4

A New Era?

The Vienna Order and the Ottoman World

One of the most recognizable images of Napoleon Bonaparte's French empire was *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (The Coronation of Napoleon). Completed in 1807, Jacques-Louis David's painting immortalized the induction and coronation of the Corsican and his first wife Josephine as emperor and empress at Notre-Dame de Paris on 2 December 1804. Since its first exhibition, the painting has been considered 'a transparently masterminded piece of modern propaganda', where many prominent French men and women, ranging from Napoleon's mother, Maria Letizia Ramolino, to Charles Talleyrand and Joseph Bonaparte, were portrayed in the cathedral even when some of them did not actually attend the ceremony. *Le Sacre* symbolized the unity and strength of France.[1]

Of all figures that appear in the painting, one man markedly differs from the others with his turban and dark beard. He fixes his curious gaze on the emperor, standing at the very back of the throng. He was the Ottoman ambassador to Paris, Mehmed Said Halet Efendi (1761–1822). Originally from the Crimea, Halet was in the second year of his four-year Paris embassy when the coronation took place. As a French correspondent once described him, he was a 'very tall and very beautiful figure', and known to his Ottoman associates to be a proud and stubborn man.[2]

During his French sojourn that lasted until 1806, perplexed by the chaotic international politics and fickle alliances of the time, Halet grew immensely antipathetic to European ways of diplomacy, finding them 'vulgar' and 'unwholesome'.[3] His reports from Paris suggest that he found French politicians to be sorely lacking in the courtesies of statesmanship. Yet he also harboured a degree of gratitude to them, as they helped him cover the expenses of his embassy when the Porte was unable to supply funds, having been preoccupied with the financially draining New Order programme in the 1800s.[4]

[1] Todd B. Porterfield and Susan L. Siegfried, *Staging Empire: Napoleon, Ingres, and David* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 4; see also Jean Tulard, *Le Sacre de l'empereur Napoléon: Histoire et légende* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

[2] George Grosjean, 'La politique orientale de Napoléon. L'ambassade de France à Constantinople (1803–1805) (I)', *La revue hebdomadaire. Romans, histoire, voyages* 9(48) (27 Oct. 1900): 525–42, at 526.

[3] Karal, *Halet*, 33.

[4] Ibid. 90. The New Order programme is discussed in Ch. 2.

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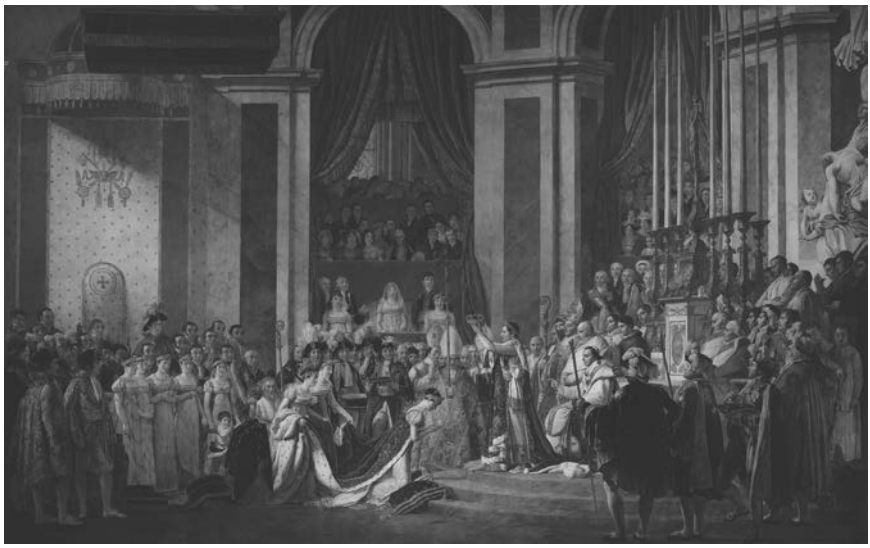

Figure 2. Jacques-Louis David's *Le Sacre de Napoléon*

As we will see in the following pages, less than a decade after his return to Istanbul, Halet emerged as the most formidable man in the Ottoman imperial capital. He established a powerful network and patronage contacts with Janissary aghas and Greek Phanariots as well as with regional leaders such as Mehmed Ali of Egypt, Ali Paşa of Janina, and the hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, who provided him with funds, intelligence, and an immense political influence.[5] Halet's power sometimes surpassed even that of young Sultan Mahmud II. His rapacious authority and harsh response to threats, his network and scheming ways of preserving his power, and the tragic end of his life would lead historians to consider him as a 'statesman turned villain.'[6]

The career and political influence of Halet Efendi in the Ottoman world are of great significance for our purposes here because during his heyday in the Topkapı Palace, the 1810s, the 'Eastern Question' took on a new meaning in international relations. Aiming to put a definitive end to the global Napoleonic Wars, while the 'Western' question of the future of Latin America and the 'Northern' question of Scandinavia were deliberated by the self-defined Great Powers and the so-called second-rank European polities during and after the Paris peace negotiations and the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, the disputes over Poland and the European dominions of the Ottoman Empire together constituted 'the Eastern Question'.

The 1810s were a momentous period also because a new inter-imperial order was forged in Europe then. First, at the Vienna apartment of the Austrian foreign

[5] Philliou, *Biography*, 72–3. [6] Ibid. xxiii.

minister Prince Klemens Wenzel Lothar Nepomuk von Metternich-Winneburg (1773–1859), and then during the peace negotiations in Paris in March and May 1814, the leading empires—Austria, Britain, Prussia, Russia, and later France—came to officially style themselves as a separate category, 'the Great Powers', and introduced new hierarchies into international politics on the continent. Nearly a century before the formation of the League of Nations, the five claimed managerial responsibilities to form an exclusive security system, the Congress or Vienna system, which aimed at precluding a return to the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars that had devastated Europe in the past three decades.

The Powers fostered an understanding of security as a public good that could be obtained most effectively by means of cooperation among themselves. They agreed to upholding a series of norms and principles 'to serve as a code of conduct ... rules of behaviour to regulate the competition among them, and ... a set of procedures designed to maintain order'.[7] Conference diplomacy, in place of inter-imperial wars, became the means to deal with crises, and ambassadorial conferences were organized with a previously unseen frequency in order to manage Europe's immediate issues.

The Allied Council Meetings in Paris (1815–18), and the congresses in Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822), were all convened with an arguably conservative yet explicitly anti-revolutionary spirit, having in view the establishment of peace on the continent. The five Powers espoused the idea of non-intervention in each other's affairs, self-restraint in place of encroachments and aggression, and consultation with each other instead of unilateral action, constant assurances, and pacific intent in lieu of overt revisionism and violence. As of the mid-1820s the Vienna system was refashioned as an international order, i.e. the Vienna Order, under supervision of the Concert of Europe—the exclusive, elite club of the Great Powers.[8]

The question that concerns us here is the implications of this new episode ensuring peace and security in Europe especially in the rest of the world. Did it mean the beginning of a new era in the Levant also? As early as 1814, the issue of where in the post-Napoleonic world the Ottoman Empire, and for that matter the Levant, would be positioned occupied the minds of the statesmen that represented the Great Powers *and* the Sublime Porte. The sultan's empire had dangerously strained relations with her Romanov neighbours on the eve of the Vienna Congress, and both certain Ottoman ministers and Austrian and British diplomats saw great value in involving the Porte's differences with Russia in the ongoing peace negotiations in Paris and Vienna.

[7] Richardson, 'The Concert of Europe', 51; Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 30; Cottrell, *The Evolution*, 68–9; Abbenhuis, *Neutrals*, 40–41; Jarrett, *The Congress*, 361–2; De Graaf, *Fighting Terror*, Introduction.

[8] Eckart Conze, 'Historicising a Security Culture: Peace, Security and the Vienna System in History and Politics, 1815- to Present', in *Securing Europe*, 44–5.

But, due to a variety of factors, largely originating from the diplomatic choices made by Halet Efendi and his entourage, this plan never materialized. And then the Ottoman Empire came into close contact with the Concert of Europe a decade later, during the Navarino incident of 1827, when Russia, Britain, and France intervened and destroyed an Egypto-Ottoman fleet so as to secure European commercial interests and aid the Greeks in their war of independence. This event has been considered as one of the earliest instances of humanitarian interventions in history.[9] It also proved to be an early moment of the Vienna Order which signified that the changing dynamics of the relationship between the Concert of Europe and the Ottoman Empire prevented neither Great Power advances in the Levant, nor inter-imperial competition, nor diplomatic encroachments or military/naval interventions.

The Eastern Question in the 1810s

Policies pursued by Russia with respect to the sultan's empire and the Porte's responses to them became a major determinant in the sculpting of the Eastern Question in the early decades of the Vienna Order. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Catherine II's 'Greek Project' had been replaced by an 'Ottoman Project' under Emperor Paul I.[10] This was a victory of the moderates in the St Petersburg court—moderates such as Victor P. Kochubei (1768–1834), a former ambassador to Istanbul, and the diplomat Nikita P. Panin (1770–1837), over hardline statesmen such as Catherine II's lover Pyotr V. Zavadovsky (1739–1812) and Foreign Minister Fyodor V. Rostopchin (1763–1826) who favoured 'direct territorial conquests, the division of Ottoman possessions, support for separatists and liberation movements'.[11]

The moderates called for preserving the Ottoman Empire as a 'weak neighbour' under the orbit of Russian influence. Their strategy was considered to be more beneficial for Russia than Empress Catherine II's late eighteenth-century project of total dismemberment.[12] After the palace coup and assassination of Emperor Paul in March 1801, his son Alexander I adopted the same moderate policy, considering the sultan's empire as a barbarian state 'whose weakness and bad rule

[9] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 63–90.

[10] Kobishanov, 'Politika Rossii', 4.

[11] Ibid. 4–5.

[12] On the weak neighbour policy, see Report of Dashkov, 4 Sept. 1829, *VPR* vol. 2/8, 292; Protocol of the Extraordinary Committee, 4 Sept. 1829, ibid. 278; Bitis, *Russia*, 359–60; P. A. Iovskij, *Poslednyaya vojna s Turcieyu, zaklyuchayushhaya v sebe kampaniyu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropejskoj i aziatskoi Turcii i na kavkaze*, vol. 1 (St Petersburg: Tipografiya Depart. Narod. Prosveshch., 1830); N. I. Ushakov, *Istoriya voennyx dejstvij v aziatskoj Turcii v 1828 i 1829 godax*, vol. 1 (St Petersburg: Tipografiya Eduarda Pratsa, 1836); N. A. Lukyanovich, *Opisanie tureckoj vojny 1828 1829 godov*, vol. 1 (St Petersburg: Tipografiya Eduarda Pratsa, 1844).

are a precious guarantee of [Russian] security'.[13] His pursuit of this policy proved to be volatile, however, due to continuous tensions between the courts of St Petersburg and Istanbul.

One of the moments when Russo-Ottoman relations were heavily damaged was the 1806–12 war that had begun (as we saw in Chapter 2) when Sultan Selim III opted to throw in his lot with Napoleon Bonaparte, recognizing him as the emperor of France and even appointing pro-French hospodars in the Balkans, which immensely antagonized Tsar Alexander I. In 1807, at Tilsit, the tsar even negotiated with Bonaparte the plans for the partition of the sultan's empire.

The Russo-Ottoman fighting continued intermittently, and came to an end only when Bonaparte recruited a massive *Grande Armée* of 600,000 men and made alliances and agreements with Berlin and Vienna for military support and the passage of his forces during his Russian campaign. The tsar was isolated, racing in vain to make counter-alliances. Seeing that Prussia and Austria were not standing in Napoleon's way, Alexander I looked to end the war with the Ottoman Empire. The peace was sealed with the Treaty of Bucharest in May 1812, which was ratified in July, despite the new sultan Mahmud II's belief that he could have wrought more from the Russian anxieties.[14]

As I have detailed elsewhere, the Treaty of Bucharest secured for Russia the mouths of the Danube and Bessarabia, setting the Pruth river as the border with the Ottoman Empire.[15] In return, the tsar agreed to evacuate all areas in the Balkans and the Caucasus that his army had occupied during the war. However, the treaty was hastily prepared, and therefore laden with clumsy phrases and open-ended articles. It left unaddressed at least two issues that became fundamental for Russo-Ottoman relations in the following years: first, Russia's claim for the protection of the Ottoman Serbians and her demands for autonomy for them, and, second, despite the stipulations of the 1812 treaty, the fact that Russia left her troops in the Phasis Valley in the Transcaucasia and wanted to legitimize this with a secret article, which Mahmud II categorically rejected. When Russian forces failed to abandon the Caucasus due to the region's strategic importance against a potential Persian or Ottoman attack, Mahmud II declared that 'Russia must evacuate the district in question otherwise there must be war'. When the tsar refused to capitulate, the dispute took a turn for the worse.[16]

This was one of the most critical conundrums for European politics, because the Russo-Ottoman war would handicap Russian success against Bonaparte by diverting Russian resources, and would prolong the Napoleonic Wars. Since her

[13] Kobishanov, 'Politika Rossii', 19–20.

[14] F. Ismail, 'The Making of the Treaty of Bucharest, 1811–12', *Middle Eastern Studies* 15(2) (May 1979): 180–87; Liston to Castlereagh, 13 July 1812, NLS MS 5672, f. 9.

[15] Ozavci, 'A Priceless Grace?'

[16] Liston to the Duke of Wellington, 25 Mar. 1815, TNA FO 139/26/40.

immediate interests were at stake, Britain had supervised the Bucharest talks and peace through her special envoy, Stratford Canning. As differences between Istanbul and St Petersburg manifested themselves again in 1812, and when the sultan accused Canning of making his plenipotentiary Mehmed Galib Efendi (1763–1829) sign a treaty that was arguably unfavourable to the Porte, the young British diplomat was called back. In his place the foreign secretary appointed the seasoned Robert Liston, a shrewd diplomat who had left a positive influence over the Ottoman ministers during his first Istanbul embassy in 1794–5.[17]

Liston's mission was to secure the precarious peace between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The much-tarnished Anglo-Ottoman relations had been mended by the 1809 Treaty of Dardanelles. British authorities now saw themselves capable of affecting the diplomatic choices in Istanbul. In 1809, they had dictated the closure of the Straits to foreign warships and obtained commercial privileges (fixing customs tariffs on certain products) from the sultan in return for a defensive alliance against France.[18] Having obtained her goals in the 'Orient', Britain would now lead a pacific policy in the Ottoman Empire, hoping to preserve the status quo at almost every turn until the late nineteenth century.

Shortly after his arrival in Istanbul, it became Liston's 'fixed opinion' on the Russo-Ottoman dispute that the only means to produce a cordial understanding between the two empires was 'the renunciation on the part of the [Russian] emperor of all projects of external acquisition or encroachment'.[19] The British diplomat closely followed the discontent of the sultan when the Porte made several futile remonstrances concerning the evacuation of the Russian troops from the Caucasus. Mahmud II was convinced that Alexander I was playing a long game: the tsar was leaving the border disputes with the Porte unresolved with the purpose of deploying them in the future as a pretext for a new Russian offensive in the Balkans and the Caucasus. Yet the sultan was not entirely sure as to the course of action he should take.

The advice his ministers offered him was mixed because they were divided on the subject. One group, led by the moderate and Anglophile Reisülküttâb Mehmed Galib Paşa, called for moderation and peace. The signatory of the Treaty of Bucharest, Galib advised that the sultan should treat foreign courts, and particularly Russia, with 'perfect civility and attention', and search for means to find common and conciliatory ground instead of escalating tensions. In February 1814, he asked Liston to bring the Russo-Ottoman dispute to the attention of the Allied ministers during the peace talks to be held in Paris and Vienna. He suggested its

[17] Ozavci, 'A Priceless Grace?'

[18] Sir Robert Adair, GCB, *The Negotiations for the Peace of the Dardanelles in 1808–1809: With Dispatches and Official Documents*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1845).

[19] Liston to Castlereagh, 12 Nov. 1812, NLS MS 5627, f. 57.

resolution be in favour of the Porte.[20] That is, the idea of involving the Ottoman Empire in the Paris and Vienna peace settlements came initially from an Ottoman statesman.

The former ambassador to Paris and now president of the imperial council, Halet Efendi was the leader of the other group which leaned toward France. He was willing 'to foster the causes of the present and future quarrels with Russia'.[21] This faction insisted that only with 'a principled policy' and 'firm resolution and an uninterrupted perseverance in the same system' of making no concessions against Russia could the 'dignity and high destinies of the Ottoman Empire' be maintained.[22]

In early May 1814, when the news of Bonaparte's removal from power in Paris arrived in Istanbul, the moderate Galib Paşa emerged as the sultan's favourite due to his anti-French tendencies and cautious diplomacy. But a cabinet crisis followed and at a most unexpected moment Halet's party managed to prevail in the imperial administration.[23]

Halet had realised that his political existence was at stake. He therefore masterminded a scheme and hastened to pen a memorandum to the sultan (together with Halil Efendi, the president of the conferences) that was calculated to gain advantage from the temper of the sultan. In this memorandum, Halet accused Galib of having signed the last, disadvantageous peace with Russia in Bucharest in 1812, providing the sultan with 'treacherous information' and imitating 'the manners of the Franks', organizing 'noisy entertainment with dancing and music', carrying 'his imitation of Christian ministers so far as to appear at the office until after the third hour of the day (11 o'clock), neglecting thus the management of the most urgent business of the State'. Halet moreover stated that the affairs of France were far from settled, and criticized Galib's advice to the sultan that the Porte needed prudence in its relations with Russia.[24] According to Liston, as a consequence of these insinuations, and due to his 'bigoted prejudices', the sultan dismissed Galib from his position and sent him into exile.

Thus Halet's hardline, pro-French faction gained the upper hand in the Ottoman cabinet just when the Napoleonic wars came to an end with Bonaparte's defeat (at least for the time being), and just when a new European order was being forged under the guidance of the victorious major Powers, particularly Britain and Russia. It was then that Halet preferred to follow a policy diametrically opposite to Galib's scheme of involving the sultan's empire in the

[20] Liston to Castlereagh, 26 Feb. 1814, TNA FO 78/82/25.
[21] Liston to Castlereagh, 27 Mar. 1813, NLS MS 5627, f. 99.
[22] Liston to Castlereagh, 25 June 1814, NLS MS 5628, f. 30. On Halet, see also Süheyla Yenidünya Gürgen, *Devletin Kâhyası, Sultanın Efendisi. Mehmed Said Halet Efendi* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2018).
[23] Liston to Castlereagh, 11 May 1814, TNA FO 78/82.
[24] On Halet's influence in the Topkapı Palace, see *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 5, 2525–7; Liston to Castlereagh, 10 June 1814, TNA FO 78/82.

ongoing peace negotiations in Paris and Vienna, which resulted in the Ottoman Empire's exclusion from the Vienna order at her will.

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As the historian Mark Jarrett tells us, in 1814, Britain and Austria had 'achieved their primary territorial objectives' in Europe: Belgium was incorporated in the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, as Britain wished, Austria had established control over northern Italy, and the German Federation provided a stable German core to central Europe. Now the two courts looked 'to preserve the existing balance (or more properly, distribution) of power on the Continent'. By contrast, Prussia, Russia, and especially France emerged as 'acquisitive powers', looking to extend or consolidate their territories and spheres of influence. The aspirations of latter three put an increasing strain on the stability of the postwar order.[25]

Among these aspirations was the Russian plan to extend control 'across the flat plains of Europe by taking the lion's share of Poland in the west and by establishing a sphere of influence over the part of the Ottoman Empire to the south'.[26] To hold these objectives in check and contain Russian in the east, in July 1814, the British foreign minister, Lord Castlereagh, and Prince Metternich drew up a plan. They designed to invite the Ottoman cabinet to send a minister, 'of respectable rank and character', to Vienna, perhaps 'not to sit in the congress . . . but to be within reach of the assembly to give explanations if required—to watch over the interests of his country'.[27] The Russo-Ottoman disputes could naturally become an object of discussion at Vienna. The Ottoman world's tranquillity and independence were '[closely] connected with a system of general and permanent peace' which would be the ultimate object of the congress. The existence of a senior Ottoman minister at Vienna would lead the Powers to 'pay sufficient attention to this subject' and the Porte to advocate its interests, where necessary.[28]

As results, an official invitation was sent to the Porte via Liston. The Porte responded only four months later, in November 1814, when the Congress of Vienna had just begun. The response was negative. The sultan would not send a senior minister to Vienna.

Historians usually argue that this stemmed from the Porte's lack of interest in European politics or from the absence of qualified men to represent its interests in Vienna. But, in reality, the Porte's decision was influenced by a number of factors. First, Halet was of the belief that the peace in Europe was hardly settled, and that it would not be wise to leave the fate of the empire in the hands of the European Powers. Halet's hardline faction associated European politics with amorality and

[25] Jarrett, *Congress*, 156. [26] Ibid. 360.

[27] Ibid. For the Ottoman Turkish version of the document, see BOA TS.MA.e 243/16, 6 July 1814. For the Austrian account, Metternich to Stürmer, Vienna, 6 Oct. 1814, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 10; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 39–40.

[28] Liston to Castlereagh, 25 July 1814, TNA FO 78/82/72.

deceit, and harboured an insatiable distrust of the Quadruple Alliance due to the agonizing experiences of the recent past whereby their empire, they believed, had repeatedly been a victim of European treachery. Moreover, the role accorded to the Ottomans in the anticipated protocol at Vienna as an observant, and thus a 'third-rank' or even lower-placed country—in the Ottoman version of the document, this was noted as *karardadeye rızazade* (the consenter to decisions)—was virtually unacceptable, if not offensive, to the sultan, who considered his empire as the last eternal state of the Islamic world and in no way inferior to her western neighbours.[29] The four-month silence was in fact a cultural response that went unnoticed by European diplomats.[30]

Despite the Porte's negative response, Metternich still promised the Ottoman chargé d'affaires in Vienna, Yanko Mavroyeni, that 'without waiting for a[nother] formal invitation,' he would do all he could during the congress for 'the entire satisfaction of the Porte' in its dispute with Russia.[31] He wanted to avoid giving Tsar Alexander I a free hand in the Balkans, and therefore lost no time in keeping his word. In early January 1815, he talked Castlereagh and Talleyrand into guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the European dominions of the sultan's empire. In February, before his departure from Vienna, Castlereagh held conversations with Tsar Alexander I to persuade him to offer security guarantees to the Porte.

The British foreign secretary succeeded in his last mission at Vienna by presenting a proposition to the tsar to ensure 'the conservation and integrity of the Turkish empire' as an inducement to coax the Porte 'to facilitate a more liberal commercial intercourse for the nations of Europe in the Black Sea'.[32] This was a barter: security for freer trade. Alexander I saw in this an opportunity for both gaining economic advantages after the draining wars and demonstrating his commitment to the unfolding 'Great Union' in Europe. Accordingly, he agreed to the proposal.[33]

The proposition was delivered again by Liston. The British diplomat's letter to the Ottoman cabinet stated that a new system of union and peace was unfolding in Europe, and that for it 'to be complete, the general security would also have to embrace the integrity of the Ottoman dominions'. The sovereigns of Europe, including Tsar Alexander, the letter continued, were ready to give this extension of the guarantee of the sultan's empire, leaving the disputes with Russia to the

[29] BOA HAT 956/41003. [30] Ozavci, 'A Priceless Grace?'

[31] Gentz to Caradja, 7 Nov. 1814, *DI* vol. 1, 119.

[32] Castlereagh to Liston, 14 Feb. 1815, AVPRI f. 133, o. 468, d. 2303, l. 356.

[33] Gentz to Caradja, III, 24 Feb. 1815, *DI* vol. 1, 143; BOA HAT 961/41197; 'Rapport du Chargé d'affaires de la Porte à Vienne, sur son entretien avec le Prince de Metternich', 17 Feb. 1815, AVPRI f. 133, o. 468, d. 2303, l. 295 Nesselrode to D'Italinsky, 26 Apr. 1815, *VPR*, vol. 2/8, 284–5; cf. Ozavci, 'A Priceless Grace?' It is unclear, however, whether these were his actual motivations or whether he had other ulterior motives.

mediation of 'the three friendly Powers, Austria, France and Britain'.[34] Liston also added a clause demanding the liberalization of the commerce in all Ottoman coasts, not only in the Black Sea.[35]

Many European statesmen and diplomats—Castlereagh, Metternich, Alexander I, Liston, and the Chevalier d'Italinsky, the Russian ambassador to Istanbul—considered this proposal as an 'invaluable favour' or a 'priceless grace' (*безценную милость*) to the Ottoman Empire.[36] It would save the sultan from the embarrassment of another military defeat at the hands of Russia by guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the sultan's European dominions.[37] But the Porte saw the proposal in a different light.

After receiving the proposal, the Halet-led Ottoman cabinet—which included Reisülküttâb Mehmed Seyid, the new Şeyhülislam Seyyid Mehmed Zeynelabiddin Efendi, Halet's butler Mustafa Efendi, and Hüsnü Bey, the defterdar Mehmed Emin Rauf Bey, as well as the viziers of Zahire, Tophane, and Darbhane—held two council meetings in March 1815.[38] On the 30th day of the month, they decided to refuse the Powers' proposal because of their suspicion concerning the goodwill of the Powers, given the Porte's deplorable experience with them in past decades during the wars with Russia (1786–92, 1806–12), the French invasion of Egypt (1798–1801), the slow British evacuation from Alexandria (1802–3), the British blockade of Istanbul (1807), and the secret Franco-Russian talks at Tilsit (1807) for the partition of the Well-Protected Domains. They feared that the proposal could be a Russian ploy to prolong the border disputes until the affairs of Europe was settled and thus maintain Russian troops in the Caucasus.[39] Moreover, the fact that the proposal was bundled together with the issue of capitulatory/commercial privileges was something that caught Sultan Mahmud II's attention from the outset, and led him to ask his men to be wary.[40]

On the basis of these considerations, a majority of the Ottoman ministers at first thought to respond with another prolonged 'silence'. But then they agreed to inform Liston that the dispute between the Porte and Russia could be resolved only with the evacuation of Russian troops from the Caucasian borders and by adherence to the 1812 Treaty.[41] Their 'civil rejection', as Liston put it in his report to Castlereagh, received almost no reaction from the leaders of the Powers because just before the Porte's response arrived in early April 1815, the news of Napoleon Bonaparte's escape from Elba had broken, shaking the entire continent and dragging the European Powers back into war.

[34] BOA HAT 956/41005; 'Raport Italinskogo ob audiencii Taleirana', 15 Mar. 1815, AVPRI f. 133, o. 468, d. 2303, ll. 311–13.
[35] Ozavci, 'A Priceless Grace?'
[36] D'Italinsky to St Petersburg, 25 Mar. 1815, AVPRI f. 133, o. 468, d. 2303, l. 356.
[37] Liston to Castlereagh, 10 Mar. 1815, TNA FO 178/84/60.
[38] BOA HAT 956/41003; 'Küçük Hurşid Ahmed Paşa', *İA*, 396. See also Liston to Castlereagh, 10 Apr. 1815, TNA FO 178/84/66.
[39] BOA HAT 956/41003. [40] Ibid. BOA HAT 956/41006. [41] BOA HAT 956/41003.

Liston poignantly wrote that the revival of war in Europe further strengthened Ottoman ministers in their decision.[42] Figures like Friedrich von Gentz, the confidant of Prince Metternich and the secretary of the Congress of Vienna, wrote that his hope was the involvement of the Ottoman Empire, as a 'great power', in the Vienna system, if necessary 'despite her own protests', because it was an object of 'the highest importance for the general security, and for the stability of the peace of Europe'. But his attempts to impress the European leaders in Paris in November, during the talks after Bonaparte's ultimate defeat and before the second Treaty of Paris, remained fruitless.[43]

No other substantial negotiation took place in 1815 on the subject of Ottoman involvement in the Vienna Order. Sultan Mahmud II's empire thus isolated itself from the new international order purposefully—a resolution induced not simply by irrationality and prejudice or lack of awareness of what was transpiring in Europe, but arguably more by their distasteful experience with the major European Powers in the recent past.

In the eyes of Ottoman ministers, and particularly Halet Efendi, both the invitation to the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and the proposal in 1815 teemed with problems and threats: being accorded a lower-rank status at the congress, being a 'consenter to decisions', the bundling of the proposal with the issue of commercial privileges, and their suspicion that it was part of a ploy, particularly on the part of the Russians. To them, 1815 did not mark a new era in their relations with their western and northern neighbours. Perhaps the inter-imperial wars were over in Europe, perhaps peace and order were now definitively established there. But the memory of wartime diplomacy associated with 'trickery' and 'politicking' was still fresh in Istanbul, and it continued to guide the isolationist diplomacy of the sultan and Halet in the coming years.

A 'Humanitarian' Intervention: Navarino 1827

What effects did the non-involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the Vienna Order have for the Levant? According to the British historian Edward Ingram, even though the new order in Europe was based on respecting the international treaties of Vienna and continued cooperation, it hinged on violence and violation of law elsewhere in the world. He argues that the European Powers 'did not fight one another, [but] they fought everybody else—if only to show them that they had not lost the knack'; 'Only by accepting the narrow, exclusively Christian,

[42] Liston to Wellington, 4 Apr. 1815, TNA FO 178/84/69.

[43] Gentz to Caradja, 1 Jan. 1816, *DI* vol. 1, 198–9. For a detailed and excellent analysis of the Allied Council meetings in Paris, see Beatrice de Graaf, *Tegen de terreur. Hoe Europa veilig werd na Napoleon* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2018).

definition of Europe and the colonialist assumption that war with outsiders ([o]thers) is not war, may one treat the Vienna [Order] as a period of peace between the European Powers.' The relations of the Concert of Europe with the Ottoman Empire were likewise characterized by violence, which manifested itself in this specific case in five different ways: occupation, armed intervention between the imperial authorities and the provinces, sponsorship of armed rebellion, negotiation backed by threat, and partition.[44]

True as these arguments may be in part, the situation was in fact much more complex and nuanced. On the one hand, the Vienna Order helped prevent, albeit with partial success, the major European Powers that formed the Concert of Europe from engaging in *single-handed* interventions and occupations in the Levant.[45] Their engagements there now required an audience to legitimize and validate such practices, which bridled any unilateralism.[46] Ironically, the required audience was often none other than the very same Powers—the political decision-makers and, eventually, public opinion.

Yet, at the same time, the Vienna Order accommodated and even enabled cross-border interventions, surrogate wars, asymmetrical, political interpretations of international law, pacific blockades, and other arguably bellicose acts and violence of the pre-1815 world—to the extent that these did not harm European peace and order in toto but *not* to the extent that it prevented bellicose imperialism elsewhere in the world. In other words, the major difference between the pre- and post-1815 world remained limited to the Powers' willingness not to overtly step on each other's toes. They eschewed another total war in Europe during their quest for colonies and endeavours to open up new markets for free trade elsewhere.

Moreover, their understanding of security as a public good obtained through cooperation led to lasting efforts among the larger and smaller powers to facilitate concerted action. Just as with Russo-Austrian relations in the 'Eastern Question' of the eighteenth century (see Chapter 1), convergence, or upgrading toward political and military (naval) collaboration, stemmed from the divergence of the Powers' perception of threats and interests. As explained in the introduction of this book, from this point onwards, Great Power cooperation in the nineteenth century proved to be the logical completion and a vital requisite of competition among them—not simply and not always its binary opposite.

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An important and defining early example of the Janus-like nature of the Vienna Order was the involvement of the Great Powers in the so-called 'Greek crisis' of 1821–32. From a Greek viewpoint, this was a revolutionary war of independence

[44] Ingram, 'Bellicism', 214. [45] Ibid. 206, 211.
[46] Richardson, 'The Concert of Europe', 51.

against the Ottoman sultan. To the Porte, it was a mischievous uprising (*Rum fesadı*) supported by Russia. In the end, it sparked what was fashioned as the first 'humanitarian' intervention in the Ottoman Empire, and attested to the symbiotic relationship at the time between imperial competition and cooperation.

An intellectual revival or self-awareness amongst Ottoman Greek subjects was the major cause of what transpired in the 1820s. For several decades, prominent writers and activists like Adamántios Koraïs (1748–1833) and Rigas Velestinlis (1757–98) had acted to represent ideas and emotions for Greek emancipation from Ottoman 'barbarism and tyranny'—some of them suggesting the foundation of a Greek-speaking democratic republic with a population composed of both Christians and Muslims, and calling for peaceful coexistence under a more liberal regime.[47]

The aspirations of the Greek intelligentsia found a concrete political movement in the Philiki Hetairia (the Friendly Society). Founded in Odessa in 1814, the Hetairia carried the torch of the Greek independence struggle. It recruited members from both Ottoman and Russian empires amongst prominent hospodars as well as Russian Greek officers. During the Congress of Vienna in 1815, its members made resolute attempts to place their cause before the Powers, as the 'civilized Christians of Europe' against the 'barbaric Turks'. While these endeavours constituted one of the earliest moments of the adoption of the Enlightenment idea of civilization[48] in the Ottoman world, they yielded no results.

In 1821, the movement initiated a military campaign under the young Russian Greek General Alexandros Ypsilantis (1792–1828), who marched with a regiment past Russian borders into Moldova and Wallachia, making use of the fact that the Ottoman forces were engaged in a conflict with Ali Paşa of Janina. The subsequent Greek efforts at the Congresses of Laubach and Verona in 1821 and 1822 expanded the meaning of the Eastern Question with a new dimension besides Russo-Ottoman differences regarding commerce in the Black Sea and the Danubian Principalities.[49] But, in the opening years of the 1820s, Greek attempts to obtain Great Power support remained again unheeded. European statesmen regarded the revolutionary aspirations of the Hetairia in a similar light to those of the Carbonari in Italy, i.e. as a threat to the monarchies.

To reiterate, the Vienna system and the ensuing Vienna Order were anti-revolutionary from their inception, and in the eyes of Great Power leaders, there was little to endorse and much to oppose in the ambitions of the Greek movement. Prince Metternich, for instance, saw no difference between the revolution against Ferdinand, the king of Naples, and a revolution against Sultan Mahmud II.[50] Tsar

[47] Frary, *Russia*, 28; George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. 1 (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1861), 172–203; Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 290.

[48] For more on this notion, see Ch. 7.

[49] Gentz to Caradja, 6 Dec. 1822, *DI* vol. 2, 148–50.

[50] Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 195; Šedivý, *Metternich*, 83, 117–18.

Alexander I and his foreign minister, Ionnes Antonios Capodistrias (1776–1831), who would become the first leader of the autonomous Greece in 1828, publicly denounced the Hetairia and allowed the sultan's armies into the Danubian Principalities to suppress Greek forces in 1821. The British ambassador to Istanbul, Percy Clinton Smythe, 6th Viscount Strangford (1780–1855), communicated to the Porte that, at Verona, the 'Greek affair' was announced as an Ottoman domestic affair.[51] George Canning, who succeeded Lord Castlereagh as foreign minister after the latter's suicide in 1822, accepted that—as fighting spread from Moldavia and Wallachia to the Morea, and 10,000–20,000 Muslim (and some Jewish) civilians, including women and children, were killed and scores were sold into slavery—Greek belligerence had become a 'fact'.[52] The Powers even recognized 'the Ottoman government's right to repress the revolt using arbitrary, indiscriminate and violent retaliation against innocent civilians who paid the price of the actions committed elsewhere by other Ottoman Christians'.[53] All these factors defined the initial stance of the Concert toward the 'Greek crisis'—an almost unblemished policy of non-interference and neutrality.

But this changed in a few years' time, as we will see, especially when Russia came to pursue a more active policy to bring the 'Greek affair' into the political agenda of the Concert. The shift in Russian policy confirmed for the Porte that what transpired from 1821 onwards was the sequel of a strategy, the continuation of 'the long game' that Tsar Alexander I had been playing since the troubled Treaty of Bucharest of 1812. In the estimation of Ottoman ministers, the Russo-Ottoman disputes over the Caucasus and the Balkans had been put on hold in 1812–4 due to the Napoleonic wars. But once the European peace was definitively settled, the Russian authorities would return back to an expansionist policy. Mahmud II and his ministers were persuaded that Tsar Alexander I and Capodistrias were the masterminds of the Greek 'mischief' (*fesad*).[54] British Ambassador Strangford implicitly confirmed this, insinuating that 'a certain friendly power' was supplying 'quite illegal assistance' to the Greeks.[55]

The Ottoman persuasion did not originate merely from strategic estimates. In the late 1810s and 1820s, the Porte seized a large number of 'secret documents' from arrested Greek messengers. The information gathered pointed to Russia as the whisperer behind the rising independence ambitions among the Greeks. In April 1820, for instance, intelligence had discovered that a very numerous association had formed among the Christian subjects of the Porte in the Morea, Albania, and the neighbouring provinces with a view to the liberation and

[51] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 64–5; *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 5, 2997.

[52] On the Greek violence, see Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian*, 108; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 65; Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 56–7; Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821–33* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 59.

[53] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 67.

[54] Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian*, 108.

[55] Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 309.

independence of those countries. A great number of the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands had joined the confederacy and demonstrated great zeal in support of it since the visit to Corfu by Capodistrias, the Russian foreign minister. Several informants, including British consuls and the conspirators themselves, had disclosed to the Ottoman cabinet that the overarching plan was to seize the Ottoman fleet and then occupy Istanbul by means of an uprising of the city's Orthodox population.[56] These were in line with the declaration of Ypsilantis, who called for the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire with 'Constantinople' as its capital.[57] According to these reports, the plan was countenanced and supported by Tsar Alexander I.[58]

The news of the Greek démarche therefore did not come entirely as a surprise to the sultan.[59] Confronted with the severity of the threat, he reacted ferociously, using religious language in order to mobilize the reluctant and undisciplined Janissaries, and declared the Greek struggle to be a 'war on Islam'.[60] Moreover, since the Ottoman elites were persuaded that the revolt in the Balkans was part of a wider conspiracy and that a revolution among the Istanbulite Christians was likely to transpire, the Muslim populace was called to arms and provided with pistols, while the armoury of the Greeks and Armenians was confiscated.[61] Orders were sent to detect the 'riff-raff' Greeks and Armenians and send them away to Anatolian provinces.[62]

Still the most powerful man in Istanbul, Halet was coldly furious. He felt betrayed when he realized that some of the Phanariotes with whom he worked closely had links with the Hetairia.[63] In March and April 1821 more than 60 of these were executed for acting as 'terrorist conspirators'—and as a deterrent to the Greek populace.[64] Among them was Kostaki Muruzi, a close associate of Halet and a dragoman of the Ottoman imperial council. Patriarch Gregorios was dismissed from his position and replaced by the Bulgarian Archbishop Eugenios, and then hanged (not as the patriarch but as a man who abused his previous post as patriarch) together with several senior bishops who had been (arguably falsely) suspected of endorsing the Greek movement.[65]

In March 1822, the Ottoman imperial council was called to decide upon the punishment of the Orthodox Christians involved in the 'rebellion'. Despite the divisions within the cabinet, at Halet's demand, the new Şeyhülislam

[56] Dakin, *Greek*, 41–9; Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 200. [57] BOA HAT 1317/51338.
[58] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 5, 2726–7; Liston to Castlereagh, 25 Apr. 1820, NLS MS 5636, f. 69.
[59] BOA/HAT 45685. For a study that asserts the opposite, see Şükrü Ilıcak, 'The Revolt of Alexander Ipsilantis and the Fate of the Fanariots in Ottoman Documents', in *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*, ed. Petros Piziniars (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2011), 225.
[60] BOA C.Dh. 3650; cf. Philliou, *Biography*, 85. [61] BOA HAT 1084/44138; 1294/50258.
[62] BOA HAT 525/25687; 1316/51330. [63] Yenidünya, *Halet Efendi*, 245.
[64] Philliou, *Biography*, 88.
[65] Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian*, 108; Philliou, *Biography*, 89.

Abdulvehhab Efendi issued a fatwa that announced that the residents of rebellious Greek towns and villages that refused to submit had 'forfeited their status as loyal non-Muslim subjects under Islamic law, and were therefore liable to be killed or sold into slavery'. Repressive measures were to be taken; in the interest of order 'against a background of law of war under Islam', the 'rebellious' (*isyancı*) Greeks lost their *zimmî* status and became *harbîs*.[66]

Within a space of a few weeks, the Ottoman Empire became an inferno for her Greek subjects, while in the Morea, the killing of Ottoman Muslims and their enslavement also continued, and diverse Greek forces turned against each other, instigating a civil war within civil war. Şeyhülislam's fatwa unleashed furious mobs in the streets of the imperial capital and other towns with significant Greek populations, such as İzmir (Smyrna) and Ayvalık (Kydonies), and the Aegean islands, where several thousands were subject to gruesome violence, killings, or slavery. Numerous Janissaries and opportunist soldiers procured immense gains from pillage, plunder, and the slave trade, victimizing even the pardoned *reaya* (non-Muslim) villages.

Seeing that the repression of the Greek 'rebellion' was out of control, the Porte issued *firmans* and another fatwa. It denounced the misdeeds as a breach of Islam and declared them illegal.[67] Divisions within the Ottoman cabinet then became even sharper. As Strangford reported, Reisülküttâb Mehmed Sadik Efendi and Canib Efendi, both from the moderate camp, were strongly inclined to show mercy. They made 'every effort to oppose the sanguinary counsels of Halet . . . '[68] Yet, in mid-1822, 'the barbarous system of terrorism which Halet Efendi pursues' prevailed.[69]

The Greek crisis had put Halet under immense pressure. The Phanariot families, who had been acting as hospodars in Wallachia and Moldova and providing Halet with funds to pay off the Janissaries, had now been dismissed from their posts.[70] One of his major sources of income was thus denied. Furthermore, in the past few years, the fact that he had had differences of opinion with Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt with respect to the administration of Syria prompted the latter to stop sending Halet gifts and funds to secure his post.[71] In 1822, the Janissaries, who had their own professions in Istanbul as boatmen, firemen, butchers, etc. (see Chapter 2), were recruited against their wishes and sent to Greece to fight the 'rebels'. When the news of Janissary losses was received from Greece, causing great consternation among the populace, Halet emerged as a

[66] Ibid. 85–6; İsmail H. Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkani, Sadr-i-azamlar (vezir-i-a'zamlar), şeyh-ül-islamlar, kapdan-ı-deryalar, baş-defterdarlar, reis-ül-kitablar* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971), 152; Erdem, 'Ottoman Responses', 68–9.

[67] Ibid. 70–71.

[68] Strangford to Castlereagh, 25 May 1822, TNA FO 78/108; cf. Theophilus C. Prousis, 'British Embassy Reports on the Greek Uprising in 1821–22: War of Independence or War of Religion?', *History Faculty Publications* 21 (2011): 214.

[69] Ibid. [70] Philliou, *Biography*, 73. [71] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 5, 2898.

scapegoat. Now he could not pay off their aghas. Complaints against him became rampant among the Janissaries, whose leaders submitted petitions to the sultan for Halet's removal.[72]

This was an invaluable moment for Mahmud II to rid himself of Halet, who had for a decade established a network in the empire that had undermined the dynasty's authority. Knowing that the latter's power base (the Janissaries and the Phanariotes) were no longer behind him, the sultan dismissed Halet from his post in October 1822, and exiled him to Konya. On the day of his arrival there in early November 1822, Halet was executed. When his corpse was returned to Istanbul and exhibited in the court in December, a note attached to his nose read that,

> [b]ecause of the guile and machinations in which [he] took part . . . many people have been ruined by him . . . [A] hypocrite in his words and actions, he behaved, on the surface, like a faithful man, but, deep down, he sought nothing but to advance his personal interests, and without . . . dissolving this perversity which had become familiar to him, he dared to commit, against the supreme will, many actions analogous to his character . . .[73]

Thus came the end of the Halet Efendi era in Istanbul—an era that saw the Porte's refusal to participate in the Vienna system, Ottoman isolationism in inter-imperial relations, and the rise and brutal suppression of the Greeks.

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Were the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul correct in believing that Russia had a hand in the Greek 'uprising' all the while? Available sources and recent scholarship have shown that Tsar Alexander I was opposed to any revolutionary movement, and did not endorse the Greek démarche in the beginning. It was only 'certain independently-minded front-line [Russian] commanders in the south' who had personal links with the leaders of the Greek movement that were aware of the revolution and possibly aided it.[74] Ypsilantis's written appeals to the tsar and Capodistrias for an aid in their démarche were received negatively. The Russian Greek general was even dismissed from the imperial army.[75] In 1821, the tsar's agents expressed their 'disinterestedness in the Greek affairs' to the Porte; and in 1822, at the Congress of Verona, they would do the same before the other Powers' plenipotentiaries.[76]

[72] 'Affairs of Turkey', *The Times*, 17 Dec. 1822.

[73] Memorandum 6 Dec. 1822, TNA FO 78/111; cf. Philliou, *Biography*, 92; Yenidünya, *Halet Efendi*, 258.

[74] Bitis, *Russia*, 102.

[75] Frary, *Russia*, 30.

[76] 'Note présentée par le Ministre du Russie (Stroganoff) a la Sublime Porte', 6 July 1821, AMAE MD Turquie 45/9; 'Déclaration du Plenpt [*sic*] Russe à insérer au protocole des conférences qui avaient été ouvertes a Vienna sur les affaires d'Orient', Nov. 1822, AMAE MD Turquie 45/12.

Yet a shift occurred in Alexander I's attitude toward the crisis in conjunction with the inimical Ottoman response. The tsar's offence at the Sublime Porte's public accusations of him as the instigator of the 'rebellion', the deliberate Ottoman disruptions over Russian trade in the Black Sea, and, most importantly, the killing of a large number of Greek co-religionists by the Ottomans all led the Russian ambassador, Baron Sergey Stroganoff (1794–1882), to protest to the Porte and immediately leave Istanbul, breaking off the diplomatic relations between the two courts in 1822.[77] Under the growing influence of the interventionists in his entourage, such as Capodistrias, who insistently reminded the tsar of Russia's right—as acquired by the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca—as the protector of the Orthodox subjects of the sultan, the tsar reviewed and reversed his policy.[78]

The fact that in the island of Chios alone tens of thousands of Christians had been killed or enslaved in the spring of 1822 spurred great agitation amongst the philhellenes in other European metropoles. In London and Paris, committees were established to provide funding for the Greek movement, and public campaigns were initiated. In the following years, several pro-Greek pamphlets were written (31 in French, 37 in German, and 12 in English). 'Foreign fighters' left for Greece from France, Prussia, Switzerland, Hungary, and the Netherlands for religious and political reasons. Impressive artworks produced included Eugène Delacroix's *Scènes des massacres de Scio*, portraying the massacres of Greeks by 'evil barbarians'. Lord Byron's poems and the story of his eventual participation in the Greek war himself, his unfortunate death in Missolonghi in 1824 from a fatal illness, J. M. W. Turner's watercolour study illustrating Byron's *The Giaour*, as well as daily newspaper reports, all led to the generation of a new influence, public opinion, which propelled the Great Power governments in a more interventionist direction.[79]

In 1827, the Powers undertook their first joint armed 'humanitarian' (as they called it at the time) intervention in the Levant partly as a consequence of these pressures from the public. It is debatable, though, whether humanitarian concerns, shared perceptions of threats, or their willingness to cooperate were the main motivations behind the intervention. Another factor was the mounting piracy in the Mediterranean during the crisis which obstructed European trade. The Powers found in this a common threat and also a justificatory pretext for legal intervention. But, in the end, multilateral intervention was more a consequence of Great Power suspicions (of each other) and competition, and less a result of their willingness to cooperate.

[77] 'Halet Effendi's Threat', *The Times*, 20 Sept. 1822.

[78] Patricia K. Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801–1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 26; Grand Vizier to Nesselrode, 27 June 1821, AMAE MD Turquie 45/7.

[79] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 75–8.

In 1824, when Alexander I came up with the idea of the creation of three semi-autonomous principalities in Greece under the sultan's authority, yet also under the protection of the Powers, he was vetoed by the other Powers, who feared that Russia could use the scheme to establish a naval base in Greece.[80] Metternich was uneasy with intervention in favour of a revolutionary group. Consequently, throughout the crisis he followed a consistent policy of non-intervention, remaining loyal to the anti-revolutionary spirit of the Vienna Order. He called for respect for the Ottoman sultan's sovereignty (and the monarchy).[81] Prussia faithfully supported his cause. But Britain changed her position in 1825.

Rodogno has shown that London was left with an inconvenient choice between allying with the Porte against Russia or joining St Petersburg in its plan for intervention.[82] The British opted for the latter under public pressure as well as out of fear of a unilateral Russian action.[83] Especially after the sultan turned to the aid of Mehmed Ali Paşa, the latter's son Ibrahim launched a strong and conclusive campaign,[84] and when the news of the two sieges of Missolonghi broke, religious sentiments came to hold a stronger sway over the state of affairs in Britain.

In 1825, the tsar's ambassador to London, Christopher Lieven, made a shrewd move by revealing a document, the so-called 'barbarization project' of the sultan, whereby the entire Christian population was allegedly to be swapped with Egyptian Muslims. With this, he achieved his goal of heightening interest in the Greek crisis in the British parliament.[85] This became the last straw determining London's gradual change of policy, and its agreement on cooperating with Russia in the Greek crisis—a vivid example of how sentiments, be it religious or humanitarian, and commercial interests helped tip the scales when rational strategic considerations caused hesitation.

Time and again, such religious and commercial sensitivities served as lubricant for the sluggish Great Power and Ottoman diplomatic machinery to proceed with respect to the Eastern Question in the nineteenth century. This being said, London also had in mind a carefully designed plan. In fact, it was almost exactly the same strategy as Austria had followed in the late eighteenth century when dealing with the Eastern Question of the time. In the late eighteenth century, Austria had acted together with St Petersburg to contain the Russian aggrandizement over the sultan's empire. Now, Britain was doing the same: she was cooperating with Russia to hold the tsar's designs in check.

What political scientist Korina Kagan argues is therefore true. Anglo-Russian cooperation was more than 'an occasion for high-level great power security

[80] 'Mémoire sur la pacification de la Grèce', 9 Jan. 1824, *VPR* vol. 2/5, 1982, 308–14.
[81] Metternich's policy is detailed in Šedivý, *Metternich*, 133–216.
[82] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 78–81. [83] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 128. [84] See Ch. 5.
[85] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 79.

cooperation'.[86] Britain's involvement in the Greek crisis resulted from a reckoning of the influence of the philhellenes, the mounting piracy that haunted British commerce, and, finally, due to the strategic, humanitarian, and religious stimuli.[87] For Russia, the Greek crisis tended to be more a pretext for exerting greater influence in the politics of the Balkans and for finally putting to an end the disputes with the Porte over the Caucasus. This we can deduce from several instances.

For example, when Alexander I passed away in December 1825 and was succeeded by his brother Nicholas I, the new tsar would at first falter on the Greek crisis and even tell the duke of Wellington, who had been in St Petersburg for his coronation, that 'his quarrel with the Porte was not about the Greeks but for his own just rights under treaties which the Porte had violated', alluding to the Treaty of Bucharest of 1812.[88] And in April 1826, when St Petersburg sent an ultimatum to Istanbul demanding that the latter withdraw its troops from Wallachia and dispatch plenipotentiaries to Akkerman to finalize the border disputes pending since the Treaty of Bucharest, it did not mention the Greek crisis once.[89]

A new question follows from this: why then did Russia want to act together with Britain (and later France) during the Greek crisis? One may argue that it was more because of Tsar Nicholas I's need to legitimize his plan to regain possession of the disputed lands in the Caucasus and the Balkans. A unilateral action on the part of Russia could isolate her and upset even European peace. But a joint intervention could provide her with a leeway to solve disputes with the Porte in the tsar's favour. In short, he showed his commitment to the Vienna Order to obtain his long-due imperial goals. The Greek crisis thus provided him with a heaven-sent leverage over ongoing Russo-Ottoman disputes.

On 4 April 1826, when the tsar signed with Britain the Protocol of St Petersburg in the name of 'the principles of religion, justice and humanity', the situation and security of the Greeks were actually his lesser concern. True, with the protocol, an offer was made to the Porte and the Greeks for the mediation of Britain and Russia between them. The objective was framed as the pacification of the Levant, security of European commerce, and the creation of an autonomous Greece under Ottoman suzerainty.[90] Even France was eventually involved as a mediator, as she looked to redefine her rank among the Great Powers (considering herself as second-rank among the other four), anxious not to be left out and leave the future

[86] Korina Kagan, 'The Myth of the European Concert: The Realist-Institutionalist Debate and Great Power Behavior in the Eastern Question, 1821–41', *Security Studies* 7(2) (1997): 1–57, at 25.
[87] On the Austrian policy in the 18th c., see Ch. 1. [88] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 129.
[89] Nesselrode to Nicholas I, 16 Feb. 1826, *VPR* vol. 2/6, 1985, 393–400.
[90] Šedivý, *Metternich*, 150; Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 130, 135.

of Greece to the dominant influence of either Russia or Britain.[91] Yet all these were also means for the tsar to gain the majority among the Concert of Europe—the very audience before which he had to justify his acts.

Less noted in the literature is that the tripartite agreement immensely piled on the pressure on the Porte. An unsigned document (possibly the Russian ultimatum) written in Istanbul on 26 April 1826 suggests that the tsar was urging Istanbul to begin negotiations over the disputed lands in the Balkans and the Caucasus by 17 May. The document read that 'the system of alliance' between the Great Powers that had come into existence in 1815 (alluding to the Vienna System) had received 'a double blow [in] the last five years' and was 'exposed as being shaken to its foundations by the troubles which desolate a part of European Turkey and by the [differences] between the Sublime Porte and the Imperial Court of Russia'. From crisis to crisis, things had come to the point where 'a fixed and precise state of things must necessarily and immediately take the place of the uncertainties which hitherto held in suspense the resolutions of the Allied Courts'. It was no longer a question of 'gaining time … of partial measures'. Now there was 'no space for bargaining because the resources of diplomacy were exhausted—the good offices of the Allied Courts are useless … at Petersburg … for Russia has the right, the will and the strength to deal with it alone … ' If the Porte replied negatively to Russia's demands, 'the Russian resolution is taken—she will do what dictates her honour, rights and interests. The resolutions of the Allied Courts are also taken … they will confine themselves to deploring the inefficiency of their efforts to save the Ottoman Empire.'[92]

To Sultan Mahmud II, the St Petersburg Protocol and the ensuing Russian pressures were a huge source of humiliation. Against the imminent Russian threat, he had only one alternative, war—one that would almost certainly culminate with a devastating defeat for him given the military revolution under way in Istanbul.[93] Consequently, on 25 July 1826 he accepted the recommencement of negotiations over the disputed lands in the Balkans and the Caucasus.[94]

The talks began in Akkerman between Count Vorontsov and the Ottoman plenipotentiaries Hadi and İffet Efendis. They broke off several times.[95] In the end, Mahmud II conceded only when Vorontsov secretly promised Hadi and İffet that should the sultan evacuate the Danubian Principalities entirely and settle the dispute frontier in Transcaucasia, 'the Greek question would simply die of neglect'.[96] The Ottoman delegates were authorized to sign the Akkerman Convention

[91] Nesselrode to Nicholas I, 16 Feb. 1826, *VPR* vol. 2/6, 393–400; Desages to Baron, 21 Aug. 1825, AMAE Papiers Desages 60PAAP/6/128; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 81.
[92] BOA HR.SYS 1676/2. [93] See Ch. 5.
[94] Stats-Sekretar' K.B. Nessel'rode poverennomu v delax v Konstantinopole M. Y. Minchaki. Moskva, 15(27) Aug. 1826, *VPR* vol. 2/6, 576–9.
[95] Ibid. [96] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 6, 2998; Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 302.

on 7 October 1826, surrendering the territories that the Porte had stubbornly claimed since 1812.[97]

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After Akkerman, the Greek question did not die of neglect. This time the British cabinet, facing continuous domestic pressure, remained dedicated to resolving the affairs of Greece by means of Great Power mediation. British diplomats in Istanbul, joined by the French and now less devoted Russian agents, continued for another year to urge the Porte to agree on Greek suzerainty, much to the frustration of the sultan. The 'stern, relentless spirit of a fanatic despotism' in Istanbul would prevent the Porte from yielding, British ambassador Stratford Canning complained. He did not seem to be aware that what was at stake for Mahmud II was now a matter of not making any more concessions to the Russians after the Akkerman Convention.[98] Moreover, thanks to the support of Mehmed Ali Paşa, by mid-1827 Ottoman forces had largely contained the Greek revolutionaries, and fights amongst the Greek factions had intensified, to the detriment of their national movement.

This became the moment of intervention. With the initiative of the prime minister, George Canning (1779–1827), on 6 July 1827, Britain, France, and Russia held a series of ambassadorial meetings and then signed the Convention of London 'in the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity' on the basis of 'the invitation of [the Greeks] to the conflict', 'self-preservation based on the threat to the stability of Europe and impediments to the maritime commerce caused by . . . acts of piracy', and 'sentiments of humanity'. Despite the Porte's refusal, they agreed on the establishment of an autonomous Greece paying tribute under Ottoman suzerainty.

The legal intervention was officially justified by framing it as an endeavour to ensure the safety of British, Russian, and French imperial subjects by the supply of 'commercial security' in the Levant against 'piracy and war'—though 'to give to the Greeks a more secure and definite existence under the Ottoman Porte' was also another major, albeit unofficial, objective.[99] France suggested an additional arrangement for a general guarantee of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but, their eyes being fixated on the border disputes in the Balkans and the Caucasus, the Russian plenipotentiaries rejected it.[100]

[97] Selim Aslantaş, 'Osmanlı-Rus İlişkilerinden Bir Kesit. 1826 Akkerman Andlaşması'nın "Müzakereleri" ', *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 9(36) (Winter 2013): 149–69, at 163–4.

[98] S. Canning to G. Canning, 24 Apr. 1827 TNA FO 78/153; cf. Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 304.

[99] Viktorija Jakimovksa, 'Uneasy Neutrality: Britain and the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832)', in *International Law in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Inge van Hulle and Randall Lesaffer (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 65; the Earl of Dudley to the Prince of Lieven, 6 Mar. 1828, PRAG, 35–7.

[100] Dakin, *Greek*, 182.

The Triple Alliance then presented to the Porte an overdetermined ultimatum in August 1827. It asserted that 'a new refusal, an evasive or insufficient answer, or a complete silence on [the Porte's] part would put the cabinets of the Allies in the necessity of taking measures which they would judge to be most effectual' to put an end to the state of things that were incompatible with 'the interests of the Porte', as well as 'the security of commerce and the general and perfect tranquillity of Europe'.[101]

To Metternich, the ultimatum was a miserable violation of international law (he would point to the double standard when the tsar rejected Great Power mediation in the Polish question), and the Convention of London was nothing but 'an act of open hostility'.[102] The Austrian chancellor was dismayed by the fact that 'a treaty arranged among the five Great Powers concerning the settlement of the internal affairs of a sixth country, without a previous request and the cooperation of that country . . . [w]as an irregular, dangerous and inadmissible form of proceeding'.[103] He further argued that after Akkerman, neither two, three, nor five Great Powers would be able to convince Mahmud II.[104] He had a point, but there was almost nothing he could do at this juncture. Britain, Russia, and now also France had already dug their heels in. Canning deliberately neglected him.[105]

If Metternich's Prussian-backed opposition to intervention all along produced any effect, it was the fact that, given the legal and political questions it would arise, the three intervening Powers had to frame the ultimatum conscientiously. This is why their note included the statement that, even though they might take military measures in the interests of the security of their commerce and for European peace, they would want to do so without 'disturb[ing] their friendly relations' with the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Reisülküttâb Pertev Efendi was puzzled: 'Hostility! Friendship! What a confusion of terms in all this! Can you explain to me how water and fire . . . can exist together? . . . If it is a declaration of war that you have to make to us, say so.'[106] The Porte immediately rejected the ultimatum, maintaining that it was not 'afraid of [European] naval squadrons'. It was a violation of Law of Nations.[107] For the Triple Alliance, this meant that all diplomatic resources

[101] 'Première Déclaration à la Porte Ottomane', PRAG, 5; Stratford to Dudley, 19 Aug. 1827, TNA FO 78/155, cf. Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 309–10.

[102] Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 20 June 1827, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 29; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 179–80.

[103] Metternich to Zichy, Vienna, 31 Jan. 1827, HHStA, StK, Preussen 125; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 177.

[104] Ibid. 179. [105] Dakin, *Greek*, 182.

[106] UK Government, Constantinople Protocols 1830 (n. 79), 126; TNA FO 352/15B, cf. Smiley, 'War Without War', 61; also in Stratford to Dudley, 21 Aug. 1827, TNA FO 78/155.

[107] RGIA, f. 846, op. 16, e. 4479, l. 184; cf. J. V. Petrunina, *Social'no-'ekonomicheskoe i politicheskoe razvitie Egipta v period pravleniya Muhammeda Ali v rossijskoj obshhestvenno-politicheskoj mysli XIX v.* (Moscow: Prometej, 2008), 262; also in 'Manifesto of the Sublime Porte', PRAG, 1046; cf. Jakimovksa, 'Uneasy Neutrality', 67.

had now been exhausted. In October 1827, the fleets of Russia, Britain, and France were ordered to blockade the Otto-Egyptian fleet in Navarino Bay.[108]

As Will Smiley has adeptly shown, the practice of 'pacific blockade' while at peace—a term that was actually coined in hindsight in 1849—was a 'new legal form of force' or a new type of (symbolic) violence, to add to Ingram's aforementioned list, employed by the Powers in the nineteenth century. Navarino was one of the earliest examples of this coercive instrument in the Levant.[109] With the pacific blockade of Navarino in 1827, the Powers 'prohibit[ed] the Sublime [Ottoman] State from moving about in its own territory' without actually declaring war on the Porte.

Given this unacceptable offence for Sultan Mahmud II, after accidental shots were purportedly fired from an Ottoman frigate, a general naval battle began between 89 Ottoman-Egyptian and 24 allied ships on 20 October.[110] The disparity in the modes of military-technological power was so stark that in a few hours, 'a great many [of the Otto-Egyptian ships] have blown up and several have been sunk', the British Admiral Edward Codrington reported from the spot. The Navarino harbour was 'covered with wrecks'.[111] Thousands of Ottoman and a dozen European sailors died.[112]

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The Porte immediately announced a protest calling for the immediate cessation of aggression and demanding indemnities for the damages inflicted on the Ottoman navy.[113] But the ambassadors of the three Powers in Istanbul responded negatively and then left the Ottoman imperial capital—though not before the Porte had given them a hard time in granting guarantees of safe passage. At the end of November, the sultan declared the Akkerman Convention null, and on 20 December 1827, he gathered his assembly and ordered the arsenals to prepare for the long-expected yet dreaded war against Russia. Orders were sent to all provinces to call upon Muslims to defend their laws and religion.[114] Russian commerce in the Black Sea was deliberately fettered by Ottoman authorities.

As 6,000 French troops were dispatched to the Morea to protect the Greek population and supervise the evacuation of the Ottoman-Egyptian forces, on 26 April 1828 Russia officially declared war on the Ottoman Empire on the grounds

[108] 'Instructions to be addressed to the Admirals commanding the Squadrons of the three Powers in the Mediterranean', PRAG, 15.

[109] Smiley, 'War Without War', 56.

[110] Ottoman sources claim that the first shot was not fired by the Ottoman fleet. *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 6, 2999; BOA HAT 945/40700.

[111] Codrington to Stratford, 16 and 20 Oct. 1827 FO 78/157; Cunningham, *Anglo-Ottoman*, vol. 1, 315.

[112] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 83.

[113] M. le Général Guilleminot to M. le Baron de Damas, 11 Nov. 1827, PRAG, 18–19; also in Jakjimovska, 'Uneasy', 61–2.

[114] *Le Moniteur*, 3 Dec. 1827; *The Times*, 6 Dec. 1827.

that the Porte did not fulfil the requirements of the Akkerman agreement and had restricted Russian commerce. The Russo-Ottoman war at once alerted European statesmen and diplomats, as Russia separated herself from the Concert and did not consult the other Powers, taking an independent decision despite prior cautions.[115]

The news of Russian victories that arrived after each battle in the Balkans and the Caucasus led many to believe that the Ottoman Empire was falling. The British prime minister, the duke of Wellington, observed that 'the tranquillity of the world' was gone.[116] He questioned whether a Greek empire could be established, while the French prime minister and foreign minister, Jules August Armand Marie de Polignac (1780–1847) drew up more concrete plans for the dismemberment of the sultan's dominions and the establishment of a Christian state in Constantinople with the Dutch king, William I, as its new ruler.[117]

Even though Russian strategists at first endorsed the French plan, when the Russo-Ottoman war (which lasted more than a year) culminated with an embarrassing defeat for the sultan and the signing of the Treaty of Edirne (Adrianople) on 14 September 1829, they reviewed their position.[118] Alexander I preferred to return to the 'weak neighbour' policy. The peace treaty had ensured the Ottoman payment of indemnities to Russia, the establishment of autonomous administrative structures in Moldavia and Wallachia, and free passage for commercial vessels through the Straits. More importantly, it was agreed that the disputed frontiers in the Balkans and the Caucasus should be conferred on the tsar, and Russian commerce in the Black Sea would be 'fully liberalized'.[119] Russia had got all she hoped for now, and was in a commercially advantageous position in the Levant.

In addition to these, Sultan Mahmud II reluctantly recognized Greece as a tributary state, following the stipulations of the London Agreement of the Triple Alliance dated 22 March 1829.[120] This paved the way for the full independence of Greece in 1832, after long, delayed negotiations due largely to the differences of opinions among Britain, France, and Russia over the regime and whom to appoint as the leader of Greece.[121]

The Navarino intervention and the Great Power supervision of the foundation of an independent Greek state signalled a hesitant turn away in European politics from the anti-revolutionary proclivities of the Vienna Order. Britain, France, and

[115] The Earl of Dudley to the Prince of Lieven, 6 Mar. 1828, PRAG, 53–5; see also Katalin Schrek, 'The Effects of Russia's Balkan Aspirations on the British Diplomacy in St Petersburg: The Treaty of Adrianople and Its Consequences (1829–1832)', in *(Re)Discovering the Sources of Bulgarian and Hungarian History*, ed. Penka Peykovska and Gabor Demeter (Sofia: n.p., 2015), 22–37.

[116] Dakin, *Greek*, 274; Macfie, *Eastern Question*, 12.

[117] Puryear, *France and the Levant*, 77–9.

[118] BOA TS.MA.e 709/66.

[119] BOA HR.SYS 1187/2. Also in Şerafeddin Turan, '1829 Edirne Andlaşması', *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih–Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 9(1–2) (1951): 111–51, at 125.

[120] Frary, *Russia*, 43–5.

[121] Ibid. 46–53.

Russia all strove to manage their strategic differences, economic interests, and public pressures (religious sentiments), as well as Ottoman/Greek differences. In the end, even though neither the leaders of the Triple Alliance nor the Concert of Europe as a whole had a unified position and policy with respect to the Eastern Question at the time, and even though Austria and Prussia urged non-intervention on the others, Russia, Britain, and France drove each other towards an intervention, albeit reluctantly so.

With the countries following suit in an attempt to prevent one another from establishing dominant control over the emerging Greek state, the legal and strategic quagmire led the Triple Alliance into a rabbit hole. They did manage to place the intervention on legal ground by highlighting that its ultimate object was 'commercial security'. But the subsequent Russo-Ottoman war, and the territorial gains and commercial privileges St Petersburg consequently obtained from the Porte, only hampered the solidity of the Concert of Europe serving as a centrifugal dynamic.[122]

In the end, the Greek revolutionaries emerged victorious, having obtained their ultimate objectives—independence—even though they were given a lesser voice in the selection of the regime and even the leader of their new independent polity. The Ottoman Empire, for her part, remained on the receiving end of violence, having lost her fleet. She was partitioned by the Powers and then by Russia, and she unwillingly liberalized foreign trade in her dominions. Twelve years after the Congress of Vienna, in a new encounter with the Concert of Europe, Sultan Mahmud II and his ministers thus realized that the dynamics of Euro-Ottoman relations were now different under the Vienna Order. In late 1828, they even made an untimely attempt to get their empire 'approved and recognized as an integral part of the European political system', though this was considered unfeasible due to Russian opposition as well as the growing belief that the sultan's empire was disintegrating.[123] In the eyes of Ottoman ministers, a new era in inter-imperial politics had begun—not in 1815, but in 1827.

Counterfactually speaking, can one argue that the Porte paid dearly for the decisions it had taken during the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15? By refusing to become a part of the Vienna System at the time under Halet Efendi's sway, did it jeopardize the territorial integrity of the sultan's European dominions, which, as of 1829, saw the emergence of new polities, (semi-)independent kingdoms, and republics in Greece, Moldavia, Wallachia, and then Serbia?

The answer needs to be tentative: the Vienna Order formed in the 1810s barely put an end to Great Power encroachments and the policy of supplying security in the Levant in search of their own strategic, economic, and (to a lesser degree) religious interests. True, the transimperial security culture woven around the

[122] Ingram, 'Bellicism as Boomerang', 215; Frary, *Russia*, 39.
[123] Ottenfels to Metternich, 10 Dec. 1828, HHStA, StA, Türkei, VI, 34; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 44–5.

Eastern Question did undergo a transformation in order to hold aggression in check and foster cooperation among the Powers. And true, if the Porte accepted the Powers' proposal in February and March 1815, it could place the territorial integrity of the sultan's European dominions under the guarantee of international public law. But, as was proved time and again in the course of the century, before and after Vienna, international law tended to be applied unevenly when it came to the Eastern Question or the periphery of Europe.

According to Ingram, the partition of the Ottoman Empire by the creation of Greece illustrated 'the reciprocal relationship between equilibrium in [Europe] and bellicism in the [its] periphery'.'[124] The Ottoman Empire might have 'paid the price for the Concert of Europe's stability', as the Powers 'recognized [her] rebel subjects as belligerents, sank [her] fleet, invaded, annexed and partitioned [her] territory'. And, with their bellicism, the Powers stored up problems for the future: 'the states that savaged [the Ottoman Empire] would one day turn on one another.'[125]

Ingram calls this the boomerang effect of the bellicism of the Vienna order. I argue instead that it was a paradox that formed the core of the transimperial security culture that preceded this order. The imprudent European *supply of security* in a foreign territory, whereby the more pressing interests of the Powers were heeded above all, tended to engender fresh vulnerabilities in the Levant as well as further *demand for security* in Europe. An infamous historical episode provides us with an excellent example of this paradox: the war between Cairo and Istanbul in the 1830s that followed the Navarino intervention and the independence of Greece, that almost ended the Ottoman Empire, and that engendered a Great Power crisis, testing the Vienna Order to its foundations.

[124] Ingram, 'Bellicism as Boomerang', 215. [125] Ibid.