. These included Sir Algernon Borthwick and Sir Richard Temple. Those who had expressed interest included Sir George Baden-Powell and Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett. Perhaps unsurprising given the author was a

²⁷⁸ BL, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43874/163, No date, Woods to Sir Charles Dilke, 1 Bryanstone Square.

²⁷⁹ YEE, BOA. Y PRK TKM 18-14 Ief 1, 6 July 1890, Woods Pasha to the Sultan.

²⁸⁰ BBA, Y. PRK, TKM, 17/44, May 22 1890, Members of the House of Commons invited to meet Woods Pasha.

²⁸¹ The document gives the name Sir E. Leelmere, probably Lechmere.

Conservative member, all the invitees appeared to be Conservative and many had military or naval connections.

Let us now turn to a pamphlet written by Woods in which the main purpose was to respond to a critical piece written on the Sultan. "Blackmailing the Sultan" was published in July 1890.²⁸² The piece was a response to a pamphlet entitled the "Armenian Question and the Reign of Abdul Hamid."²⁸³ This was anonymously produced, ostensibly by the Ottoman Committee of Europe. Woods believed that there was, in fact, no committee and a single author who he identified as Osman Bey and whom he described as 'disreputable.'²⁸⁴ He goes further and claims that the reason the pamphlet was published was to secure a subsidy from the palace to ensure future silence.²⁸⁵ On the final page of the pamphlet, Woods alleged that a Leon Effendi, resident in Paris had been an intermediary in an effort to extort £6,000 from the palace to prevent the publication of this pamphlet. The extortion had failed and so the publication had appeared.²⁸⁶ We know from the previous chapter that the Sultan was vulnerable to this kind of blackmail.

According to Woods, Osman Bey's pamphlet accused the Sultan of running a regime based on tyranny and filled with corrupt officials. It argued that the Sultan was responsible for mysterious disappearances. It also held the Sultan responsible for the lack of reforms. This latter point Woods did not respond to as he felt he had already dealt with it in two recent letters, already referred to. On the other criticisms, he denied them. On the Sultan's regime he wrote that it was '...entirely a fancy sketch.'²⁸⁷ On the secret executions and disappearances, he wrote that they were untrue. The only

²⁸² BL, 8028.de.30/7, Woods Pasha, *Blackmailing The Sultan Refutations Of The Calumnies In Osman Bey's Anonymous Pamphlet*, 10 July 1890, (London: C.D. Collet, 1890), pp. 1-4.

²⁸³ It has not been possible to locate a copy of this pamphlet.

²⁸⁴ Osman Bey is identified as Frederick Millingen, also known as Vladimir Andreevich by the World Catalogue.

²⁸⁵ Woods, *Blackmailing*, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

examples given were those of Midhat and Ali Suavi. Woods argued that the former had attempted to establish rule by a collection of ministers and had failed. Also, that he was by no means as intelligent as some had thought.²⁸⁸ Woods took the opportunity to again criticise Elliott's article saying that he allowed his Whig predilections to overrule his judgement where the Ottoman constitution was concerned. The Sultan realising that the empire was not ready for it, had quite rightly suspended it.²⁸⁹ The latter was dismissed even more brusquely. He was described as 'a mad ambitious fanatic' who had swallowed republicanism from France and attempted to break into the palace with a number of armed men.²⁹⁰ Woods believed that he would have received the same treatment in any other country and to argue that he had been tricked into the attempt was not worth commenting upon. The Sultan was accused of improving the financial situation by stealing from religious foundations, whereas Woods explained it by a firm grasp on economics.²⁹¹

Perhaps the most interesting part of the pamphlet is a section in which the death of Abdülaziz is discussed. Here Woods firmly rejected the theory of suicide, arguing that the one person who continued to believe in it was Dr Dickson, and he had not seen the body until significant time had passed. Woods argued that no one else thought it had been suicide. Furthermore no autopsy had been permitted and that as what he termed a 'revolutionary' regime was in power at the time, a verdict of suicide was very convenient for them: the same decision perhaps being reached in similar circumstances in any other country.²⁹² We saw earlier in this chapter that the article in which Elliott had made this case caused Abdulhamid II a not inconsiderable degree of concern. Given that in Woods' memoirs he is far less certain, we may be forgiven for assuming that there were political reasons for Woods to make the case so categorical in this pamphlet.

²⁸⁸ Woods, *Blackmailing*, p. 3.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Woods wrote a second pamphlet in November 1890 entitled “The Truth About Asia Minor”.²⁹³ The pamphlet was not addressed to anyone in particular: it is therefore difficult to know how it was published, or how it came to be in the British Library. It also means it is difficult to know how widely it might have been disseminated. His reason for writing was to correct all the ‘...exaggerations and misrepresentations...’ about the Ottoman Government.²⁹⁴ Woods repeated many of the arguments we have already seen. But this pamphlet provided a new argument concerning the impracticability of Armenian autonomy. Woods used statistics to show that the Armenians were minorities everywhere. He argued that the ‘Mohammedans are as 5 to 1 and 10 to 1 taking the whole population of the various districts and not simply that of a village.’²⁹⁵

To bolster his claim Woods included a table which showed Ottoman population figures for some of the Armenian-inhabited provinces.²⁹⁶

Woods gave no further information on these figures, such as the year from which they came or the source from which they were derived. However, the figures in Woods’ table for the Armenian population are precisely the same as those contained in a table in McCarthy’s book *Muslims and Minorities*.²⁹⁷ According to that table, these were the Ottoman figures contained in a private Ottoman document from 1882-1883 and which had not been intended for publication. Woods must have been given access to it. This may suggest that his pamphlet was being produced with official approval. It has not been possible to find the original document. In McCarthy’s table, he only gives

²⁹³ BL, 8028.de.30/8, November 4 1890, Admiral Woods Pasha, *The Truth About Asia Minor* Constantinople, pp. 1-16.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁹⁷ Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: the Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*, (New York: New York University Press, 1983), p. 62.

the Ottoman figures for the Armenian population and compares them to other sources on the same and does not give the figures for other communities in the same area. The final row of Woods' figures which purported to provide data from the entire empire is clearly inaccurate and must only be the totals for the provinces included. According to these figures, Bitlis had the closest balance between Muslims and Armenians, 167,057 to 101,358 or 62.2 per cent Muslims to 37.8 per cent Armenians, a proportion of roughly 6:4. The biggest gap appeared to be in Sivas, which had a Muslim population of 735,489 and an Armenian population of 112,649, or 86.7 per cent to 12.3 per cent, or roughly 9 Muslims for each Armenian. The proportion of Muslims to Armenians across the entire region was 84.3 per cent Muslims to 15.7 per cent Armenians, or roughly 8 Armenians per 20 Muslims.²⁹⁸ This was the first, and perhaps only, time that Woods made use of statistics in this way. Clearly he was attempting to show that, on the basis of population alone, providing the Armenians with an autonomous regime which would mean a non-Muslim governor would not be advisable. The figures are interesting because of the mixed use of religious delineators: Muslim, Catholic etc., and national delineators: Armenian.

Woods gave examples of how events in the Ottoman Empire were used to criticise it. On the one hand, the lack of security was used as a reason to support intervention by what he calls 'the Armenian agitators.' But when soldiers were sent to the region to re-establish security, the Ottoman Government was accused of persecuting the Armenian population by the same writers.²⁹⁹ A little further down, Woods described the claims concerning what had been happening as having 'no other

²⁹⁸ In order to reach these proportions I simply added together the Muslim and Armenian figures and ignored all other communities.

²⁹⁹ Woods, *Truth*, pp. 2-3.

Province	Muslims	Armenians	Syrians	Nestorians	Greeks	Catholics	Protestants	Jews	Gypsies non Muslims	Foreign Subjects	Total
Erzurum	441671	101119	0	0	3356	6730	1970	6	15	292	555159
Bitlis	167057	101358	0	0	1981	4948	1498	0	159	0	276998
Van and Hekiarî	282582	71582	0	59500	0	1930	0	2900	0	0	418494
Diabekir	240574	45291	13649	0	1437	6348	3975	1170	0	0	312444
Mamuret El Aziz	300194	73178	0	0	543	2464	4971	2	0	0	381352
Sivas	735489	112649	0	0	36822	2943	2493	220	1585	0	892201
Aleppo	663416	50182	3841	0	7525	19927	9183	9599	0	0	763673
Adana	336914	31876	97	0	5847	1401	2150	3	0	410	378698
Totals for the whole Ottoman Empire	3167894	587235	19568	59500	55530	46691	26240	13900	1759	702	3979019

Fig. VI: Synoptical table the population of those parts of Asia Minor where the Armenians of both sexes are more numerous than elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire according to the last census

foundation than the fertile imagination of a few intriguers living in London and Marseilles who seek to excite European public opinion so apt to be misled in all that relates to eastern affairs.'³⁰⁰

In the same pamphlet Woods referred to anti-Muslim attitudes. Here he suggested that the prejudice was deep rooted going back as far as the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and that for this reason:

...the smallest affair in the east assumes the gravest dimensions and incidents that would pass unnoticed elsewhere become matters of importance owing to the religious character in which they are clothed for presentation to the public opinion of western Europe.³⁰¹

The issue that Woods was referring to here was claims that the Ottoman Government was seeking to both interfere in and reduce the traditional rights of the religious minority communities within the Ottoman Empire. The current controversy Woods explained as akin to the Catholic Church in the fourteenth century and its attempts to maintain religious supremacy over temporal authority. Woods believed that, if it were put in that light, and if it were not a Muslim Government, no one outside the empire would be that interested. Woods argued that the claims based on Sultan Mehmed II's decrees, as confirmed by subsequent Sultans, put forward by the Patriarchs would not stand up to independent legal opinion.³⁰²

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Woods had written the above pamphlet by the Sultan's order, given his apparent access to private Ottoman population figures, it would suggest that he had official support. There is nothing in the pamphlet that Abdülhamid would have disapproved of and given the lack of a publisher it may well have been produced with the support of the Ottoman

³⁰⁰ Woods, *Truth*, pp. 3-4.

³⁰¹ *ibid*, p. 5.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

Government itself. It should however be pointed out that if that was the case, one would have expected to find a version of it in the Ottoman Archives. No such version was found. It could therefore have been a privately published document which had official Ottoman support.

A document from 1891 sheds light on how Woods was seen by the Russian Embassy and perhaps adds further evidence to the theory that Woods wrote for the Sultan. This is a strange piece, which was sent to Woods by the Minister responsible for the police and Gendarmerie.³⁰³ The note reported a conversation between the Minister and a representative of the Russian Ambassador. The conversation is phrased as a joke, on the part of the Russian, but shows that the Russian Embassy took Woods' journalistic activities seriously. The Ambassador asked the Minister to let Woods know that they were aware of the recent article in *The Times* authored by him, in which he had drawn an unfavourable comparison between the Sultan's mercy, given to Armenian revolutionaries, and the sort of justice that they would have received in Russia. The Russians certainly believed that this had been done with the approval of the Sultan as Woods had allegedly signed himself Aide-de-camp. The Minister told the Russian representative that the Sultan took no interest in such things and that the Ottoman Government expected nothing to result from the article. The Minister asked Woods to tell the Russian Ambassador that he didn't find the joke funny and left it up to Woods whether to inform the Sultan.

How does this fit into the above? It has not been possible to locate any article or pamphlet by Woods from around this time in which the Sultan's mercy is compared to that of the Tsar. This could mean that no such letter was written and that the Russian Embassy was attempting to damage Woods. From Woods' memoirs we know this was something that they did attempt to do. From the end of the Russo-Ottoman War, the Embassy monitored Woods' naval activities.³⁰⁴ But, there were at least two

³⁰³ BOA. Y. PRK. ZB. 7-62. 17 February 1891 Minister of Police and Gendarmerie to Woods Pasha.

³⁰⁴ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 50.

occasions when Woods himself referred to letters from him causing the Russians to make complaints. The first concerned an anonymous article in *The Times* from around the time of the Penjdeh crisis, in 1885 and another which resulted in ‘...an Imperial rebuke upon one shoulder with a friendly pat of approval on the other.’³⁰⁵ We will shortly see another example of Woods referring to the Sultan’s mercy with reference to the Armenian question, so it is not impossible that Woods had written something. We also know that Woods had written other letters in which the Russian Empire was compared unfavourably to the Ottoman one. What is more interesting is that the Russian Embassy believed that Woods was writing with Sultanic approval, the Minister’s denial notwithstanding.

The second letter from Woods to the Sultan to be found was from August, 1894. In it he summarised Woods’ actions whilst in London and included the following sentence: ‘Since my arrival at England, I have been endeavouring to establish friendly relations with men of influence from the press in order to make them act more properly with regard to His Imperial Majesty and His Government.’³⁰⁶ Woods expressed concerns that, given that most important people from the press were on holiday, it was difficult for him to accomplish much. But to show that he had managed some success, Woods gave an example of an unnamed owner of a newspaper who tore up a letter from “Hagopyan” (Sic.) in front of him and claimed that he promised to do the same in future with any other communications. We can presume that the Hagopian referred to here was Garebed Hagopian. Could the owner Woods referred to have been Algernon Borthwick, the owner of *The Morning Post*. One final thing concerning the press that Woods told the Sultan that he had been doing was to correct misleading news on his empire, which had come from other parts of Europe.

³⁰⁵ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 54.

³⁰⁶ BBA, BOA. Y. Prk. MYD 1/1528. August 22 1894. Woods Pasha to Sultan, London.

It would appear that Woods met another key member of the press establishment later that year. Donald Mackenzie Wallace had been made an assistant Editor of *The Times* and had responsibility for the newly created Foreign News Department in the early 1890s. There is a copy of a letter from him to Woods from November 1894.³⁰⁷ Woods' own letter was not located however. Given that Wallace suggested a time on the following day when he would be available, it would appear that Woods had asked for an appointment. Wallace went on to express a view that he was not sure which of the protagonists, Armenian or Ottoman, had exaggerated their 'case' the most and wrote that they thought '...we westerners are extraordinarily gullible.'³⁰⁸ Which particular case he was referring to is not made clear, however it is likely to have included the events in the vicinity of Sasun.

There is some evidence to support this assertion. Woods sent two letters to *The Morning Post* and *The Times* respectively from this period in which the Armenian situation was again discussed. His letter to *The Morning Post* was printed in the edition of 22 November.³⁰⁹ In it, he asked that any conclusions should wait until objective descriptions of the recent events had been received. Woods described those accounts which had been printed from Armenian sources as being a part of '...the furtherance of their ambitious and impracticable designs.'³¹⁰ Presumably meaning the establishment of an autonomous, or even an independent, Armenian state. Woods went further and argued that the events had been caused by the Armenians themselves. He made reference to two points made by those who had claimed that massacre had taken place. First Woods wrote that, as the Armenians were able to initially defend themselves against the military sent with the tax collectors, claims that they had been attacked by Kurds could not be sustained. Second, that the claim that the Kurds had not

³⁰⁷ *The Times* Archive, Outgoing Editors' Letters, Felb2/748, November 21 1894, D.M. Wallace to Admiral Woods Pasha.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ *The Morning Post*, November 22 1894, p 2 column 3, "The State of Armenia, November 21, Woods Pasha".

³¹⁰ Ibid.

joined with the military and were now being punished with the Armenians did not support the notion that they were enemies.

Woods believed this supported the Ottoman Government's view that there had been a rebellion of part of the Armenian and Kurdish communities. Woods argued that rebellions could not be dealt with through the use of 'rosewater'.³¹¹ As in a previous letter when Woods had written that the people of Asia Minor could not be judged by nineteenth century standards, he wrote that no matter what the faith was, people did not have the same idea concerning the 'sanctity of human life' and that if a judgement were to be used which was based on British standards, Ireland should be remembered.³¹² He concluded by arguing that the agitation for autonomy had led to the need to use the military and that, as a result, innocent people had been killed.

A response from Minas Tcheraz was published on 27 November.³¹³ He countered Woods' arguments by arguing that only one out of four Kurdish tribes were at peace with the Armenians in the region of Sasun, whom he numbered at 5,000 families. He wrote that, due to its mountainous nature, it was difficult to plant anything and the famine, which had been continuous for fifteen years, had led to no taxes being paid. Tcheraz argued that the local authorities were aware of these problems but that the central Government had ordered them to collect them nonetheless. The Armenians were able to fight back, or as Tcheraz described it '...able to oppose resistance to their oppressors....'³¹⁴ He went on to argue that the Ottoman Government was in the process of destroying the Armenians in this region because they were capable of defending themselves due to the harshness of the area. He wrote that

³¹¹ The Morning Post, November 22 1894, p 2 column 3, "The State of Armenia, November 21, Woods Pasha".

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ The Morning Post, November 27 1894, p. 3 column 3, "The State of Armenia, Minas Tcheraz, November 23".

³¹⁴ Ibid.

they preferred the wilderness to the 'Turkish officials' who were crueller by far.³¹⁵ Tcheraz accused the Ottoman Government of implementing a '...plan of terrorising everywhere its Armenian subjects....'³¹⁶

On Woods' claims concerning the reasonableness of the Ottoman military response, Tcheraz was dismissive, writing that '...the violation of women, and the massacre of infants are means too barbarous to re-establish order.'³¹⁷ He argued that the Armenians would far prefer to be in the same position as the Irish, as British rule there was '...a thousand times better than that of the Turks in Armenia....'³¹⁸ Tcheraz denied Woods' claims concerning the real motive of the Armenian agitation, arguing that all they wanted was the implementation of the Treaty of Berlin and the joint diplomatic note of 7 September 1880. He concluded by writing that, by making these lying assertions, Woods and other similar writers were making it easier for those behind the massacre of Armenians.³¹⁹

Woods' letter to *the Times* in early December continued his argument on the quality of the current evidence.³²⁰ In it he stated that letters from 'Mr Theumaian' and correspondence from Athens could not be relied upon. It is very likely that this was Garebed Thoumaian convicted by an Ottoman court of sedition and exiled after pressure from the British Embassy. Woods argued that Thoumaian had been '...seriously implicated in recent disturbances, and owed his liberty to the clemency of the Sultan.'³²¹ Also that the account contained in his letter of what had taken place in 'Yozghat' did not match the reports which had reached the British Embassy. On The Reuter's telegrams from Athens he

³¹⁵ The Morning Post, November 27 1894, p. 3 column 3, "The State of Armenia, Minas Tcheraz, November 23".

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ *The Morning Post*, November 27 1894, p. 3 column 3, "The State of Armenia, Minas Tcheraz, November 23".

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ *The Times*, December 6 1894, p. 6 Column 6, "Disturbed Armenia, Woods Pasha, London Dec. 5".

³²¹ Ibid.

wrote that, as no one in Athens was able to speak Armenian and the refugees had therefore become dependant on the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, who in Woods' view were bound to take advantage of the situation, these reports could not be relied upon either. He further argued that the various Armenian groups contained what he described as 'facile and picturesque writers' and gave the '*Haïssadan* and *L'Arménie*' periodicals as examples.³²² The latter was Minasse Tcheraz's publication. Woods asked for readers to suspend coming to a definite opinion until an investigation had taken place, suggesting that the Sultan's inquiry was strengthened by the presence of someone not under Ottoman authority. Woods thought that, like with the investigation undertaken by Mr. Newberry, a member of the United States Embassy, into the event at 'Marsovan,' things would prove to be very different than first thought.

Woods finished his letter by making two points. First, the criticisms of the recent decoration given to Zeki Paşa were unfair as he had been rewarded last year prior to any questions being raised over his conduct.³²³ Woods used his own experience of being given a decoration and the announcement not appearing in the official *Ottoman Gazette* for a year. Second, claims that Musa Bey's exile would be a farce were proving not to be the case, as Musa had not been allowed to return to his ancestral lands. He asked if the current Armenian agitation was not a repeat of what had taken place in 1876.³²⁴ This seems to be the last of Woods' public letters.

The above letter from Woods received two responses in *The Times*. The first came from Francis Seymour Stevenson, who had become President of the Anglo-Armenian Association in 1892.³²⁵ In it he argued that the reports printed in *The Times* had settled the discussion and proven that the

³²² The Times, December 6 1894, p. 6 column 6, "Disturbed Armenia, Woods Pasha, London, Dec. 5".

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ *The Times*, December 7 1894, p. 11 column 5, "Disturbed Armenia, Francis Seymour Stevenson, December 6".

rumours of atrocities were accurate. He added that Woods' dismissal of two of the sources could not be relied upon when remembering how he had spoken out against the agitation concerning events in Bulgaria. Stevenson thought however, that, as Woods had not questioned the other sources, his admission was important.³²⁶ Stevenson's solution was for the Great Powers to enforce the Treaty of Berlin in so far as Armenian reforms were concerned. He reminded readers that the recent events in Sasun were not unusual but the latest in a line of events that went back some sixteen years. He argued that, if the Powers did not change the system within the Ottoman Empire, which had led to the current situation, the result would be '...either in the extermination of the Armenian population, with its centuries of continuous national existence and its time-honoured Church, or in the forcible remodelling of the political map of Asia....'³²⁷

Woods did receive some support from an anonymous letter from a captain in the Royal Navy.³²⁸ He supported Woods' request for time to be given for an independent enquiry, arguing that in his experience similar stories had been invented in the past. He gave the example of 1890 when claims had been made concerning persecution of Christians on Crete. At the time he had been the senior naval officer on the spot and had gone with the then consul, Biliotti, to investigate some of them. Their investigation had shown that none of the stories had any basis in reality. It would appear that the anonymous writer was Captain Reginald Carey Brenton, who in 1889 commanded *Fearless* which made a number of trips to Crete.³²⁹ His report appeared in the Blue book for 1890 on the Cretan issue.

³²⁶ *The Times*, December 7 1894, p. 11 column 5, "Disturbed Armenia, Francis Seymour Stevenson, December 6".

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ *The Times*, December 12 1896, p. 14 column 4, "Disturbed Armenia, December 6, Captain R.N".

³²⁹ Enclosure 1 in No. 171, January 4 1890, Commander Brenton to Vice-Admiral Hoskins, *Fearless* at Sudar Bey, extract, in *Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Crete* Turkey No. 2, 1890, C.5967, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1890), p. 181.

The Ottoman Archives contains an unfavourable commentary on Woods' efforts from a correspondent in Brussels. A Mr. Marengo reported a conversation he had with someone who he left unnamed. This was forwarded to the Palace Secretary by Mr. Maymek, who may have been an important member of the Ottoman staff in Belgium.³³⁰ The document does not indicate who Mr. Marengo was, but he must have been considered of some significance for his letter to be sent on to the Palace. Mr. Marengo wrote that Woods' letter in *The Times* was one of his many mistakes since entering the service of the Sultan. No reason was given for this view. He then went on to report the conversation with an unnamed person. They thought that Woods' letters had made 'millions' who had never previously thought about the establishment of an Armenian state consider it. This person argued that it looked as if Woods were writing in favour of the Armenians rather than the Sultan and drew Mr. Marengo's attention to a recent letter by Woods, which he described as sarcastic, published in *The Telegraph*.³³¹ It was not possible to locate this letter. Given the anonymity of the person to whom Mr. Marengo was speaking, it is difficult to evaluate what he said: however it is very difficult to see the basis of his criticisms in Woods' letters. It may well be that the correspondent in Brussels decided to pass on any information no matter how good or bad it was.

The final piece of evidence from Woods, which suggested that he had some official role in Abdülhamid's public relations efforts, comes from 1895. Woods wrote a report in which he outlined how he believed the Ottoman Government should deal with the growing agitation in Britain.³³² He argued that the Armenian agitators had a great deal of money, which they were using to produce pamphlets and newspapers. Woods recommended that the Ottoman Government should use the same tactics and that they should send what Woods called a 'sympathetic correspondent' to the area concerned. He further emphasised the importance to the Ottoman Government's cause of providing

³³⁰ YEE, Y.PRK.TKM, 33/84, 14 C. 1312, December 13 1894, Woods' Alleged Support for the Armenians, Brussels.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² BOA. Y. EE. 166/2 Lef 4. 29 April 1895 Woods Pasha to Sultan.

more information particularly from those on the spot who could contradict the stories put out, for example, by *The Telegraph*, whose correspondent Woods argued was not even in the vicinity of the place he claimed to write about. There were no letters from this year by Woods in the press.

We have seen examples of Woods referring to instructions he had been given by the Sultan. In February 1896 Woods received a letter from the Secretary to the Duke of Edinburgh who had become Duke of Saxe Coburg Gotha.³³³ In it the secretary thanked the Sultan on behalf of the Duke for the gift of cigarettes, which were especially welcome as they were the Duke's favourite type which he had not been able to find anywhere else. The letter also referred to the message which the Sultan had sent via Woods, but does not hint at what it might have been. Four years earlier in 1892, there was a letter from Woods to the Sultan along with a translation of a letter from the Duke to Woods.³³⁴ This latter letter was not found in the archives. However, Woods' note stated that the Duke would be 'pleased' for him to attend the wedding of the Duke's daughter in Germany. Was this as representative of the Sultan, or as a friend to the Duke? It is impossible to know for sure.

Like Hobart, Woods was also used by the Sultan to assist in entertaining English speaking visitors to his capital. In his memoirs he described his role as an Aide-de-camp as: '...accompanying His Imperial Majesty to and from the mosque as one of the members of his household and to assisting the Chamberlain on duty in dispensing gracious messages of welcome on the part of the Sultan to English-speaking visitors of distinction.'³³⁵ This task placed Woods at some risk as he was present at the attempted assassination of the Sultan in 1905.³³⁶ One of these visitors was the former owner of *Vanity Fair* and Member of Parliament Thomas Bowles.³³⁷ According to Woods' account, Bowles arrived on

³³³ YEE, Y.PRK.MYD. 17/39, 27 S. 1313, February 12 1896, G. F. Bambridge to Woods Pasha, Clarence House, St. James.

³³⁴ BBA, Y.PRK. ASK. 87-67, 7 Kanun Avvul 1308 December 19 1892, Woods Paşa to the Secretary of the Sultan.

³³⁵ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 223.

³³⁶ Ibid., pp. 232-238.

³³⁷ Ibid., pp. 115-116.

the Thursday, attended the *Selamlık* with Woods on the Friday, met the Sultan afterwards and was invited to dine that night, after which the Sultan sat with him and chatted all through a French play performed in the Palace theatre. Another visitor whom the Sultan met after attending the *Selamlık* was the author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose Sherlock Holmes books the Sultan had read in translation. He was given the Order of *Mecidiye*.³³⁸

The Liberal politician, George Shaw-Lefevre, attended the *Selamlık* and attended a palace dinner, for which he was criticised in the press in Britain.³³⁹ Joseph Chamberlain was another politician who had met with the Sultan. According to Woods Chamberlain described the Sultan to him as 'the only statesman he had met in Turkey.'³⁴⁰ According to Garvin's biography of Chamberlain, this meeting took place on 5 November 1886.³⁴¹ Woods is not referred to at all and the Sultan is described as a '...timid-looking man ... and looks as if he found his Sultanship a great bore.'³⁴² One final dinner is worth mentioning, as the guests included two former rulers, Prince Milan of Serbia, and *Khedive* Ismail of Egypt.³⁴³ This must have taken place some time between Milan's abdication in 1889 and his return to Serbia in 1895. The Sultan clearly put a lot of effort into his meetings with foreign guests. Appointing Hobart and Woods to be his Aides-de-camp was meant as a way of building bridges with English speaking visitors.

Linked to the above was the Sultan's use of Hobart and Woods to represent him at important occasions. Woods attended Hobart's funeral as representative of the Sultan in 1886.³⁴⁴ In 1891, he again represented Abdülhamid, now as an Aide-de-camp, at the re-interment of British Crimean

³³⁸ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 114.

³³⁹ Ibid., pp. 248-249.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

³⁴¹ J. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* V2, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1933), pp. 269-270.

³⁴² Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 115.

³⁴³ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 159.

dead when their bodies were brought from various cemeteries to the Haydar Paşa cemetery.³⁴⁵

According to Woods' memoirs, a couple of years before the 1908 Young Turk revolution he escorted a party to the location where Florence Nightingale was reputed to have worked.³⁴⁶ It is interesting that, prior to this particular story, Woods described his position as '...one of the ornamental officers of the Sultan's brilliant court....'³⁴⁷ We may assume that over time the position became more ornamental and less practical.

Another example of the Sultan using his foreign employees to try to strengthen commissions, took place after the riot in the Ottoman capital in 1896. A commission was set up to examine whether the police and military response was adequate. *The Times* included a report from an interview given to a French correspondent by the Sultan.³⁴⁸ He told the correspondent that, in order to prove the objectivity of the commission, '...Kamphoevner Pasha, Lecoq Pasha, Blunt Pasha, Woods Pasha, and Szechenyi Pasha' had been appointed as 'consulting members.'³⁴⁹ He went on to say that they would have access to all the information they wanted. He concluded by saying anyone found not to have done their jobs properly would be punished. According to a later report in *The Morning Post* the German and French generals, 'Kamphoevener Pasha and Lecoq Pasha,' declined to participate due to a disagreement with the Ottoman Government concerning '...certain regulations essential to the success of the enquiry which had been proposed by General Kamphoevener.'³⁵⁰ The Reuter's report gave no further details. However, in an article by *The Morning Post's* own Constantinople correspondent from the 19th, a little more information was provided.³⁵¹ This report stated that there

³⁴⁵ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 181-182 and TNA, FO195/1740, December 26 1891, M. E. Fane to Woods Pasha, Ahmed Ali Pasha, Ibrahim Bey, Pera.

³⁴⁶ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, pp. 254-258.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

³⁴⁸ *The Times*, October 3 1896, p. 5 column 1, "Latest Intelligence, The Situation in Turkey, Paris, October 2".

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *The Morning Post*, October 8 1896, p. 3 column 1, "The Situation in Turkey, Reuter's Telegram, Constantinople, October 6".

³⁵¹ *The Morning Post*, October 19 1896, p. 5 column 2, "The Situation in Turkey, From Our Correspondent in Constantinople, October 13".

had been a difference in opinion over the powers of the committee. This report also suggested that both Woods and Blunt had been criticised locally for participating in the commission; the author took the view that they had no choice given their employment by the Sultan.

Woods, clearly concerned by these criticisms, sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. In the covering letter which was sent to Salisbury's private secretary, Eric Barrington, Woods stated that he wanted to explain the reasons for the 'malicious telegrams' about him.³⁵² The letter also went on to say that he had not been aware of the rumours which had reached the British Ambassador when he visited him to discuss the situation and had he known of them he would have come sooner.³⁵³

The memorandum covered two related areas, the commission and Woods' understanding of the Constantinople riots. Taking the commission first, Woods described how it had been created to present a report on the riot.³⁵⁴ Kamphoevener Paşa was shown a copy of the report and expressed some concerns that it did not contain enough detail. Subsequently, the Sultan appointed a number of foreign officers, including Woods, to the commission, issuing them with orders to look at the reports and comment on where information was missing.³⁵⁵ The commissioners met a number of times and asked for additional information to be put into the report. At that point '...a question arose as to our real position in the matter.'³⁵⁶ Given that Woods then described how the views of the commissioners were expressed to the Sultan, we can assume that some of the commissioners were unhappy with their position on the commission. The Sultan issued new instructions which said that they were commissioners in the same way as the others, that they could institute their own investigations and

³⁵² TNA, FO195/1913, October 1896, Woods Pasha to Mr Eric Barrington.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ TNA, FO195/1913, October 25 1896, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, pp. 1-2.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

then produce a report describing what had taken place during the riots. The Sultan asked if they were prepared to obey these instructions. Woods' response was to agree, but that he was reserving the right to express a dissenting view. Two other commissioners including Blunt agreed with Woods.³⁵⁷ Kamphoevener declined on the basis that he was too important to undertake personal enquiries and Lecocq because of the difficulties in carrying out such an investigation. It would then appear that an argument took place between the Sultan's chamberlain and the two Paşas which Woods described as containing 'high words.'³⁵⁸ This then led to their withdrawal.³⁵⁹ The report that the commissioners had been asked to sign an inaccurate report, was clearly untrue as they had not had the opportunity to begin, let alone complete, their work.

Those two Paşas returned to the commission but, after a few sittings, a second disagreement took place concerning the removal of papers from the commission's room. At that point, the two aforementioned Paşas withdrew for a second time and did not return.³⁶⁰ The investigation continued with the members of the commission, Woods and his European colleagues along with two Ottoman Turks, visiting buildings which had been burgled the day after the siege of the Ottoman Bank. Woods gave two reasons for this, the first, perhaps obvious, was to find out how the burglaries came about, the second, to draw attention to British financial losses.³⁶¹ According to Woods, he was criticised in the press for these visits because they were seen as a violation of the capitulations and an effort to prejudice evidence. It was at this point that Woods visited the Ambassador and explained what had been taking place.

³⁵⁷ TNA, FO195/1913, October 25 1896, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, p. 4.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

After a digression into the subject of Armenian refugees, which will be dealt with below, Woods returned to the commission's work. He argued that the commission was not a judicial one, and that its purpose was to write a descriptive report without making any conclusions. He wrote, however, that if the report were made public conclusions would be obvious.³⁶² Woods gave the Prime Minister his personal views on the riot. He wrote that he did not believe that the Armenians acted in accordance with a pre-determined plan from the palace.³⁶³ He went on to argue that orders were issued by the Sultan, on the Wednesday, to stop the riots, but that due to a lack of experience on the part of the military and police, they were not properly implemented.³⁶⁴ On the other hand, Woods suggested that had similar tactics as those used in other countries, such as the use of firearms and cavalry charges been used, the death toll might have been higher.³⁶⁵ Woods believed that the police were largely surprised by the riots, excluding those in 'Psamatia' (Samatya Sultan Ahmet district).³⁶⁶ That lack of preparedness was exacerbated by disorganisation and poor training. Woods explained the outbreak of violence in so many places at once as the result of increasing Muslim frustration with the Armenians, which had been growing over the past year. Woods believed that the police were not neutral between the rioters and the Armenians under attack. He concluded by writing that he did not wish to excuse the crimes that had taken place but did appreciate the difficult position the government was in with the provocation that had been given.

Returning to the Armenian refugees mentioned briefly, Woods described his efforts to help them. The British Ambassador had expressed concerns about the current way in which the Ottoman Empire was ruled. He told Woods that he favoured the introduction of a 'responsible ministry' during a previous meeting.³⁶⁷ Woods met with the Sultan and took the opportunity to express the Ambassador's

³⁶² TNA, FO195/1913, October 25 1896, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, p. 11.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

concerns, but admitted on that particular issue he had not been able to affect the Sultan's thinking. That could hardly have surprised Woods given how long he had known the Sultan. Woods was more successful on a different issue, which he used to illustrate the British Ambassador's point. That was something he had been told by the United States Minister, Mr. Terrel. Terrel had been experiencing difficulties in discussing Armenian women and children with the Grand Vizier, who had claimed that the delays were being caused by the palace.³⁶⁸ As a result, Woods was ordered to go to the First Secretary of the palace to find the relevant papers and was told that they had not arrived. The Sultan asked Woods for his thoughts on what should be done and Woods suggested that all women and children who had men abroad should be allowed to leave the country to join them. He justified his view by saying that the Sultan would not want international opinion to think that he '...made war upon women and children...' and that it was unlikely that they had taken part in any revolutionary activities. He further suggested that the *Dragoman* of the United States Legation be asked to provide the details of the individuals concerned. The consequence was that fifty individuals were shortly to leave the empire for the United States.

This is the most detailed evidence that has been found to demonstrate the Sultan's attempts to bolster his international credibility by using Woods in a commission of investigation. He hoped that by using some of his foreign employees, European governments and public opinion would accept the results of the commission. Clearly the hope was disappointed. The presence of Woods and the other foreign members of the commission did not make its findings more palatable. Minds had long since been made up. The Sultan and his regime were responsible for the massacres and the riots and in so far as Sultan Abdülhamid II attempted to make himself the single arbiter of the Ottoman Empire's fate, they were correct. Woods clearly wrote this report to try to justify and explain the part he played in the Sultan's commission.

³⁶⁸ TNA, FO195/1913, October 25 1896, Woods Pasha to Lord Salisbury, Constantinople, pp. 9-10.

This last event appears to be the final time that the Sultan used Woods in this kind of role, although he clearly continued as an Aide-de-camp until the Sultan's deposition. It could be that, as British attitudes became less favourable towards the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan used Woods less.

IV. Reforming the Ottoman Navy: The Death of the Hamidian Fleet 1886-1909

The previous chapter stated that Abdülhamid II had altered the priorities of the Ottoman Navy. Largely due to efforts to save money he had moved to a defensive posture. The period up to 1886 witnessed Ottoman experiments in order to find the most suitable torpedo type for the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Chapter three showed that torpedoes had been bought in 1886. Clearly by 1889 decisions had been taken and bearing in mind Woods' letter to Salisbury referred to earlier in this chapter sufficient torpedoes were available to defend both waterways. A British report from 1890 made it clear that if the Ottoman Government decided to prevent the Royal Navy from entering the Dardanelles they would be able to do it considerable damage.³⁶⁹ This view was repeated in a joint army and navy report from 1892.³⁷⁰ We have already seen that when Lord Salisbury had asked for ships to be sent through the Dardanelles in 1896 he had been told that they would be at great risk.

Examining the fleet the situation here was far less satisfactory. According to Marder, after 1885 only two new ships had been launched.³⁷¹ He compared this to thirteen in the 1860s.³⁷² In 1889 a secret report by Admiral Hoskins made the point that with Russian naval improvements and the deterioration of the Ottoman Navy, the Ottoman Empire was losing naval superiority in the Black

³⁶⁹ Arthur Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: a History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era 1880-1905* (London: Frank Cass, 1940), pp. 155-156.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

Sea.³⁷³ Hoskins further said that boilers had not been maintained and equipment not updated.³⁷⁴

Interestingly enough there was discussion concerning presenting this report to the Sultan, but it is not known if that happened. The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, left the decision of timing to White, but said he needed to keep the origin of the report secret.³⁷⁵ By 1890 the Russians had established a Black Sea fleet comprising five battleships and related vessels including torpedo boats.³⁷⁶

If any further evidence of the ineffectiveness of the Ottoman fleet were needed the 1897 Graeco-Ottoman War provided it. In March, Colonel Ponsonby wrote that he had been told by a friend of the Minister of the Navy, Hasan Paşa, that he recognised that he could not deploy the fleet, but that he would do enough to get the fleet into the Marmara Sea to answer the 'derision' which had been expressed when it was heard that the navy was being prepared for war.³⁷⁷ Ponsonby's contact was not identified. Woods could well have been the source as he would certainly have known about the navy's weakness. Ponsonby also reported that the fleet would not go past the Dardanelles as they felt it was inferior to the Greek Navy. At the same time however, it should be born in mind that the Ottoman Empire easily defeated Greece on land. At least so far as this war was concerned the Sultan's naval policy had not damaged the war effort. It is likely however that the poor state of the navy so clearly demonstrated for the whole world to see led to increased expenditure in the following years – as was noted when examining McCarthy's table in the previous chapter.

Apart from the letter to Salisbury no documents from Woods for the period 1886-1909 dealing with the Ottoman Navy at all have been found. It is arguable that this reflects a couple of factors. First is the Sultan's priorities concerning the navy. Given the defensive nature of his policy once torpedoes

³⁷³ TNA, Enclosure Memorandum on the Naval Defences of Constantinople, in FO78/4208 No.495, W.A. White to the Marquis of Salisbury, Constantinople, Secret, December 8 1889 p. 3.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁷⁵ TNA, FO195/1632 No.411, Foreign Office to Embassy, December 17 1889.

³⁷⁶ Marder, *The Anatomy*, p. 153.

³⁷⁷ TNA, Enclosure, Colonel Ponsonby, in FO78/4798 No.147, Currie to Foreign Office, March 8 1897,

were purchased there was less need for ongoing work. Second was the continued financial difficulties that meant that constant upgrades were difficult. Third is the Sultan's efforts to make use of German advice and decrease dependence on Britain. It may well be that the declining use of Hobart in the 1880s, notwithstanding the torpedo experiments, and the lack of materials from Woods after 1886 may reflect this. But this chapter has shown that Woods was used in other areas and so it is not simply the case that the Sultan decided to dispense with his services.

Woods did however make comments on the Ottoman Navy in the Hamidian period in his memoirs. He wrote that the Navy Minister Hasan Hüsni Paşa was '...the destroyer of the Turkish Navy.'³⁷⁸ He was not clear on why he thought this, but perhaps it was partly to do with the way he treated the officers through '...extra surreptitious levies, under his rule, upon their pay and rations....'³⁷⁹ Woods described how the minister lost his position for a single day after being connected with an alleged plot against the Sultan. This caused many officers to celebrate, until they realised that he had been restored. The problem of promotion, which Hobart had raised in his report from 1869, continued. In fact Woods wrote that it was why the 'Young Turkish Party' had so much support within the navy. Capable officers could not rise within the navy without influence at the palace and were blocked by the 'jealousy' of their superiors.³⁸⁰

We do not know when Woods retired from the Naval College. At the latest it must have been in the mid-1890s. In his memoirs he wrote of the Captain of *Hamidiye* describing how he was the son of his friend with whom he had sailed on the training missions in the mid-1870s.³⁸¹ Woods did not refer to

³⁷⁸ Woods, *Spunyarn*, V2, p. 60.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 129-130.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

teaching Hüseyin Rauf Bey – later known as Orbay. According to Panzac, Rauf Bey had graduated from the college in 1899.³⁸²

Further evidence of the Ottoman Navy's deterioration is provided by the war with Italy (1911) and the two Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913) when the navy seems to have played a minor role. (The most famous part being played by the aforementioned *Hamidiye* under the command of Hüseyin Rauf Bey). Finally Black Sea naval superiority was only granted to the Ottoman Empire during the First World War when *Goeben* and *Breslau* were transferred to the Ottoman Government. Given that they continued to be manned by German sailors this can only be described as a purely nominal transfer.

It would appear that the Sultan's policy of restricting expenditure had a significant impact on the Ottoman Navy. Clearly therefore the long-term effect of Hobart's and Woods' efforts in that area was undermined. One caveat is worthy of being made and that concerns the effect on the Turkish Navy after the end of the empire. It is beyond the scope of this work to look at that, however it is likely that there were Turkish sailors who had been through the Ottoman Naval College and would have known of Woods if not Hobart. Perhaps the most enduring legacy was left by Woods when giving lessons on the use of torpedoes. One wonders how he felt when he read of the damage caused to British and French ships when attempting to enter the Dardanelles. The Ottomans had clearly learned their lessons well.

³⁸² Daniel Panzac, *La Marine Ottomane: De l'apogée à la chute de l'empire 1572-1923* (Paris: CNRS, 2009), p. 398.

Chapter Six. Conclusion

This thesis has shown that the work undertaken by Hobart and Woods was both interesting and important. Although they were both initially employed to reform the Ottoman Navy, their work went beyond this. Chapter three began by looking at the changes Hobart and Woods recommended to make the Ottoman Navy more efficient. One problem which became apparent was the lack of Ottoman commentaries on their reports. This has meant it has been difficult to analyse their views based on Ottoman responses. But the views of some outside observers suggested that improvements were taking place between 1868-1876, albeit slowly.

The fact that both Hobart and Woods were allowed to actively participate in Ottoman Naval conflicts suggests a considerable degree of trust. Here we saw a distinction in the way they were treated by the British Government. Woods, due to his less public profile, was able to protect his pension, whilst Hobart lost his. Hobart's work in the vicinity of Crete allowed the Ottoman Empire to put an end to the conflict there and maintain control of the island for three more decades. The fact it took the Ottoman Government over a year to send Hobart to Crete suggests that there was a degree of opposition to his employment there. A definitive answer on whether that opposition was based on anti-foreigner feeling or something else will have to wait for future research in the Ottoman Archives. But, the opposition of Redif Paşa in 1877, if Hobart's view as expressed to Layard is accurate, would strengthen this idea. The same may explain the slowness in his recommendations being implemented. The same may apply to Woods being prevented from continuing his torpedo lectures at the beginning of the 1870s.

The Ottoman naval involvement in the Russo-Ottoman War had little impact on the outcome. However, had Hobart been allowed to implement his plans for the use of the Danube as the line of

Ottoman defence rather than the Balkan peninsula, the war may have been prolonged to the point where those in Britain like the Prime Minister who favoured active intervention may have been able to take the initiative. We will need to await further research before that argument can properly be investigated. In spite of the above, the war did provide at least one interesting feature. It was the first naval conflict between two significant powers that saw the use of the Whitehead Torpedo. The impact of that new weapon on the combatants was limited and showed that further work was necessary. The defence used by Hobart against torpedoes which had to be manually directed to their target was innovative and may have prevented the destruction of Ottoman ships. The war also showed that the Ottoman Navy was capable of going to sea and acting where necessary

The war did however demonstrate that, despite Hobart's early recommendation concerning the ending of military forces being transported by the Navy's warships, this continued to happen. Until the Ottoman Empire had developed an interconnected internal transport network ships would continue to be used for this purpose. Under the same heading of transportation was the decision to use the navy to remove considerable numbers of civilians from the Caucasus to Asia Minor. Using the navy for transportation meant that Ottoman ships could not be used to maintain a consistent blockade of the Russian coast and prevent fast Russian steamers from damaging Ottoman commercial shipping and attacking Ottoman naval squadrons, although on the latter point it would appear that the Russian torpedo boats had very little success. The Ottoman blockade whilst being breached on some occasions seems to have had an impact on the Russian rail network.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the Russo-Ottoman war concerned using a navy to attack a fortified place. On one side, the Russians did not have a Black Sea navy which was capable of transporting Russian soldiers so as to attempt a landing on the European or Anatolian coasts close to the Ottoman capital. At the same time, the Ottoman Fleet was not able to attack heavily fortified

Russian cities like Sevastopol. This suggested an improvement not only in the obvious adoption of torpedoes as defensive weapons, but also through developments in guns and defensive earthworks. It suggested that using only a naval squadron to attempt to take a fortified place in future might prove to be difficult. This was, of course, proven during the Dardanelles campaign of 1915.

On the conclusion of the war, Hobart's final active command was in the waters off the coast of Thessaly. Here he returned to blockade work and supported the military in dealing with the rebels. But this was the last active command that either man had. One question which it has not been possible to answer is how far Hobart and Woods were involved in attempting to persuade the Sultan to use them to transport Ottoman troops to Egypt in 1882. From both newspaper articles and archival sources it would appear that Hobart at least was arguing in favour of Ottoman intervention. But we know that the Sultan was not convinced.

Between the end of the war and the death of Hobart in 1886 they were involved in various torpedo tests. It would appear that Woods in particular – due to the fact that through working at the Naval College he had trained officers in their use – can be said to have encouraged the Ottoman Naval authority's interest in them as a tool. How far Woods was involved in designing the defence plans for the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, that is, whether he was involved in working out the best locations for mines to be placed, is not known. What is however clear is that he had a role in the development of Ottoman torpedo defence and that those defences were important in the Ottoman Empire's key battles during the first two years of the First World War, the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaigns.

Two final remarks on Ottoman naval reform efforts should be made here. As was pointed out in chapter three, it takes time to educate and train sufficient officers to enable the military, or in this

case the navy, to successfully adopt modern techniques. This by itself may explain the slow process of Ottoman naval reform efforts. Equally important, however, was a decision on the part of Sultan Abdülhamid II to place special emphasis on controlling expenditure. When he told Woods that the Treasury had been blocking his plans for naval spending, we may conclude that this was rather disingenuous and that in fact the Sultan himself was attempting to make his government live within its means. At times of crisis however, expenditure did increase, and this may well explain the increased spending on the Navy around the turn of the twentieth century.

So much for the Navy. Both Hobart and Woods were appointed as Aides-de-camp by Sultan Abdülhamid II and both chapters four and five described their functions. These began as their naval work appeared to be declining. Attending the Sultan at the *Selamlık* may well have been simply to allow them to be seen by the British Embassy and so proving the value the Sultan placed on English friendship. But, there was more to their position than that. Dining at the palace in order to add to the guest list and provide good conversation for other English speaking visitors, and acting as tour guide to visitors to the Ottoman capital, both of which demonstrated something new on the part of the Ottoman Sultan: a recognition that he needed to try to demonstrate a kind of gentility which would combat the image of the decadent despot. It did appear to work in so far as many of those who attended these dinners were won over by the Sultan.

Developing this strategy further, the Sultan made use of both Hobart and Woods to contact members of the British Royal family and senior politicians on his behalf. Partly these messages were designed to pass on the Sultan's goodwill to the recipient in question and also deliver personal gifts. But, clearly these contacts went considerably further than friendly greetings and gifts. There were two clear occasions when both men were used to deliver important messages as part of the Sultan's informal diplomatic efforts. Hobart in 1885 as part of the Hasan Fehmi mission, and Woods in 1887 to represent

the Sultan's concerns over the Elliot article. Although these are the examples with the most evidence there is sufficient reason to suspect that these were not the only times when the Sultan used them in that way. In the case of Hobart we could go back as far as 1879 if not to 1878 and with Woods well into the 1890s.

In the area of media management chapters four and five demonstrated that both Hobart and Woods were personally inclined to support the Ottoman Government and Sultan in the British press. The evidence for them being ordered to do this, is in places sketchy and limited to hints with the clearest example again being Hobart in 1885. Woods seems to have had this role in the early 1890s when responding to claims from those who supported autonomy for the Armenian inhabited provinces. His use of an internal Ottoman document on population for the eastern provinces is suggestive of this, as was the document in which he outlined suggestions on how to deal with the Armenian agitation in Britain.

To conclude, both Hobart and Woods continued to support the Ottoman Government when it was no longer popular to do so in Britain. But their support of it went beyond the traditional strategic arguments made by those like Lord Palmerston, Elliot and Layard. They developed a deep appreciation of the Ottoman Empire and supported it because they believed it had a right to exist as a state no more nor less legitimate than any other of the European powers.

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