

RUSSIA-TURKEY RELATIONS IN THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Introduction

Although we have to mention the date of 1492 for the beginning of the historical process of Turkish-Russian relations when the Moscow Principality and the Ottoman State contacted through the envoys, in fact the company of these two deep-rooted nations on the same geography in the north are dates back to much older times. The northern wing of the Turkic migrations from east to west, which started at B.C., always forced the Slavs and Turks to coexist, especially in the subforest areas of Ukrainian steppes. For this reason, Lev Nikolayevich Gumilyov mentions in his work «Ancient Turks» the similarities of these two co-existing nations, especially those in the Ukrainian region¹. The existence of the Turkic states in the region began with the Huns, continued with Gokturks and then with the political organizations of the Great Bulgarians, Khazar and Avar and finally with Genghis and his sons' reign. It could be possible to analyze the historical processes of these two nations who recognized the same system only through clear-cut outlines. However, it was required to choose and comment on just one subject from among these broad and long historical connections. For this reason, historical process and historicity were considered as a concept used to limit the broad history of relations between the two states. The Russians, who set up a strong organization in the north similar to the one the Ottoman Empire established in Asia and Europe, dominated the old Turkish countries, especially in Eastern Europe and Asia. In this respect, the two dominant powers had to give a struggle for existence from time to time. For example, it was possible for the Russians to integrate their natural resources to the world economy by finding a route to the south, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean while the Ottoman Empire could keep its power at its peak by strengthening an alternative political structure that directly affected the resources of Turkistan and beyond. This is why the Powerful Grand Vizier Sokullu came to Astrakhan in 1568 to stop the power he did not desire as a rival in the future, and wanted to realize the goal of facilitating logistical transportation to the Caspian by joining Volga and Don Rivers like the Or Canal.

The first diplomatic relation of the Ottoman State with the Russians started during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II when Ivan III sent his ambassador, Alexis Golovkastof, to Istanbul to expand the network of Russian trade ships². In this connection, in consideration of their power and status, the Ottomans did not accept the Duchy of Moscow as their direct respondent but notified that they would conduct their relations through the Crimean khans, which were the subjects of Ottomans. Especially with the weakening and fall of Golden Horde State³ and the collapse of its successor khanates in the XV century,

first the Khazan Khanate in 1552 and then the Astrakhan Khanate in 1556⁴ were defeated by the Russians, the Russians began to dominate Western Turkistan. Thus, by the end of the XVI century, the Russian Tsardom became a great state with the pressure on Sweden and Poland in the west and the wealth and power they accumulated in the east. If the campaign to Astrakhan launched by Sokullu Mehmet Pasha in 1568 did not stop due to the slackness of the Crimean Khan and the insufficiency of logistic facilities, it might be assumed that the power balance in the history could change. However, even the Ottoman army, which had the most important tactical and military capabilities of the period, did not have the ability to make operations in the Caucasus and beyond, and finally the Ottoman army had to go back without fighting⁵.

It can be considered that the project of joining Don and Volga and opening a door to Turkistan, which is known as Or Canal, was aiming to stop the Russians who were emerging as a new power and could be a threat to the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty in the north in future. The Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire Sokullu Mehmet Pasha did not give up despite his failure in the Suez Canal project against the Portuguese and, about a year later, he started the Don-Volga Canal project. According to Inalcik, this project⁶ was planned at the time of the Kanuni era and aimed at stopping the Russians who emerged in the north near Iran. The pressures on Muslim peoples in Astrakhan and its surrounding during the Kanuni period continued increasingly in the era of Selim II. Continuing to fight the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean for pilgrimage and trade routes, the Ottomans returned to the north in early 1568 and intended for the Astrakhan campaign. Thus, the project to open a canal between the Don River running to Black Sea and Volga running to the Caspian Sea has been on the agenda again. Under these conditions Sokullu Mehmet Pasha started preparations for the Astrakhan campaign. After the preparations, which continued all through the winter, they came to the area found a little north of Astrakhan in August 1569. This area was discovered by the Ancient Greeks to be shallowest ground that Don and Volga had crossed over before they flow into two separate seas. It is understood that Çerkez Kasım Pasha had also learned about the ancient times when he was exploring the region⁷. The excavation of the canal started at the area between Ilovlya branch of Don and Kamsyinka branch of Volga (now called Petroval town). The excavations continued for three months continuously. One third of the channel was opened. 30,000 Nogay Tatars were hired to work on the canal works. Historian Peştevi⁸ says that, although there was no lack of security, food and equipment, the Tatars had spread a rumor among soldiers that winter comes to the region three months earlier and it would not be possible to work in unbearable colds and, therefore, the soldiers disintegrated and returned to their hometowns. Although the edict of Selim II which orders the army to spend the winter in Astrakhan reached on the way, the army continued to withdraw. Thus, after the Suez Canal project of Sokullu, the Don-Volga Canal project was also terminated. The Don-Volga Canal was opened in 1952 after a five-year excavation of the

Soviet Union, which was carried out from two points other than the one chosen by the Ottomans.

From this date on, the Ottomans were not interested in region for about a century. However, during this time the Crimea, under the aegis of the Ottomans, continued to pressure on Moscow and to receive tax from them. In fact, the Crimean horsemen burnt down Moscow completely in 1571 aiming to keep a possible power balance under control just before its beginning. The main purpose of the Russians' expansion of their territory to the south was to acquire land suitable for agriculture and to make it possible for the poor Russian villagers trapped in the forest to reach to fertile lands. In 1502, the Crimean Khanate broke the power of the Great Horde by conquering Saray, the last fortress of the Golden Horde and they gained control over Khazan and the territory around it. The people affected by this turmoil were placed in Perskop city⁹. Therefore, the lands between Ryazan and the Crimean khanate remained empty and these lands not owned by anyone were called *Dikoye Pole* (wild lands). Kazakhs and peasants from Russia started to settle in these empty lands. Not long after the Kazakhs started to settle in Dnepr at the borders of the Crimean Khanate¹⁰. Moscow, which wanted to protect itself from the pressure of the Crimean Khanate, built military cities and fortresses in this process. They completed Belgorod, the most important southern defense line of 800 km long, in 1653. This border line did not only secure the south but it also expanded the Russian border about 100 km down to the land of the Crimean Khanate. This process caused the Russian to learn about the surrounding region towards the Ukrainian lands. Besides, with the new settlement, the Russians began to feel that their future could be possible only by possessing this region. Thus, the territory of Ukraine became primary target of the Moscow state. Despite these strategic positions of the Russians, the Turks did not see Russians as a serious threat in the 16th and 17th centuries and, therefore, did not plan to conquer the Russian territory¹¹.

From 1654 onwards, under the influence of the Cossacks, the Russians captured most of Ukraine and seized places with strategic importance against both the Crimean Khanate and the Ottomans. In the meantime, Hetman Doroshenko, the king of Ukraine, abandoned the Ottoman patronage and entered to Russian patronage. This caused the Ottoman army under the command of Mustafa Pasha, including the forces of the Crimean Khanate, to march into Ukraine's capital Cyhyryn city in 1678. It was the beginning of a new era in the history of the two neighboring states when they began to fight directly¹². According to the Bahçesaray Agreement signed between the Crimean Khanate and the Russians after this war, which ended with an absolute victory of the Ottoman army, the Russians agreed that they would continue to pay tax to Crimea. The Ottoman State continued not to accept the Russians as their respondents in this period and they were conducting their relations through the Crimean Khanate¹³.

However, the raids of the Ottomans to Poland and to north did not have the potential to fix the distorted balance of manorial system and

to establish a system of gross revenues itself. Besides, the Ukrainian lands lost their old fertility and could not bring the expected yields. For this reason, according to the general opinion of the Russian historians, despite such victory, the Ottomans gave up its interest in Ukraine and Russia and turned their attention to Central Europe leaving the region to the initiative of the Crimean Khanates. According to Russian publications, it was necessary for the Russian-Turkish relations to maintain a peace between 1670-80. A.L. Nordin-Nayokinki, who is the foreign relations officer of Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich, estimated that a peace with Poland would also be valid for the Ottomans because the war could break out due to Poland and he warned the Russian Tsar accordingly¹⁴.

When the Ottoman Empire was defeated at the apex of its power in Vienna in 1683, Russia joined the Holy League formed by the Holy Roman (Nemetsky) Empire, Venice and Polish states upon the invitation of Poland. It was a turning point of history as Polish, who were the *casus belli* of the Ottoman against Russians, were inviting their eternal enemies to the Holy League, thereby, Central Europe and Russia joining on the same front against the Turks. Poland was also signing an agreement that she accepted Russian sovereignty on the territory of Kiev and Smolensk in return for the Russia's joining to Holy League¹⁵. For the Holy League, Russia made two campaigns to Crimea under the command of Prince Golitsin between 1687 and 1689 but could not succeed and had to retreat with great defeats¹⁶. This alliance and block movement against the Ottomans would be implemented as a new foreign policy argument by Russia and Russia would continue to advance in the southern territories where Russia wanted to descend by acting jointly with the European states in the strategies on this region.

Since Tsar Peter understood that he could not have a proper commercial and economic system without seas, he besieged the Castle of Azak located at the key point of the Black Sea with a crowded Russian army in the spring of 1695. Although the Ottoman troops repel the attack of Tsar Peter at first with the strong resistance of soldiers and the support they received from sea, Peter took over the castle on July 19, 1696¹⁷. Thus, the Russians gained a direct base in the sea trade the importance of which they had noticed beforehand. The Castle of Azak was also important as an alternative commercial route, to disseminate the richness that Russians obtained in the 17th century to different parts of the world. Especially the big merchant families would also be able to carry their fur and valuable chemical material from Siberia and its surroundings to various markets by sea.

With the signing of the Treaty of Karlowitz by the Ottoman State with the Austrian, Venice and Polish states of the Holy League on January 23, 1699¹⁸, the Russians also attempted to make a gain but they could not benefit from this agreement. With the arrival of the Russian representatives, the 'Istanbul Treaty' was signed on July 3/13, 1700. As a result of this agreement, the Russians, who could not contact with the Ottoman State directly, made a bilateral agreement with the Ottoman Empire for the first time¹⁹ and succeeded in holding an important castle like Azak in their possession²⁰. In addition, by holding a strategic com-

mercial center that will lead to the warm seas, Peter made a move that could be influential in international politics. It was also important for Russia to make this agreement at a time when the Holy League was separated. Because Russia was content to take whatever they could have, and then shifted its interest to the less risky Baltic region.

The first serious attempt by the Ottoman State to stop the progress of the Russians was possible only when the Ottoman army under the command of Baltacı Mehmet Pasha besieged the army of Peter in Prut in 1711. While Baltacı Mehmet Pasha came to an advantageous position by surrounding the Russians at the Prut River, the war ended with Peter accepting the peace offer and the Prut Agreement was signed on 21 July 1711²¹. According to the agreement, Azak Castle, previously held by Peter, would be returned to the Ottoman State. In addition, all the castles constructed by Russia on the border would be destroyed; the Russians would not be interfering with the affairs of Poland and the Cossacks of the Crimea. In addition, Karl XII would be able to return to his country and Russia would not prevent it. Apart from Russian merchants, there would be no Russian ambassador in Turkey, the prisoners of war would be returned to the Ottoman State, and Russia would pay tax to Crimean Khanate as they did in the past²². The Prut treaty can be considered as an official document that the Turks were still strong in the military sense but the resources on that period shows clearly that the military system was not as perfect as it used to be. Again, the agreement is even more important for the Russians and it is an important success of diplomacy²³. Peter prevented the possible loss of the Russian state by the maneuver that he made when he was trapped by the Prut River²⁴. Although Turkish historians consider this agreement to be an important event due to success of the Russians in their dealings, Russian historians are not convinced that their countries have signed a very successful treaty. Because, all previous achievements of the Russians were taken back with this agreement, the Zaporizhia²⁵ region was left empty and Peter I could not realize his goals. Moreover, with the border agreements made with the Russians first in 1720 and then in 1724, both parties maintained their positions²⁶.

The Ottoman State sent Nişli Mehmet Aga to Russia as a middle-ambassador to discuss the pressures on Caucasian Muslims living under the patronage of the Ottoman State and the issue of Iran. Kapıcıbaşı Nişli Mehmet Aga was the first one among ambassadors to Russia who wrote a sefaretname (recounting of journeys and experiences of an Ottoman ambassador in a foreign country). He left Istanbul in October 1722 and returned on 17 February 1723. The ambassador conveyed the alliance proposals of the Sultan regarding the partition of Iran and made warnings for the protection of the Muslim populations living in the region²⁷. After the defeat in Vienna, the Ottoman State had to give significant concessions to the Russians for a while. However, Ottoman State recovered in a short time and managed to stop its losses temporarily by establishing balance in foreign policy. The psychological superiority due to Prut victory had an important place in this success of course.

The peaceful period between Ottoman and Russian Tsardom ended in the period of Czarina of Russia Anna Ioanovna (170-40). Russian Czarina, making an agreement with Austrian emperor Karl VI, waged war against the Ottoman Empire in 1736 and they attacked the Castles of Crimea, Özi, Azak and Khotyn. In the same year, the Austrian state declared war against the Ottoman Empire in line with their commitment to Russia²⁸. The Ottoman army succeeded in this struggle against the two great countries in the course of almost three years, centering primarily on the Austrian front. With the Treaty of Belgrade signed with the Austria, the Ottoman State took back the lands it had previously lost. The agreement with the Russians consisted of fifteen articles and one conclusion part²⁹. According to this agreement, Russia was withdrawn from the territories it had invaded previously and the Castle of Azak was destroyed and the land was neutralized. The independence of the Great and Small Kabardins territories was recognized. It was decided that the Russians would stop attacks on Cossacks and that the Crimean Tatars³⁰ would stop raids on Russia. The Russians were not allowed to have naval vessels and merchant ships in the Black Sea³¹. The Belgrade Agreement in 1739 ensured the defeat of Russia in the military sense the Ottomans had their future mortgaged with the capitulations to the French in economic terms. Moreover, this agreement marked the beginning of the process in which Europe would have a role as an important factor in the relations between the two states.

After the agreement with the Russians, it was decided to send ambassadors reciprocally. In this respect, Mehmet Emni Effendi was sent to Petersburg with the title of Governor of Anatolia³². Emni Effendi, who set out in 1741, was responsible for resolving the conflicts on the implementation of the provisions of the Belgrade Agreement. Emni Effendi, who was a successful diplomat, also discussed issues such as exchange of captives and calling the Russian tsars as emperor in protocols. Emni Efendi returned in 1742 and wrote a sefaretname on this travel³³.

In the period of Yelizaveta Petrovna, who served between 1741 and 1761, although there were rivalries and frictions, there was no war and relations were at normal level. Relations between the Ottoman State and the Russian Tsardom continued through the ambassadors and Dervish Mehmet Efendi travelled from Istanbul to St. Petersburg in 1754 to inform Osman III's (1754-1757) accession to Ottoman throne and presented the letter of the Sultan to Czarina Elizabeth. Mehmet Efendi, who wrote this journey as a sefaretname, returned with the letters of the empress in 1755³⁴. When Mustafa III (1757-1774) accessed to Ottoman throne, he sent Şehdi Osman Efendi, who had previously traveled to Russia under Mehmet Emni Efendi's entourage, in the year 1757 with the title of Şikk-ı Sani Defterdarlığı (a title of high ranking finance officer) to inform the Russian stardom of his accession to throne. Returning from St. Petersburg in 1758, Şehdi Efendi gave information and detailed description on the state of Russia by writing a sefaretname³⁵.

Catherina II, wife of Tsar Peter III, (1729-1796) became the Russian czarina in 1762 and ruled the Russian Tsardom for about 36 years. She had Stanisław Poniatowski elected as the king of

Poland to succeed King August III who died after the enthronement of Catherina³⁶. With Polish refugees taking refuge in the Ottoman lands, the Russians chased after them and massacred both the refugees and the Muslims. On this occasion, Mustafa III declared war on Russian in 1768³⁷. Although, the apparent reason of the war seemed to be these incidents, there were many events and reasons accumulated in the backstage. II. Catherina's chancellor M.I. Vorontsov stated in his report dated 1762³⁸ that Russia could not be safe if the Crimea remained in the Ottoman State. After the Russian intervention in Poland and Sweden, it was very important for the Russians to keep Crimea under their pressure. In 1769, the Russian State Council recognized the independence of the Crimea and made a major move against the Ottoman Empire. In fact, with such decision, Russia abandoned the land they took by war as an element of balance. Russian historians interpret this event as a political decision taken in terms of power balance in the world and emphasize that it was very accurate. Because, according to Russian historians, the annexation of the Crimean territory could have taken the reaction of other western states, Russia could go into a war that she was unprepared to and could lose its gains completely. As a matter of fact, the Russians did not change this attitude in both the 1771 and 1774 peace agreements, in which the Ottomans were weak, and they particularly specified the independence of Crimea in the texts of the agreements³⁹. The Russian-Turkish war lasted until 1774, and the Turks, defeated both on land and at sea, had to enter peace negotiations with the Russians. Peace negotiations started in Focşani and Bucharest but no agreement could be reached due to the excessive demand of the Russians. However, as a result of the increase of the Turkish defeats, a peace was concluded on July 10-21, 1774 in Küçük Kaynarca (today Kaynardzha)⁴⁰.

This agreement, which constitutes a turning point for the Ottoman Empire, consists of twenty-eight articles and two separate provisions. This agreement, a victory of the Russians, allowed the Russians to take vast land between the Dnepr and Dniester rivers and set the Kuban River as the border⁴¹. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca is one of the most burdensome treaties in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The Russians, who separated the Crimea from the Ottomans and ensured its independence, had the right to control the Crimea and the Kerch Strait⁴².

History of Crime (Russian Sefaretname 1771-1775), written by Necati Efendi, an entourage of Silahtar İbrahim Pasha, deals with the wars of Russia against Crimea and narrates the Ottoman-Russian war between 1768-1774 and especially the Crimean front. According to this important work of Necati Efendi, the betrayal of the Crimean Tatars, the Agreement of Maksut Giray Han with the Russians and the counter propaganda against the Ottomans had an important role in the loss of Crimea⁴³. Both parties decided to send an envoy to discuss the problems arising out of the twenty-seventh article of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. For this purpose, the Babiali (literally «sublime porte» which means Ottoman government) sent Çavuşbaşı Abdülkerim Efendi to Russia in 1775 as an ambassador with the

title of Governor of Rumelia. Mehmet Emin Nahifi Efendi, the poet and high ranking military officer (müşir), served as an entourage of Abdülkerim Pasha and explained in his sefaretname the struggles regarding the settlement of the problems arising after the agreement⁴⁴.

The Russians increased their oppression on the Crimea immediately after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. With respect to Crimea issue, Aynalı kavak bond of arbitration («Aynalı kavaktenkih namesi» in Turkish) was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia with the mediation of France and England on 21 March 1779⁴⁵. The treaty emphasized that the Crimea was independent and the dominance of the Ottoman State over the Crimea was reduced gradually⁴⁶. After the incessant conflicts and clashes, Catherina invaded Crimea in 1783 with an army of seventy thousand soldiers, led by Potempkin. The Ottoman State, however, failed to respond to this situation and accepted the situation implicitly⁴⁷.

However, the lands of Crimea and its surrounding were one of the main sources of the Ottoman Empire not only for population but also for strategic and logistic reasons. In addition, the settlement of Russia in the region would bring about a total loss of activity in the region for the Ottoman Turkey in future. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire tried to wage war against Russia in the region successively with all its power. The Ottomans declared war again in August 1787 as a result of the increasing desire of the Russians to proceed to the south. Austria also became a party to this war as a commitment of previously signed treaty, and the Ottoman State had to fight two major states on two fronts⁴⁸. The main purpose of the Ottoman State in entering the war was to take the Crimea back and to withdraw the Russians to the borders before the signing of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. The aim of Czarina Catherina was to eradicate the Ottoman Empire from the stage of history and become the sole sovereign of the Black Sea, to make the Balkans Russian subjects and to establish a Greek (Greek) state supported by herself in Istanbul⁴⁹. The Russians, who cooperated with Austria, achieved great victory in the battles against the Ottoman State. The interpretations of Russian historians also overlap with the those of Turkish historians. According to them, the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman State and Muslims and Turkish subjects in Russia were the weakest breaking points in the relations between the two states. While the two states were fighting out with the armies outside, they were indoctrinating their religious communities inside. For this reason, it was important for Russia to nurture her desire to have the Bosphorus and to descend to the Mediterranean.

At the beginning of the war, the Ottoman State requested for support from European states of Sweden and Prussia⁵⁰ against Russia and signed an alliance with these states. However, these alliances were not successful due to the French Revolution and the Ottoman State was left alone in the war against Russians⁵¹. With the French Revolution, which shook the Europe and the world and marked the beginning of a new age, the Russians declared that they wanted to negotiate with the Ottomans but the defeated Ottoman did not accept the request for these negotiations. After Koca Yusuf Pasha's appoint-

ment to Grand Vizier, the Ottoman State, which could not get the support expected from Prussia, sent the delegation previously signing the Sistova Agreement to the Jassy town to conduct the peace negotiations. Negotiations started in November 1791 but could be completed only in January 1792 and Treaty of Jassy⁵² was signed consisting of thirteen articles and a conclusion part. According to this treaty, the Ottoman State accepted all agreements in force, i.e. the 1774 Treaty of Kaynarca, the 1779 Aynalıkavak Tenkihnamesi, the 1783 Trade Agreement and the annexation of the Crimea and Taman in 1784. The land on the left side of Turlawould be given to the Russians together with Ochakov Castle while Ismail, Bender, Akkerman, and Kili Castles would be given to the Ottomans. The tax debts of the Bulgarian Voivode shipwould be cancelled, the tax would not be collected for two years and public amnesty would be announced. Kuban would be the two states' borders in the Caucasus. For the peaceful relations of the two states, the governors of Cildir would not attack to Tbilisi Georgian Prince. The Russian merchant ships would be protected against the pirates of Garp Ocakları (pirates from Algeria), and Garp Ocakları would compensate any damages to such ships and the Ottoman treasure would provide such compensation if the pirates did not pay⁵³.

During these wars with the Ottoman State, the Russians achieved victory with their disciplined and qualified infantry organizations trained in the new system that had intelligent European commanders. In the Ottoman soldiers, unlike Russia, an irregularity and looseness emerged and the Janissaries, the backbone of the empire, were no longer able to fight. In result of the defeat at these wars with the Russians, Selim III understood the importance of reforming the military system and wanted to establish a military organization in the modern way. With the Treaty of Jassy, it became obvious that the system did not function well in the Ottoman Empire and the new Sultan seriously reviewed these issues⁵⁴.

During the Peloponnese and Greek revolts, the powerful states, acting in a triple alliance formed between Russia, England and France, succeeded in converting the Ottoman State's domestic affairs into a European problem. In addition to secret resistance movements they organized in Balkans, the Russians increased their harassment to the Ottoman Empire and set the Ottoman Navy on fire in Navarino (1828-1829)⁵⁵. Despite the request of the Ottoman Empire for compensation, the Russians declared war and, taking advantage of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire which had no navy, came to Edirne crossing the Black Sea. İbrahim Pasha, the son of the Governor of Egypt Mehmet Ali Pasha, abandoned the Peloponnese due to lack of support and food stock. The French took advantage of the opportunity to occupy the lands abandoned by Egyptian army and established a small Greek administration. The Russians occupied Ahiska, Kars and Erzurum under the lead of General Paskiyevic. The war ended with the Treaty of Edirne⁵⁶. The border in European lands would again be the Prut River, but the privileges of Moldavia-Wallachia and Serbia would be increased. In addition to granting full independence to Greece, Russia would be paid a substantial amount of compensation. The activities of the Russians in the

Balkans continued intensely. At the end of this process, Serbia declared its independence in 1830 with the initiatives of Russia⁵⁷. In short, the first half of the 19th century beginning with Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Jassy and Edirne was a process in which Russia took the Ottomans completely under a siege. The balance between the two states was ensured by Western states with this process, and the Ottoman State was condemned to survive with the support of Western countries.

The Turkish state, which had survived the Russian threat with Edirne Agreement with severe losses, had to deal with the revolt of Mehmet Ali Pasha, the rebellious governor of Egypt. M. Ali Pasha shook the Ottoman State seriously. M. Ali Pasha, who was not recognized as the governor of Syria, came to Kütahya by defeating the Ottoman armies. Mahmut II had to make an alliance with the Russians on 8 July 1833 to oppress the revolt of M. Ali Pasha. In scope of this alliance, which was known as the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi⁵⁸, the Russian army would help the Ottoman military and financially. In the case of war, the Ottoman State would help Russia by closing the straits to all other states. With this strategy change, the Egypt issue was now on the agenda as a topic that was of interest to all Europe and Russia. In the result of the negotiations on Egypt issue with the European States, the Straits gained an international status and the Russian privilege on the Straits was removed⁵⁹.

The Ottoman State had a quiet period after 1841 until the war of Crimea. The Russians regarded the Ottoman Empire as a sick man while taking an active role in European politics during the Nicholas I period. The Ottoman-Russian Wars began in 1853 with the Russian Trasdrom, which increased the pressure on patronage of the Christian Orthodox people in the Balkans. Britain and France joined the Ottoman Empire in these wars, called as the Crimean wars and continued until 1856. Russia, who became one of the most important forces among the European states after the Vienna congress of 1815, had a heavy defeat in the result of the Crimean Wars. The terms of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca were abolished with the Paris Agreement⁶⁰ signed on March 30, 1856. The Black Sea was neutralized and unarmed and a new arrangement was made with respect to the Straits. The patronage of the Russians on the Memleketeyn since 1774 (the two cities Moldavia and Wallachia) was terminated⁶¹. The Turkish-Russian struggle, which had been continuing with defeats for about 150 years in terms of the Turkish state, could be stopped with the support of European allies. However, the political, social and economic concessions given in return for the support caused irreparable consequences for the Ottoman State.

Russia could not get what they wanted from the Balkans and the Caucasus against the European powers and started to act by making use of its power on Orthodox peoples of Balkans. Moldavia and Wallachia were united under as to form the Romanian state in 1857. By interfering with the events that began in 1875 in Herzegovina after Romania, Russia started turmoil in the Balkans and further weakened the Ottoman Empire in the region⁶².

Although the fact that the Russians gained control over the Balkans and the Caucasus seems to be the reason for the battles

between 1877 and 1878, known as War of 93, the Russians actually wanted to take revenge of the defeat they suffered in the Crimea. During these wars, which had become one of the biggest defeats of its history for the Ottoman State, the Russians massacred hundreds of thousands of Muslims and came to the vicinity of Istanbul invading all the Balkans⁶³. On the Caucasian front, Kars and Erzurum were fallen. With the Treaty of San Stefano⁶⁴ signed between the two states on March 3, 1878, it was acknowledged that the Ottoman Empire lost all territories in Europe and the Caucasus. However, Britain and Austria, opposing to the Russians' ownership of the Ottoman heritage alone, were not willing to the Russians' rule on the Balkans and Central Europe and they organized the Berlin Congress (13 June – 13 July 1878). The states in the Balkans were recognized as independent⁶⁵.

In 1905, the Russians, defeated by Japan, and turned their direction back to the Balkans. Albania, Crete, Macedonia and Montenegro were the Ottoman State's biggest problems in the Balkans. Even though Russia had problems in itself, it implemented an effective policy on the Balkans both with its propaganda tools and diplomatic means. Russia was effective at the outbreak of the Balkan wars in 1912-13, which led to the loss of the first Balkan lands conquered in Rumelia. The rebellious Balkan countries entered into the war of independence against the Ottoman Empire with alliances of Serb-Bulgarian, Bulgarian-Greek, Montenegro-Serbian and Montenegro-Bulgarian. After the wars with the Balkan countries, in which the Balkan countries achieved great success in the Balkan Wars, Turkish territory was limited to today's East Thrace lands. The Balkan countries, which were separated from the Ottoman Empire and declared their independence, were now fighting for their border conflicts. After the Balkan affairs, Russians had a conflict with the Ottoman State over the Armenian politics. With a document dated February 8, 1914, two large autonomous Armenian provinces based in Van and Erzurum were founded in Eastern Anatolia under the foreign governorate inspectors⁶⁶.

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