

RUSSIA'S POLICY OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
IN THE ERA OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY AND NAPOLEONIC
WARS, 1792-1806

A Ph.D. Dissertation

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September 2010

To my family

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WARS, 1792-1806

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

September 2010

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the Ottoman-Russian relations in late 18th – early 19th centuries. Chronologically it covers the years between the two Ottoman-Russian wars, the starting and final points of the thesis being the Peace Treaty of Jassy (1792) and the proclamation of war against Russia by the Porte in late 1806. These years not only became an inter-war period in relations between the two empires, but also faced a short-lived phenomenon of cooperation and a defensive alliance between the Sultan's and the Tsar's governments. The primary aim of this work was to study the circumstances of the Ottoman-Russian rapprochement at the time and the diplomatic strategies of the Porte and St. Petersburg within a wider context of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. The thesis argues that during the time under discussion Russia conducted towards the Ottoman Empire the policy of preserving a 'weak neighbour', trying to prevent the domains of the Sultan from falling into the hands of a strong European power.

Keywords: Kutuzov, Mustafa Rasih Pasha, Ottoman-Russian relations, Ottoman-Russian alliance, War of the Second Coalition, Ionian Republic.

ÖZET

FRANSIZ İHTİLÂLİ VE NAPOLYON SAVAŞLARI DÖNEMİNDE RUSYA’NIN
OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU İLE YAKINLAŞMA SİYASETİ , 1792-1806

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Bu çalışma 18. yüzyıl sonu ve 19. yüzyıl başı Osmanlı-Rus münasebetlerini incelemektedir. Kronolojik olarak çalışma iki Osmanlı-Rus savaşı arasındaki dönemi kapsamaktadır; Yaş Barış Antlaşması (1792) ve Bâb-ı Âli’nin 1806 yılı sonunda Rusya’ya savaş ilanı teze konu olan dönemin başlangıç ve bitiş tarihlerini oluşturmaktadır. Söz konusu yıllar Osmanlı ve Rus İmparatorlukları arası münasebetlerde iki savaş arası dönem olmasının yanı sıra, Sultan ve Çarlık yönetimlerinin kısa süreli bir işbirliği ve savunma ittifakına da tanıklık etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın birincil amacı söz konusu dönemde Osmanlı-Rus yakınlaşmasının koşullarını ve Bâb-ı Âli ile St. Petersburg’un diplomatik stratejilerini Fransız İhtilâli ve Napolyon Savaşları bağlamında ele almaktır. Bu tez, Rusya’nın ilgili dönemde Sultan’ın topraklarının Avrupa devletlerinin eline geçmesini engelleme yolunda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’na karşı “zayıf komşuyu” koruma politikası güttüğünü savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kutuzov, Mustafa Rasih Paşa, Osmanlı-Rus münasebetleri, Osmanlı-Rus ittifakı, İkinci Koalisyon Savaşları, Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The years that divide the two Ottoman-Russian wars, the last of the 18th century and the first of the 19th century, are justly considered to be one of the momentous epochs in Modern history. The downfall of *ancien régime* in France resulted in crucial political changes that both shattered the hitherto existing traditional framework of international relations and shook the international order at the end of the 18th century. To use the words of H. Kissinger, “under the impact of Napoleon, there disintegrated not only the system of legitimacy of the eighteenth century, but with it the physical safeguards which, to contemporaries at least, seemed the prerequisite of stability”.¹ The French revolution, the French revolutionary wars and later the Napoleonic wars became a crucial factor defining the European politics of the time, and, as relates to the topic of the given research, had also influenced the Ottoman-Russian relations.

As a result of the changed international situation of the early 1790-s both the Ottomans and the Russians were bound to amend their habitual militant politics pursued towards each other for most of the 18th century. The Treaty of Jassy (1792) not only put an end to the Ottoman-Russian hostilities, but also marked the beginning

¹ Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the problems of peace*, (Boston, 1973), p. 2.

of a new stage in the relations between Istanbul and St. Petersburg. Fresh from the war, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, irrespective of still existing mutual apprehensions, prejudices and distrust, for various reasons simply could not afford further confrontation. The years following the Treaty of Jassy were to witness the Ottomans and Russians being forced to work out a certain mode of peaceful coexistence, and later on even the Ottoman-Russian cooperation in warding off the French aggression in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean.

The primary concern of this study is to shed new light on and to fill in some white spots in the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations at the turn of the 19th century by using the original Ottoman and Russian archival documents, along with published and unpublished sources in other languages. Among the particular questions to be researched are foundations and factual implementation of the defensive alliance between the Sublime Porte and St. Petersburg, the activities of the Russian diplomatic representatives in the Ottoman Empire, joint military actions by the Ottomans and Russians within the framework of the second anti-French coalition, various interpretations by both sides of their defensive alliance, the influence of international politics upon the Ottoman-Russian relations at the period.

Structurally the study is divided into six chapters followed by a conclusion. Chapter 1 discusses the sources and the existing scholarly literature relating to the subject of this research. Chapter 2 describes the new situation that arose in the Ottoman-Russian relations after the Peace Treaty of Jassy, focusing on the exchange of the extraordinary diplomatic missions of Mustafa Rasih Pasha and M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov. Chapter 3 covers the years between 1794 and 1798,

examining the Ottoman-Russian relations in the context of the international situation of the period. Chapter 4 explains the first stages of the Mediterranean campaign of the joint squadron of the Russian and the Ottoman warships under Vice Admiral F. F. Ushakov. It also analyses the circumstances under which the defensive alliance of Russia and the Ottoman Empire became possible and was concluded, its contents and importance for both St. Petersburg and the Porte. Chapter 5 focuses on the Ottoman-Russian military cooperation during the siege of Corfu and in the Italian campaign. Apart from that, it touches upon some circumstances of political reorganisation of the Ionian Islands and their importance for St. Petersburg as the first Russian military base in the Mediterranean. Chapter 6 traces the dynamics of the Ottoman-Russian relations since the conclusion of the allied treaty of 3 January 1799 until the outbreak of the Ottoman-Russian war in December 1806. Among the specific subjects under discussion are the rivalry of the European diplomacies regarding their influence upon the Porte; the problem of the recognition of the imperial title of Napoléon Bonaparte; the renewal of the Ottoman-Russian alliance in September 1805; the gradual drifting of the Ottoman side from its alliance with Russia and the start of the Ottoman-Russian war towards the end of 1806.

In view of the existence of voluminous literature dealing usually with the long record of traditional rivalry between the Ottoman and Russian Empires, the time of their short-lived rapprochement as a response to the aggressive advances of the Napoléonic France seems to be under-examined and deserves more analysis. Taking into consideration that normally the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations has been depicted in terms of permanent confrontation, any examples of mutual cooperation, whatever occasional and transient they might be, would always attract

special attention. In this respect, indicating the phenomenon of the Ottoman-Russian diplomatic and military partnership, as well as detailed study of its causes and nature, would allow a fresh look at the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations together with the possibility of more relevant analysis of the long-standing historical narratives still present in contemporary scholarly discourse.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SUBJECT

*Τι δε βλέπεις το κάρφος το εν τω οφθαλμῷ του αδελφού σου,
την δε εν τω σω οφθαλμῷ δοκόν ου κατανοεῖς;
(Ματθ. 7,3)*

2.1. Sources

The main body of the unpublished archival material used in this study constitute the documents from the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (*Архив Внѣшней Политики Россійской Империи*) in Moscow. These for the most part consist of the correspondence between the Russian embassy in Constantinople and the central government in St. Petersburg, including the reports of the ambassadors to the Tsar (usually sent twice per month), the instructions of the Tsar and the highest officials of the state sent to the embassy, the secret memorandums of the Foreign ministry officials concerning the conduct of the Russian foreign policy, the copies of the orders to the Commander-in-Chief of the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron F. F. Ushakov, as well as to the authorities of the Russian Black Sea Admiralty, copies of various international treaties, the correspondence of the Russian ambassador V. S. Tomara with F. F. Ushakov and the commanders of the Russian transport ships passing through Constantinople and the minutes of the conferences of the Russian ambassadors with the Ottoman authorities.

Another group of the archival documents is from the Russian State Military Historical Archive (*Российский Государственный Военно-Исторический Архив*), also in Moscow. The documents from this archive mainly include the reports of the Russian commanders of the troops, which were going to or stationed in the Ionian Republic, addressed to the Emperor. Due to these reports it is possible to trace the time of the departures and the arrivals of the Russian armed forces assigned for the garrison on the Ionian Islands, as well as the names and the strength of the troops.

As to the Ottoman archival material, I have examined the *Hatt-i Hümayun* register of the Ottoman Archive of the Prime Ministry (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*) in Istanbul. However, and this remains one of the most important limitations of this study, the Ottoman documents were used here insufficiently. Also, I could use some amount of documents from the Foreign Affairs Archive (*Archive des Affaires Étrangères*) in Paris, presenting the opinion of some French diplomatic agents in the Ottoman Empire regarding the international situation of the time.

Among the most important published collections of the documents, used in the given research, first of all should be mentioned the started in 1960-s by the Soviet Foreign Ministry and still continued collection of the Russian diplomatic documents of the 19-early 20th centuries “Foreign Policy of Russia in the 19th- early 20th centuries” (*Внешняя политика России XIX и начала XX века: документы Российского Министерства иностранных дел*). Other materials, published both in the Tsarist and the Soviet times in Russia, consist of numerous volumes of the private and official document collections (The Archive of Prince Vorontsov (*Архив князя Воронцова*) in 40 volumes, The Archive of Mordvinov Counts’ Family

(*Архив графов Мордвиновых*) in 10 volumes, Collection of the Imperial Russian Historical Society (*Сборник Императорского Российского Исторического Общества*) in 148 Volumes, published in the Tsarist times; the collections of private documents of M. I. Kutuzov and F. F. Ushakov, each of them consisting of 3 volumes, which were published in early 1950-s in the Soviet Union).

The published diaries, letters and memoirs make an additional and extremely valuable source of information. Indispensable for this study was the private correspondence of Catherine II with G. A. Potemkin and Joseph II. During the research there also have been used the diaries of Heinrich Reimers and Johann Struve, two young Russian noblemen who participated in the ambassadorial delegation of M. I. Kutuzov to Constantinople and have recorded their memoirs of this event. Besides, very useful were the memoirs of M. Ogiński, who was the special diplomatic representative of the Polish emigrant circles in Istanbul in 1796. As regards the Ionian and Italian campaigns of the joint Russo-Ottoman forces of Ushakov, a unique and interesting information can be found in the memoirs of the Russian naval officer Ye. Metaxa, who served during the Ushakov's expedition as an aide on the flagship of the Ottoman squadron of Kadir Bey. The memoirs of the two French officers, J. P. Bellaire and M.-A.-B. Mangourit are also important because they describe the siege of Corfu and Ancona through the eyes of the besieged French defenders of these fortresses.

With a view to consult the full texts of the international treaties mentioned in this work, were used the respective collections of Martens (Martens, Georg Friedrich. *Recueil des principaux traités d'alliance, de paix, de trêve, de neutralité,*

de commerce, de limites, d'echange etc. Göttingen: Dietrich, 1800. Vol. 6), Noradounghian (Noradounghian, Gabriel, ed. *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, 4 vols. Paris: F. Pichon, 1897-1903), Testa (*Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane*. 11 vols. Paris: Amyot, Editeur des Archives diplomatiques, 1864-1911) and the Full Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire (*Полное Собрание Законов Российской Империи*). 45 vols., St. Petersburg, 1830.

2.2. Historiography

It is quite difficult to find specific scholarly works concerning the Ottoman-Russian relations during the short period of 1792-1806. Those existing studies that in one way or another relate to the subject of the present research I thought it possible to arrange into three larger groups, which are the Russian/Soviet/Post-Soviet, the Ottoman/Turkish and the Western historiography.

Of the Russian/Soviet/Post-Soviet authors, whose monographs and unpublished dissertations were essential for this research, I would point out D. Miliutin¹, A. Stanislavskaja², E. Tarle³, A. Shapiro⁴, A. Miller⁵, I. Elterman⁶ and N. Mun'kov.⁷

¹ D. Miliutin, *Istoriia Voiny 1799 g. mezhdru Rossiyei i Frantsiyey*. (3 vols.: St. Petersburg, 1857).

² A. M. Stanislavskaja, *Politicheskaja deiatelnost' F.F. Ushakova v Gretsii, 1798-1800 g.g.* (Moscow, 1983); A.M. Stanislavskaja, *Rossiia i Gretsii v kontse XVIII- nachale XIX veka: Politika Rossii v Ionicheskoi Respublike, 1798-1807 g.g.* (Moscow, 1976); A. M. Stanislavskaja, *Russko-angliiskie otnosheniia i problemy Sredizemnomor'ya (1798-1807)* (Moscow, 1962).

³ E. V. Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more (1798—1800)* (Moscow, 1948); E.V. Tarle, *Ekspeditsiia admirala D.N. Seniavina v Sredizemnoie more (1805-1807)* (Moscow, 1954).

⁴ A. L. Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota na Sredizemnom more v 1805-1807 g. g.* Doctoral Dissertation. [Sine Loco], 1951.

⁵ A. F. Miller, *Mustafa Pasha Bayraktar: Ottomanskaia imperiia v nachale XIX veka* (Moscow;Leningrad, 1947).

⁶ I. M. Elterman, *Posol'stvo Kutuzova v Turtsii v 1793- 1794 g. g.* Candidate Dissertation. Moscow State University, Moscow, 1945.

⁷ N. P. Mun'kov. *Diplomaticheskaja deiatel'nost' M. I. Kutuzova (1792-1813 g. g.)*. Candidate Dissertation. Kazan' State Pedagogical Institute, Kazan', 1958.

Very useful were also the articles of G. Kleinman⁸, Z. Arkas⁹, N. Kallistov¹⁰, V. Sirotkin¹¹ and E. Verbitskii.¹² Although all these works touched upon some aspects of the Ottoman-Russian relations at the time under discussion, no special research addressed in detail the problem of the Ottoman-Russian reconciliation in late 18th-early 19th centuries in the face of the growing belligerence of France.

The modest article of Kleinman, which was published in 1945, may probably serve as one of the few exceptions. The author of the article focused exclusively on the problem of the Ottoman-Russian alliance of 1799. First giving a cursory look at the international situation of the Ottoman Empire in 1790-s, the author then evaluates the character of the Ottoman-Russian relations at the same period. She examines what prerequisites were necessary for this alliance to be formed and in the end analyses the contents of the alliance treaty. Kleinman concludes her article arguing that the alliance between St. Petersburg and the Porte could not be durable because the Ottomans were afraid of Russia. In view of Kleinman, it was largely the Russian attempts to interfere in the Ottoman internal affairs, as well as the Russian wish to turn the alliance into a certain kind of protectorate, that was arousing the concerns of

⁸ G. A. Kleinman, Russko-Turetskii soyuz 1799 goda. In *Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet. Istoricheskii Fakul'tet. Doklady i soobshcheniia*. Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1945), pp. 9-23.

⁹ Z. Arkas, Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota s 1798 po 1806 god. *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei*, 5 (1863), pp. 846-901.

¹⁰ N. D. Kallistov, Flot v tsarstvovaniie imperatora Pavla I. In *Istoriia Rossiiskogo Flota* (Moscow, 2007), pp.208-246; Id. Flot v tsarstvovaniie imperatora Aleksandra I In *Istoriia Rossiiskogo Flota* (Moscow, 2007), pp. 247-321.

¹¹ V. G. Sirotkin, Iz istorii vneshnei politiki Rossii v Sredizemnomorye v nachale XIX v. *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 67 (1960), pp. 213-233.

¹² E. D. Verbitskii, "K voprosu o blizhevostochnoi politike Rossii na rubezhe XVIII i XIX vekov (O proekte russko-frantsuzskogo soyuza i razdela Ottomanskoii imperii F. V. Rostopchina). In *Kolonial'naia politika i natsional'no-osvoboditel'noie dvizheniie* (The colonial politics and national liberation movement). (Kishinev, 1965), pp. 159-193; Id. Peregovory Rossii i Osmanskoii Imperii o vobnovlenii soyuznogo dogovora 1798 (1799) g. In *Rossii i Iugo-Vostochnaia Ievropa*. (Kishinev, 1984), pp. 60-67.

the Porte. The two articles of Sheremet¹³ are also quite useful in that they present a general outline of the relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire at the time of their alliance. These articles, however, are rather brief and lack many particular details, which could additionally back the author's line of reasoning. The article of Kudriavtseva¹⁴, also dealing with the Ottoman-Russian relations at the turn of the 18th- 19th centuries, is extremely poor, contains many unallowable mistakes, and should be mentioned only due to the attempt of the author to address such a subject. A very qualified account of the Ottoman-Russian negotiations throughout 1805 about the renewal of the alliance treaty, which has been provided by Verbitskii¹⁵, is in its own way a unique study on that topic in the Russian historiography and deserves for special attention.

In general, though, the Russian and the Soviet historians never specifically turned their attention to the fact of the Ottoman-Russian rapprochement, cooperation and alliance at the end of the 18th century. More popular among the Russian/Soviet historians were the topics related to the heroic exploits of the Russian arms and the renowned Russian military and naval commanders like Kutuzov, Suvorov or Ushakov. Only within the framework of such studies it is possible to find some references to the partnership between the Tsar and the Sultan. Thus, the three volumes of the fundamental work of D. Miliutin¹⁶ about the war of 1799 mostly focus on the military activities of Suvorov in the Northern Italy though also describe the Mediterranean campaign of the squadron of Ushakov, and, fragmentarily,

¹³ V. I. Sheremet, *Vneshniaia politika Vysokoi Porty: K vremennomu soyuzu s Rossiyei*. In *Balkanskiie issledovaniia*, Vol. 18 (Moscow, 1997), pp. 40-52; Id. *Vysokaia Porta vnov' sblizhayetsia s Frantsiyei*. In *Balkanskiie issledovaniia*, Vol. 18. (Moscow, 1997), pp. 159-168.

¹⁴ Ye. P. Kudriavtseva, *Rossiia i Turtsiia na rubezhe XVIII-XIX vekov: ot voyn k soyuznym dogovoram*. *Noveishaia Istorii*, 6 (1996), pp. 45-59.

¹⁵ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossii i Osmanskoi Imperii*.

¹⁶ General Field marshal D. A. Miliutin was the War Minister of the Russian Empire in 1861-1881. See: *Voennaia Entsiklopediia*. Vol. 15. (S. Petersburg, 1914), pp. 293-97.

provides some information on the joint with the Russians activities of the Ottoman ships and soldiers.

In the same way Z. Arkas, N. Kallistov, E. Tarle and A. Shapiro in their studies, dealing with the Mediterranean campaigns of Ushakov and Seniavin, concentrate on the activities of the Russian naval forces and almost never mention the Ottoman allies of the Russians. It seems that the studies of Elterman and Mun'kov, both about the diplomatic activities of Kutuzov, had also been undertaken not so much in view to shed more light on the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations as to illuminate the diplomatic gifts of the celebrated defeater of Napoléon. Again, Stanislavskaia in her books examines the Russo-Greek connections in the context of the creation of the Seven Islands Republic, calling attention to the diplomatic and political talents of Ushakov. The only completely different in this respect is the work of Miller, which explains the events relating to the specific subject from the Ottoman history, though it largely covers the times after the deposition of Selim III, that is, when the new Ottoman-Russian war was under way and has little to add to the history of the earlier Ottoman-Russian cooperation.

The studies regarding the Russian foreign policy at the beginning of the 19th century, like those of Sirotkin¹⁷, Ievstignieiev¹⁸ and Vinogradov¹⁹, despite being quite interesting and detailed, deal with the general European politics of the period and concentrate on relations between Russia, Great Britain and France. In this context the

¹⁷ Sirotkin, *Iz istorii vneshnei politiki Rossii*.

¹⁸ I. V. Ievstignieiev, 'K voprosu o tseliakh vneshnei politiki Rossii v 1804-1805 godakh' *Voprosy Istorii*, 5 (1962), pp. 203-10.

¹⁹ V. N. Vinogradov, 'Razriadka v napoleonovskuyu epokhu. Bonapart i russkii' In *Balkanskiie issledovaniia*, Vol. 18 (Moscow, 1997), pp. 77-97; Id. "'Vostochniy roman" generala Bonaparta i balkanskiie griozy imperatora Pavla" *Ibidem*, pp. 53-64.

Ottoman Empire for the most part remains a blank space, much neglected by the authors. Very important in terms of getting the Russian perspective of the Eastern question, even though through a bird's eye view, are the classical work of the 19th century written by Zhigarev²⁰ and the collective study of the Soviet historians published in late 1970-s.²¹

To sum up, there is no special study in Russian, except for a few articles, which would specifically focus on the subject of the Ottoman-Russian relations during the inter-war period of 1792-1806. All existing Russian (Tsarist/Soviet/Post-Soviet) works which partly touch upon the issues concerning the interaction between the Russian and the Ottoman empires at the given period mostly deal with the Russian military and naval victories under command of Ushakov or Suvorov. The works dealing with the embassy of Kutuzov to the Ottoman Empire in 1793-1794, though are very helpful, also concentrate more than on anything else on the personality of the future victorious Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army during the Napoléonic invasion in Russia. The fact of the alliance between St. Petersburg and the Porte usually plays only a subordinate part in the mentioned studies or can be even not mentioned more than in a few lines. The same holds true for the works on the diplomatic history of the period. The Russian relations with such leading European powers of the period like France, Great Britain or Austria have been more or less investigated by many researchers, while at the same time the Russian relations with the Porte during the same period remain largely unexplored.

²⁰ S. A. Zhigarev, *Ruskaia politika v Vostochnom voprose (yeyo istoriia v XVI-XIX vekakh, kriticheskaiia otsenka i budushchiie zadachi)* (2 vols.; Moscow, 1896).

²¹ *Vostochniy vopros vo vneshnei politike Rossii, konets XVIII-nach. XX v.* (Moscow, 1978).

When it comes to the Turkish historiography of the Ottoman-Russian relations during the time of the French Revolutionary and Napoléonic wars, it is not that rich, not to say that it hardly exists. The book of Kurat²² is rather a general overview of the Ottoman-Russian relations throughout three centuries and does not bring anything specific about the period under discussion. The articles of Inalcık²³ and Uzunçarşılı²⁴ only slightly touch upon some aspects of the Ottoman-Russian relations of the time, yet cannot be considered profound studies on the subject. One can also mention the article of Bilim²⁵, which is, however, not very original, being largely based on the Ottoman publication of Hayreddin Nedim²⁶, describing the embassy of Mustafa Rasih Pasha to Russia in 1793-1794. In general, in all these works Russia has been depicted only as the universal evil, sometimes in a much exaggerated manner. No attempt was ever made to look into any examples of the Ottoman-Russian cooperation, which would be contradicting to the overall discourse of Russia as an eternal enemy.

Some studies, like the books of Karal²⁷ and Soysal²⁸, as well as the article of Süslü²⁹ have been undertaken in regard to the Ottoman-French relations at the end of the 18th - early 19th centuries. There are also a few specific works on the Ottoman

²² Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya: XVII.Yüzyıl sonundan Kurtuluş savaşına kadar Türk-Rus ilişkileri 1798-1919* (Ankara, 1970).

²³ Halil Inalcık, 'Yaş Muahedesinden Sonra Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetleri (Rasih Efendi ve Ceneral Kutuzof elçilikleri)' *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4 (1946), pp. 195-203.

²⁴ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, 'Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti' *Belleten*, 1 (1937), pp. 627-639.

²⁵ Cahit Bilim, 'Mustafa Rasih Paşa'nın Rusya Sefaretnamesi (30.1.1793- 8.2.1794)' *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi (OTAM)*, 7 (1996), pp. 15-36.

²⁶ Hayreddin Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*. (İstanbul, 1333).

²⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, *Fransa-Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1797-1802* (İstanbul, 1938).

²⁸ İsmail Soysal. *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız diplomasi münasebetleri (1789-1802)*. 3rd ed. (Ankara, 1999).

²⁹ Azmi Süslü, 'Osmanlı-Fransız Diplomatik İlişkileri, 1798-1807' *Belleten*, 47 (1983), pp. 259-279; Azmi Süslü. 'Rapports Diplomatiques Ottomano-Français, 1798-1807' *Belleten*, 47 (1983), pp. 237-257.

state apparatus and the Ottoman diplomatic activities at the discussed period³⁰ that contain some information on the Ottoman diplomatic missions abroad. However, the place of Russia in these works is quite insignificant. Possibly the only attempt to change the situation has been made recently by Şakul³¹, whose dissertation, based mainly on the original materials from the Ottoman Archive of the Prime Ministry, observes the time and the circumstances of conclusion of the Ottoman-Russian alliance and the Ottoman-Russian naval expedition in the Mediterranean. However, the vast published sources in Russian, as well as the Russian archival materials were to a great extent underused by the author. In this way, the Turkish historiography still lacks in a great degree the special studies on the relations between the Russian and the Ottoman empires in the years of their rapprochement and alliance in late 18th-early 19th centuries, which would be based also on the Russian sources and free from the traditional Ottoman-Turkish discourse of Russia as a declared enemy of the Porte with which any cooperation was impossible in principle.

As for the Western historiography, despite the seeming abundance of the works dedicated to the European diplomatic history of the time, covering the last decade of the 18th and the first decade of the 19th centuries, there are not so many indeed significant studies about the Ottoman and the Russian Empires in the context of their bilateral relations. Among those studies that shed some light on the issue one should mention, first of all, the books of Puryear³², Shupp³³, Saul³⁴, McKnight³⁵, Shaw³⁶, Mouravieff³⁷, Bradisteanu³⁸, Herbette³⁹, Marcère⁴⁰ and Fitzgibbon.⁴¹

³⁰ Ercümen Kuran, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı İkamet Elçiliklerinin Kuruluşu ve İlk Elçilerin Siyasî Faaliyetleri, 1793-1821*. (Ankara, 1988); Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*. (Ankara, 1987).

³¹ Kahraman Şakul. *An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, 2009.

³² Vernon John Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*. (Berkeley, 1951).

Puryear's study has been based exclusively on the French and the British archival materials, and closely investigates the Near Eastern policy of France broadly since the proclamation of the Empire until the downfall of Napoléon's rule and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in 1815. Being not a special study on the Ottoman-Russian relations, in terms of its chronological scope the book of Puryear only slightly reveals the circumstances of the last years of the Ottoman-Russian alliance. It is important for the present dissertation in terms of providing some information on the diplomatic struggle among the European powers about the recognition of the imperial title of Bonaparte by the Ottoman government and also gives a general account of the renewal of the alliance treaty between St. Petersburg and the Porte.

The fundamental research of Shupp is a good record of the diplomatic events through 1806-1807, and mainly rests on the British archival materials. The author also worked with the French and the Austrian archives. Of the Russian sources, Shupp used the collections of the documents from the published Archive of Prince Vorontsov⁴² and the published documents from the Collection of the Imperial

³³ P. F. Shupp, *The European powers and the Near Eastern question, 1806-1807* (New York, 1966).

³⁴ N.E. Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean 1797-1807* (Chicago, 1970).

³⁵ James Lawrence Mcknight, *Admiral Ushakov and the Ionian Republic. The Genesis Of Russia's First Balkan Satellite*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1965.

³⁶ Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. 1789-1807* (Cambridge, 1971).

³⁷ Boris Mouravieff, *L'Alliance Russo-Turque au Milieu des Guerres Napoleonniennes* (Neuchatel, 1954).

³⁸ Stancu Bradisteanu, *Die Beziehungen Russlands und Frankreichs zur Türkei in den Jahren 1806 und 1807*. Inaug-diss. Berlin, 1912.

³⁹ Maurice Herbette, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le directoire* (Paris, 1902).

⁴⁰ Edouard de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople: la politique orientale de la Révolution française* (2 vols.; Paris, 1927).

⁴¹ Fitzgibbon, Edward Michael, Jr. *Alexander I and the Near East: The Ottoman Empire in Russia's Foreign Relations, 1801-1807*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. The Ohio State University, 1974.

⁴² *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*.

Russian Historical Society⁴³, but the Russian and the Ottoman archives remained unexamined. Saul and McKnight studied the Russian involvement in the Mediterranean affairs. The former provides a rather detailed outline of the activities of the Russian naval forces under Ushakov and Seniavin in the Mediterranean, while the latter looks into the circumstances of the formation of the Ionian Seven Islands Republic. Within the framework of their studies Saul and McKnight also necessarily discuss some aspects of the Ottoman-Russian relations. Again, the authors use only the Western European archival collections along with some published Russian materials. The title of Mouravieff's book, which is supposed to be on the Ottoman-Russian alliance amidst the Napoléonic wars, does not reflect its actual contents. The given study is rather an overview of the European diplomatic history starting from the Egyptian expedition of Napoléon until the Vienna Congress. Fitzgibbon's dissertation does not use any unpublished archival materials and is more a reference work of the published documents and the secondary sources relating to the topic of the Russian Near Eastern politics during the first years of the reign of Alexander I.

Quite helpful is Shaw's profound study of the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Selim III. This book would always be useful for any researcher of the period. This work compares favourably in that the author has exhaustively investigated both the Western and the Ottoman archival materials pertaining to the subject of his work, along with the secondary sources in the main European, Ottoman and Turkish languages. Even though it primarily deals with the reforms of *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* of Sultan Selim, the study of Shaw also provides very much useful hints to the general situation of the epoch and to the state of the Ottoman-Russian relations in particular.

⁴³ *SIRIO*

A number of monographs by the French authors such as Driault⁴⁴, Marcère⁴⁵, Herbette⁴⁶, published in the early 20th century, give the French perspective on the subject. The works of Driault look to be a complete apology to Napoléon and his policy of territorial aggrandizement. Despite the fact of the outright French invasion of Egypt, which brought about the Ottoman-Russian alliance, Driault never sees it as aggression. The essential idea that permeates the monographs of Driault is that Napoléon was a single saviour of the Ottoman Empire, while the true aggressor was Russia, just waiting for an opportunity to destroy the Ottoman Empire and to capture Constantinople. In this sense, the books of Driault clearly suffer from open Russophobia, being rather uncritical and resembling more of a political manifesto than an impartial scholarly investigation. Marcère's work is important in that it shows the French view of the diplomatic struggle at the Ottoman capital throughout 1790-s, being based on the French archival materials and widely using the excerpts from the French newspapers of the time. Also, one should mention the study of Herbette about the Ottoman embassy of Moralı Seyyid Ali Efendi to France during 1797-1802.

Pisani in his article⁴⁷ addresses the topic of the French occupation of the Ionian Islands after the Treaty of Campo Formio, and the consequent hostilities of the French with the Ottoman Empire and Russia, also mentioning the arrests of the French citizens by the Ottomans. As regards the joint Ottoman-Russian expedition of

⁴⁴ E. Driault, *La politique orientale de Napoléon. Sebastiani et Gardane (1806-1808)* (Paris, 1904); Id. *La question d'Orient depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1905).

⁴⁵ Edouard de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople : la politique orientale de la Révolution française* (2 vols.; Paris, 1927).

⁴⁶ Maurice Herbette, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le directoire* (Paris, 1902).

⁴⁷ P. Pisani, 'L'expédition Russo-Turque aux îles ioniennes en 1789-1799' *Revue d'Histoire diplomatique*, 2 (1888), pp. 190-222.

Ushakov, the article of Pisani explains only the most general facts about the expedition and in this sense makes many references to Miliutin.⁴⁸ The author finishes his article by reviewing the changes in political status of the Ionian Islands after the Ottoman-Russian conquest. The article is of rather informative character and lacks an insightful analysis of the described events. Regarding the French perspective of the rivalry of the European powers at the Porte in early 19th century, it would be very useful to consult the articles of Coquelle.⁴⁹

In the western historiography the exchange of the extraordinary embassies between St. Petersburg and the Porte in 1793-1794 has been reflected in a few articles by Clément-Simon⁵⁰, Grunwald⁵¹ and Conermann.⁵² The article of Clément-Simon, being not very original, describes only the external side of the ambassadorial mission of Kutuzov, including the ceremony of the exchange of the embassies, the reception of the embassy in Constantinople, the gifts presented etc. The limitation of the article is that the international politics of the time almost not touched upon. Grunwald's article, even though quite informative, has no references whatsoever. The article of Conermann about the ambassadorial mission of Mustafa Rasih Pasha to St. Petersburg is remarkable by its extensive bibliography relating to the subject of the Ottoman diplomatic missions abroad. However, it analyses more the Ottoman diplomatic practices, the personality of the Ottoman ambassador to Russia and some

⁴⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia Voiny 1799 g.*

⁴⁹ P. Coquelle, 'L'ambassade du maréchal Brune à Constantinople (1803-1805)' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 18 (1904), pp. 53-73; Id. 'La mission de Sébastiani à Constantinople en 1801' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 17 (1903), pp. 438-455; Id. 'Sébastieniani, ambassadeur à Constantinople, 1806-1808' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 18 (1904), pp. 574-611.

⁵⁰ F. Clément-Simon. 'Un ambassadeur extraordinaire russe à l'époque de Catherine II et de Sélim III' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 21 (1907), pp. 25-39.

⁵¹ Constantin de Grunwald. 'Une Ambassade Russe à Constantinople au XVIII^e Siecle' *Miroir de l'Histoire*, 82 (1956), pp. 491-99.

⁵² Stephan Conermann. 'Das Eigene und das Fremde: der Bericht der Gesandtschaft Musafa Rasihs nach St. Petersburg 1792-1794' *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 17 (1999), pp. 249-270.

of the contents of his ambassadorial report (*sefâretnâme*), yet does not aim to look into the political affairs of the late 18th century.

Among the general works on the history of the Ottoman Empire and the history of relations between the Porte and the leading European powers should be mentioned the works of Zinkeisen⁵³, Iorga⁵⁴, Juchereau de Saint-Denys⁵⁵ and Anderson.⁵⁶ Apart from that, the articles of Findley⁵⁷, Naff⁵⁸ and Ragsdale⁵⁹, dealing with the topics related to the present research, should be mentioned.

In the end, there are some works of the Eastern European authors, including Goşu⁶⁰, Reyhman⁶¹ and Stoilova⁶² among others, that were useful for this study. The monograph of the Romanian historian Goşu is one of a few special studies, along with earlier article of Verbitskii⁶³, which is completely dedicated to the issue of the renewal of the alliance treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Based on the materials of the Archive of the Russian Foreign Ministry (AVPRI), the book of Goşu is for sure an indispensable reading for a researcher of the Ottoman-Russian

⁵³ Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen. *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa* (Vol. 6, Gotha, 1859; Vol. 7, Gotha, 1863).

⁵⁴ Nicolae Iorga. *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches. Nach den Quellen dargestellt*. (Vol. 5, Gotha, 1913).

⁵⁵ Antoine de Juchereau de Saint-Denys, baron. *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis 1792 jusqu'en 1844*. (4 Vols.; Paris, 1844); Théophile Lavallée, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis les temps anciens jusq'à nos jours* (Paris, 1855).

⁵⁶ M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern question, 1774-1923: a study in international relations* (London, 1970).

⁵⁷ Carter V. Findley, 'The Foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: The Beginnings of Bureaucratic Reform under Selim III and Mahmud II' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (1972), pp. 388-416; Id. 'The Legacy of Tradition to Reform: Origins of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1 (1970), pp. 334-357.

⁵⁸ Thomas Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 (1963), pp. 295-315.

⁵⁹ Hugh Ragsdale, 'Russian Projects of Conquest in the eighteenth century' In: Hugh Ragsdale, (ed.). *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (New York, 1993), pp. 75-102.

⁶⁰ Armand Goşu, *La troisième coalition antinapoléonienne et la Sublime Porte 1805* (Istanbul, 2003).

⁶¹ Jan Reyhman, '1794 Polonya İsyanı ve Türkiye' *Belleten*, 31 (1967): 85-91.

⁶² Tamara Stoilova, 'La République Française et les diplomates étrangers à Constantinople 1792-1794' *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 1991 19(4), pp. 64-75.

⁶³ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossii i Osmanskoi Imperii*.

relations at the beginning of the 19th century. I thought it possible to refer to the article of Reychman, even though it has been published in one of the leading Turkish historical journals, as such relating to the Eastern European rather than Turkish, historiography. Being quite small, this article explains some facts of indirect and secret aid by the Porte to the Polish rebels during the time of the Polish uprising of Kościuszko in 1794. Stoilova, relying on the archival materials from AVPRI, made a good analysis of the international situation and the rivalry of the European powers in Constantinople in the first half of the 1790-s.

What is typical for the Western historiography is that in general the Russian imperial policy has been often looked upon one-sidedly and with a biased disposition, which seems to be a manifestation of traditional, at times quite exaggerated Russophobia. Such a view obviously presents only one side of the coin. Very often in the Western historiography a tendency of the Russian foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire that was oriented on the protection of the Sultan's domains from encroachments of other European states has been ignored.

CHAPTER III

REESTABLISHING OF THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE PORTE AFTER THE PEACE

TREATY OF JASSY (1792-1794)

Nulla salus bello: pacem te poscimus omnes
(Publius Vergilius Maro, "Aeneis",
Liber XI, 362)

3.1. Two empires after the Peace Treaty of Jassy

The last sanguinary encounter of all those that occurred between the two neighbouring empires throughout the 18th century could hardly resolve the initial set of long-lived controversies it began with. As regards the future of the Ottoman-Russian relations this war brought about rather more problems than actual solutions. The peace treaty, signed by the representatives of both courts in the capital of Moldavia¹, is notable not so much in itself as for the fact that it once again confirmed all the previous agreements concluded between the Russian government and the Porte² over a period of two preceding decades. It was thus not only some new

¹ The Peace Treaty of Jassy had been signed on 9 January 1792 (29 December 1791). The full text in Russian is available at: *Polnoie Sobraniie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (PSZRI)*. Vol. XXIII, № 17008. (St. Petersburg, 1830), pp. 287-292; the text in French: Gabriel Noradounghian, (ed.) *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (4 vols.; Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. 2, pp. 16-21; the text in German: *Treaties Between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535-1855* (London, 1855), pp. 510-17.

² The Article 2 of the treaty states, that "Трактат мира 1774 года июля 10, а Эгиры 1188 года 14 дня Луны Джемазиель-Еввеля, изъяснительная Конвенция 1779 года марта 10, а Эгиры 1193 года 20 дня Джемазиель-Ахыра; трактат торговли 10 июня 1783, а Эгиры 1197 года 21 Реджеба, и Акт объясняющий присоединение к Российской Империи Крыма и Тамана, и что границею есть река Кубань, 1783 года декабря 28 дня, а Эгиры 1198 года 15 Сафара, силою сего мирного договора подтверждаются во всех их Статьях, исключая те только, которые сим Трактатом или

territorial acquisitions gained by Russia at the expense of the Ottomans in Jassy, but the recognition of the whole body of earlier international legal acts regulating the new character of relations between the two countries which in their totality marked a profound geopolitical shift towards the Russian domination over the Northern coastline of the Black Sea.

In this way, at the beginning of 1792, the following major agreements constituted the legal base of contacts between the two empires as well as among their subjects: The peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (21 July, 1774)³, the Aynalı Kavak explanatory convention (21 March, 1779)⁴, the Manifesto “On the Annexation of the Crimean peninsula, etc.”(19 April, 1783)⁵, the Commerce treaty of Constantinople (21 June, 1783)⁶, the Constantinople Act on peace, trade and borders (8 January, 1784)⁷, and the already mentioned peace treaty of Jassy (9 January, 1792).

As for the gist of all these treaties, they step by step confirmed the transfer of vast land areas between the mouths of the Dniester and Kuban Rivers, including the Crimean Peninsula, under the Russian rule. Also, the Russian merchants were guaranteed the privileges of the most favoured nation that were enjoyed heretofore

же и прежними в одном после другого отменены”, *PSZRI*, Vol. XXIII, № 17008 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 289. (in the original the dates are given according to Julian and Islamic eras).

³ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XIX, № 14164 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 957-967; the text in French: Gabriel Noradounghian, (ed.) *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (4 vols.; Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. 1, pp. 319-334; also see: *Treaties Between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535-1855* (London, 1855), pp. 463-475.

⁴ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XX, № 14851 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 800-805; the text in French: Gabriel Noradounghian, (ed.) *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (4 vols.; Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. 1, pp. 338-344; also, *Treaties Between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535-1855* (London, 1855), pp. 480-86.

⁵ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXI, № 15708 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 897-98.

⁶ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXI, № 15757 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 939-956; the text in French: Gabriel Noradounghian, (ed.) *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (4 vols.; Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. 1, pp., 351-373; also see: *Treaties Between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535-1855* (London, 1855), pp. 486-508.

⁷ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXI, № 15901 (St. Petersburg, 1830): 1082-1083. The text in French: *Treaties Between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535-1855* (London, 1855), pp. 508-509.

by the British and French⁸. It is necessary to point out that the very phenomenon of the Russian Black Sea commerce, which simply could not exist before on a significant scale, had arisen and only became possible in the train of the overall Russian drive to the South. Moreover, in the same year when the Crimea was annexed, St. Petersburg gained another political foothold in the Southern Caucasus, having established its protectorate over the Eastern Georgian kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in line with the treaty of Georgievsk⁹.

Peace conditions that were agreed upon in the Moldavian capital considerably strengthened St. Petersburg's positions in the Black Sea region vis-à-vis its southern neighbour, the Ottoman empire. As mentioned before, the Porte confirmed all of the previously concluded Ottoman-Russian agreements, meaning that in addition to the newly abandoned territories the Ottoman side *de iure* accepted the Russian annexation of the Crimean Chanate and recognized all changes of the Ottoman-Russian border that took place since the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774). The Sultan's government was also obliged to protect the Russian merchants from attacks of the corsairs of Barbary; to prevent the possible abuses of its border authorities as regards the territories and inhabitants of the Georgian lands under the Russian protectorate; to keep its previous commitments to St. Petersburg on the subject of the Danube principalities, on whose behalf Russia gained the right to interfere already in 1774. In regard to the trade with the Ottoman dominions the Russian merchants, as mentioned above, received equal rights with those of the British and French, thus enjoying the status of the most favoured nation.

⁸ The Article 11 of the Küçük Kaynarca treaty; The Article 6 of the Aynalı Kavak explanatory convention; The Articles 17, 20, 29, 30, 52, 77 and 81 of the Ottoman-Russian commerce treaty.

⁹ The Treaty of Georgievsk had been signed on 4 August (24 July) 1783. The full text in Russian is available at: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXI, № 15835 (St. Petersburg, 1830), pp. 1013-1017.

The Jassy peace treaty, in brief, just completed the picture of quite a new geopolitical reality on the northern coasts of the Black Sea. Within barely a couple of decades the regional status quo changed dramatically. The formerly “Ottoman lake”, as the Black Sea used to be described, witnessed the Russian soldiers, merchants and diplomats coming to the areas not long ago considered as the sphere of exclusive Ottoman influence.

In such an extremely short span of time, within a single generation, it was hard for both sides to readjust their bilateral relations in accordance with the new political landscape in the Black Sea basin. On the one hand, the lightning speed, with which the events marking the Ottoman-Russian confrontation were unfolding, could not yet make the Ottomans to forget their recent losses and still kept alive their hopes one day somehow to take back everything that had been lost. On the other hand, though, the dashing advance of the Russian forces across the Northern Black Sea plains, along with the acquisition of the Crimea, whetted in St. Petersburg further appetites and fed far-reaching ambitions to drive the Ottomans out of the Balkans¹⁰. Consequently, the outcome of the war of 1787-1792, though they were in general more than satisfactory for Russia, in some points could possibly not even completely please the Russian Empress, to say nothing of the Ottomans. At the same time both states, each for its own reasons, and witnessing the sparked by the French Revolution dramatic changes in European politics, preferred to negotiate a peace treaty to end this war. The peace treaty, signed in Jassy, was to become a new point of departure in relations between the two countries.

¹⁰ The “Greek Project” of early 1780-s provides an illustrative example of the strategic schemes designed at the discussed period by the Russian ruling elite as a quite real, even though too pretentious, political program.

Insofar as the Russian Empire is concerned, it ended the war with certain undisputed and quite real gains. First, Russia obtained vast territorial acquisitions; second, due to these the Russian empire became an established Black Sea power, there were founded new cities and ports in the northern Black Sea region, and there had been laid the foundations of Russian Black Sea commerce; third, St. Petersburg got more possibilities to exercise its influence on the adjoining parts of the Ottoman Empire, and even received the official right to interfere into the internal affairs of the Ottoman state on behalf of the Danube principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.

Thus, returning to the gargantuan designs of the early 1780-s known in historical literature as the “Greek project”¹¹, this remains only a matter of pure speculation what kind of ultimate aims about the fate of the Ottoman Empire might exist in the heads of some leading figures of the Russian state, including the Empress herself. Whatever the plan to oust the Ottomans from Europe could be, the idea was not a new one; it existed well before both in West European and Russian political thinking.¹² “La Grand entreprise”¹³ of Catherine, considering its indeed boundless

¹¹ The essence of this plan was outlined by Catherine in her letter to Joseph dated by September 21/10, 1782. She shares here with the Austrian Emperor her ideas about what might be done in regard to the Ottoman state, which is in obvious decline. Catherine proposes, should the war with the Ottoman Empire happen, to make the Russian border with the Ottoman empire the Northern coastline of the Black Sea; to create in place of the Ottoman vassal Danube principalities a permanently neutral buffer-state Dacia, whose borders would be Dniester, Danube and the Black Sea; to expel, may it be possible, the “enemy of Christian name” from Constantinople and restore the Byzantine empire with Catherine’s grandson Constantine at the head. It is known, that somewhat earlier similar ideas were already mentioned in a memo prepared by A. A. Bezborodko, at that time the secretary of Catherine. See: *SIRIO*, vol. 26: 385.

¹² T.G. Djuvara, *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie (1281-1913)* (Paris, 1914); S. A. Zhigarev, *Russkaia politika v Vostochnom voprosie (yeyo istoriia v XVI-XIX vekakh, kriticheskaia otsenka I budushchiie zadachi)* (2 vols.; Moscow, 1896).

¹³ The term “Greek project” was not specifically used at the time and is the product of later researchers of the subject, as one of the core objects of this scheme was the restoration of the Greek state. Catherine in her correspondence with the Austrian Emperor Joseph II rather refers to her plan as the “great enterprise”. See: Catherine II to Joseph II, September 21/10, 1782. A. R von Arneth, (ed.) *Joseph II und Katharina von Russland. Ihr Briefwechsel* (Wien, 1869), p. 156.

ambitions and the current overall situation in Europe at the beginning of the 1790-s, stayed, however, to be an unrealized ideal scheme much exciting the minds of later historians.¹⁴ At the time nothing tangible came out of its vast program.

Even if Catherine and her key statesmen might be nurturing some larger than life ambitions about the future of the Ottoman Balkan dominions, the war, declared by the Ottomans, who had been alarmed of the Russian expansion, came somewhat untimely for Russia, and in 1787 Russia was in no position to fulfil the great designs of the Greek project. For a number of objective reasons St. Petersburg was seeking to finish this war, which it entered without being fully prepared¹⁵ and which it had to fight on two fronts, as Sweden also unfolded the banner of war in the Baltics one year later. Catherine's own words may serve perhaps the best testimony of her intention to conclude peace at the point after three years since the beginning of the military operations. While writing to General-Field Marshal G. A. Potiomkin, her celebrated favourite and, according to some accounts, her secret husband and a de-facto co-ruler, the Empress refers to the Peace Treaty of Värälä (14 August 1790) with Sweden in the following terms: "By God's will one paw has been pulled out from a swampy place... Now I pray God to help you to do the same with the

¹⁴ One of the most detailed analyses of prehistory, sources and historiography of the question appears in: Edgar Hösch, 'Das sogenannte "griechische Projekt" Katharinas II' *Jahrbucher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 12 (1964), pp. 168-206; also see: Hugh Ragsdale, *Russian Projects of Conquest in the eighteenth century*. In: Imperial Russian Foreign Policy. Ed. and trans. Hugh Ragsdale. Woodrow Wilson Center Series. (New York, 1993), pp. 75-102; O. P. Markova, 'O proishozhdenii tak nazyvayemogo grecheskogo proekta (80-e gody XVIII v.)' *Istoriia SSSR*, 1958 (4), pp. 52-78; P. V. Stegnii, 'Yeshche raz o grecheskom proekte Iekateriny II. Noviye dokumenty iz AVPRI MID Rossii' *Noveishaia istoriia*, 4 (2002), the same article, published in German: Piotr V. Stegni, 'Noch Einmal Über das Griechische Projekt Katharinas II' *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 50 (2003), pp. 87-111; M. A. Petrova, 'Formirovaniie avstro-rossiiskogo soyuza v pravlenie Iosifa II (1780-1790)' *Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 128 (2007), pp. 116-138.

¹⁵ 'Letter of Catherine II to G. A. Potiomkin, 4 December (23 November) 1787'. Catherine says here that Austria was not more militarily prepared than Russia, and similarly did not expect war. Published in: Yekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaia perepiska. 1769-1791 (Moscow, 1997), pp. 254-55; *SIRIO*, Vol. 27: 453-55.

Turks”.¹⁶ This peace, Catherine continues, “saved men and money”.¹⁷ And a few days later almost in the same terms: “We pulled out of the mire one paw. As soon as we will pull out the other one, then we will sing Hallelujah”.¹⁸

In sum, despite the existing bold projects to drive the Ottomans out of Europe, Catherine for the moment wished peace. The difficult overall financial situation, the expenses of wars in the North, South, and West, which lasted for several decades, the repercussions of the Pugachov uprising, the French Revolution, and the strained situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Constitution (May 3, 1791) had been proclaimed by the Sejm – all these made Russian Empress to speak about the wars with Sweden and the Ottoman Empire as of quagmire, and prefer to seek fast peace with the Sultan. On the other hand, so long as Catherine II stayed on the throne, there was always a possibility of reconsideration of the objectives of the Russian foreign policy and returning to the Greek project program, provided that a more favourable political situation turns up.

In the meantime the questions the Ottoman government, and particularly the new Sultan Selim III, had to deal with were incomparably more distressing. The ship of the Ottoman state seemed to be increasingly falling apart and taking on ever more water in the heavy storms of the late 18th century. Two ill-fated wars with Russia and the shocking first ever loss of predominantly Muslim-populated territories just reflected the urging necessity to save the empire from the oncoming catastrophe.

¹⁶ “Велел Бог одну лапу высвободить из вязкого места... Теперь молю Бога чтобы помог тебе сделать то же и с турками”. ‘Letter of Catherine II to G. A. Potiomkin, 16/5 August 1790’. Ibidem, p. 425.

¹⁷ Ibidem

¹⁸ “Одну лапу из грязи мы вытащили. Как вытащим другую, то пропоем Аллилуйя”. ‘Letter of Catherine II to G. A. Potiomkin, 20/9 August 1790’. Ibidem, p. 426.

What became apparent, even if not instantly and only for some narrow group of the leading Ottoman statesmen, was that the military defeats were merely the most visible outward manifestation of a deeper complex crisis of the whole state system. It was hardly an exaggeration when Selim III, while trying in war conditions to find some additional sources of financing for the army, asked the *Kaymakam Paşa*¹⁹ of sharing thoughts on this issue and wrote bitterly that they were about to lose the state (*devlet elden gidiyor*).²⁰ By the end of the 18th century the domains of the Sultan turned into a scene of growing disorder, anarchy, immense corruption and the lack of effective control by the central authorities in virtually all spheres of life.

What was clear to Selim was probably even clearer to others, including the Russian Empress. Obviously it was the critical situation of the Ottoman state which to a great extent influenced the direction of Catherine's thought concerning the fate of the Ottoman European possessions and the Black Sea straits. In that very letter to Joseph II, which laid the foundations of what is known as the Greek project, she provided a description of the domestic situation within the Sultan's domains. The special importance of this description is that it belongs personally to Catherine, who was not only a contemporary of the events she wrote about, but also the head of the state most directly involved and most carefully watching the political developments within the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁹ *Sadaret kaymakamı*, or *Kaymakam Paşa* –an official, appointed to perform temporarily the duties of the *Sadrızam*, in case of the latter's absence from the central government (because of leading a warfare, or for some other reason). While at his post, the *Kaymakam Paşa* could exercise all powers and authority pertaining to the office of the *Sadrızam*. More detailed information concerning the office of *Kaymakam Paşa* is available at: Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (3 vols.; İstanbul, 1983-1993), Vol. 2, pp. 219-222.

²⁰ Selim wrote also, that he is personally ready to live on dry bread only, if necessary: “*Devletin irad ve masrafı ve zait sefaheti cümlemenizin malûmudur. Eğer bana şimdilik kuru ekmeğe kani ol deseniz ben razıyım... Siz bana beyan edin Allah aşkına devlet elden gidiyor sonra faide vermez*”. Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları* (Ankara, 1999), p. 32.

So, evaluating the situation from the point of view of her own country, the Russian Empress called the attention of the Austrian monarch to the following circumstances: the lack of firm state's control in the Ottoman provinces, with local pashas and magnates staying loyal to the centre only in word; aggravation of the existing separatist tendencies, that had been influenced by the methods of arbitrary confiscations of private properties, often practiced by the Ottoman authorities in order to fill the state treasury; the discontent of the majority of the Ottoman Christian subjects²¹; the reign of terror in the countryside, created by the marauding gangs; the flight of the rural population to the big cities, which had only increased the cost of life and added to the general chaos in the urban areas as well; the widespread lack of the discipline in the army and fleet, together with the concomitant notorious commercial involvements of the Janissaries; at last, the very Ottoman government, the Divan, each year being refilled with people, that were able only in illegal amassing of money rather than in looking for the remedies to save their country from the present critical situation.²² On the whole, a fairly coherent account by the ruler of neighbouring state of what was going on in the once-powerful Ottoman Empire.²³ By then the Ottoman state, ironically, no longer fitted in fact its official name, *Memâlik-i mahrusa* (which literally means "well protected domains"), as the overall positions of the Sultan government grew more and more precarious. In the five years term (the quoted Catherine's letter was written in September 1782) in addition to all of the

²¹ The Russian Empress also provides here an assertion that of the Ottoman subjects the Christians are "at least five-six times more than the Turks". While this claim sounds rather irrelevant, it obviously had to support Catherine II's overall argument.

²² 'Catherine II to Joseph II, September 21/10, 1782'. A. R von Arneth, (ed.) *Joseph II und Katharina von Russland. Ihr Briefwechsel* (Wien, 1869), pp. 152-53.

²³ For special studies dealing with the period and the question of the Ottoman domestic crisis, among others, see: Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. 1789-1807* (Cambridge, 1971); Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları* (Ankara, 1999); Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları. Nizam-i Cedit, 1789-1807* (Ankara, 1988); Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul, 2001); Yücel Özkaya, *18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Toplumı* (İstanbul, 2007).

abovementioned problems, the Ottomans witnessed the Crimean Khanate annexed by Russia and found themselves engaged in yet another devastating war on their Northern borders.

Selim III thus inherited, apart from other dilemmas and accumulated deep troubles, also the war with Russia. Abdülhamid I, Selim's uncle and predecessor, got paralyzed under the influence of the news about the loss in December 1788 of Ochakov (Ottom. Özi) fortress²⁴ and died of brain insult some three months later, on 7 April 1789/ 11 Receb 1203.²⁵ On the same day, Selim became the new Sultan. Should one pay attention to this date, it is easy to call to mind an event, which happened almost at the same time on the other side of the European continent. On 5 May 1789 the *Estates General* were convened in Versailles. What no one could know at that point was that Europe came to the verge of momentous changes.

At the outset of his reign, the young Sultan (when he ascended to the throne, Selim was 28 years of age) was determined to proceed with the war until the victorious end. Winning the war was important not only for the country, but also for the Sultan's personal prestige, since "in the Ottoman Empire a defeated Sultan meant a doomed Sultan".²⁶ Notwithstanding with the demands of several commanders on the field who were certain about the weakness of the army and who insisted on seeking immediate peace, Selim still hoped to retake the Crimea with the help of Sweden and Prussia. Very meaningful were his words that "I would not give up the

²⁴ Abdülhamid I commented on the loss of Ochakov (Özi) and following massacre of its locals: "İşbu takrîr Alîm-Allâh ve kefâ-bihi beni yeniden mükedder eyledi. Bu kadar ehl-i İslâm'ın ricâl ve nisâ, kebir ve sağırleri kefare elinde esir olmak...Yâ Rab senden niyâz-i âcizânem kal'a-i mezbûru yine dest-i a'dâdan dest-i İslâma nasîb ettiğın günleri göster...". Quoted in: Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul, 2001), p. 35.

²⁵ About some additional circumstances of the death of Abdülhamid I see: Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden*, pp. 34-37.

²⁶ Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları. Nizam-i Cedid, 1789-1807*, p. 156.

fight against the Muscovites until the Crimea, with God's help, will be conquered. I would give my consent to the peace negotiations jointly with Prussia and Sweden only if [the Muscovites], under the mediation of Prussia, would return without fight the Crimea"²⁷, or "there is no peace with Russians, who are the principal enemies of the Ottoman state, as long as the Crimea will not be taken"²⁸.

However, the campaigns of 1789-1790 proved to be a complete disaster for the Ottomans, who lost the cities and fortresses in Moldavia and Dobruja one after another as the Russian forces appeared victorious in 1789 at Galatz (Galați), Focșani, Rymnik, Akkerman and Bender. In 1790, the Ottomans continued their unhappy series of defeats by surrendering to the Russians Kilia, Tulcea (Tulça), Isaccea (İsakçı), İsmail. On the Eastern front in the Caucasus, in summer 1791, the Ottomans lost Anapa²⁹, the last Ottoman stronghold on the Northern shores of the Black Sea. The war on the sea was in the same degree disappointing for Bâb-i Âli and ended in the domination of the Russian fleet in the area after the victories at Fidonisi, Kerch Strait, Tendra and Cape of Kaliakra. In addition, having concluded peace with Sweden (14 August, 1790), St. Petersburg got opportunity to concentrate more resources for war in the South. Another Ottoman ally, Prussia was not as much anti-Russian as it was anti-Austrian, and having made sure that the Austrians would quit this war without any substantial gains it had no reason to support the Ottomans and upset for the sake of the Porte its relations with Russia. Moreover, because of the revolutionary events in France no one, neither Prussia nor England or some other

²⁷ "Ben dahi Kırımı avn-i Hakla teshir edinciyedek Moskoflu cenginden fâriğ olmam. Eğer Kırımı Prusya tavassutu ile cenksiz verirse Prusya ve İsveç beraber olarak müsâlâhaya olvakit ruhsat veririm". Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları* (Ankara, 1999), p. 42.

²⁸ "... Kırım alınmadıkça Devleti Âliyenin asıl düşmanı olan Rusyalı ile sulh yoktur". Ibid. p. 43.

²⁹ According to the Jassy peace treaty was given back to the Ottomans, eventually taken over by Russia in 1829.

country could render the Porte at this time any effective assistance. Thus, Selim's wishes to make peace with Austria and to use all remaining forces of the Empire and its allies against the Russians ended in nothing. It was clear that the Ottoman state needed a breathing space to pull itself together, to cut war expenses and to use that money for the critical internal reforms conceived by the Sultan. What is more, the discipline in the Ottoman troops had fallen so low that the Janissaries were fleeing from the battlefield, and then were telling fantastic stories of their own exceptional bravery in Istanbul coffee-houses.³⁰ Finally, Selim III himself became convinced in the fruitlessness of further fighting, and realized that recovering the Crimea in the present situation was beyond his powers. Thus, he sought for urgent peace before the massive desertion of Janissaries from the front would destroy the remains of the Ottoman army.³¹

Consequently, the ensuing Ottoman-Russian negotiations led to the signing of the peace treaty in Jassy on 9 January 1792. Though Russia got new territorial acquisitions and commercial advantages for its merchants, it was far from being able to realize the boundless geopolitical schemes designed by the Russian and Austrian monarchs in the early 1780-s. As for the Ottomans, they, apart from failing to achieve their primary aim in the war, which was to get the Crimea back, suffered even further territorial losses and another serious blow to their state prestige.

It was not only the Ottomans who were willing to conclude peace. For Catherine the current war, even if victorious, was rather untimely, and the Russian Empress was also interested in ending the conflict for all the practical reasons cited

³⁰ Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları* (Ankara, 1999), pp. 44-45.

³¹ "Bari askerın cümlesi dağılmadan musalâhayı bir gün evvel akdetmeğe çalışasın". Ibid., p. 46.

above. As soon as the peace of Jassy was signed, the former belligerents faced the new task to build up relations with each other based rather on the sober demands of the present moment, and not on the chimerical, albeit desirable, massive political projects. For this reason the statesmen of both empires were well aware of the necessity to work out a new *modus vivendi* for the time being acceptable for each party involved.

3.2. Extraordinary Embassies of Mustafa Rasih Pasha and M.I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov

3.2.1. General observations

Following the stipulations of the 10th article of the Jassy peace treaty both the Tsar's and the Sultan's courts had to send their extraordinary representatives reciprocally, to exchange ratifications of the treaty and "to confirm the peace and true friendship between the two empires". In order to get an idea of what could be the tasks of the ambassadors, it is fundamental to look once again at the driving motives behind the politics of the both states following the peace of Jassy.

As it has been already said, neither side wished to continue the war at the moment. Regarding the Porte, it simply faced a defeat. The Ottoman traditional military organisation proved extremely inefficient in the battlefields against the Russian standing army that was trained, organised and commanded along the European lines. It refers equally to the organisation of the navy, the modern naval battle tactics and the superiority of the skills of the Russian Sea officers. The overall condition of the Ottoman military was only a reflection of the deep crisis of the entire Ottoman state, which literally was on the verge of survival. Therefore, instead of

continuing the costly and pernicious war, Selim III needed peace to have a time to engage in his long-before planned reforms known as *Nizâm-i Cedîd*.

Catherine II for the time being was likewise in need of peace on her southern borders, not only in view of the damaging impact inflicted upon the Russian economy by the incessant wars (including the Pugachev uprising) that Russia had been waging for several decades³², but also by taking into consideration the dramatically changed state of international affairs. While the developments of the French Revolution arrested the attention of the whole Europe, for Russia no less important were also the affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. While the Russian government was preoccupied with the war against the Ottomans, the Sejm of the united Polish-Lithuanian state succeeded in adopting the Constitution of 3 May, 1791, which threatened to diminish the heretofore unlimited Russian influence in the Commonwealth. Having finished the war in the South, Catherine would “get her hands untied”³³ to interfere in the Polish-Lithuanian affairs and again to take control over the situation in the country. By the end of 1791, at the point of concluding the peace with the Sultan, the Russian Empress already planned to march her army of about 130.000 men from the Ottoman front into the Commonwealth territories in the right-bank Ukraine³⁴ to suppress the May 3rd Constitution. Correspondingly, it was much important for Russia that at the moment the Ottomans would be keeping peace. Very revealing in this respect were the words of V. P. Kochubey, who wrote to S. R.

³² According to Veidemeier, the war of 1787-1792 did cost Russia over 60 million roubles, while the expenses made during the first Catherine’s war with the Ottomans (1768-1774) are estimated at about 7 million roubles. See: A. Veidemeier, *Dvor I zamechatelnie liudi v Rossii vo vtoroi polovinie XVIII veka* (2 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1846), p. 98.

³³ Emanuel Rostworowski, *Obalenie dzela Sejmu czteroletniego przez Targowicę i interwencję carską. Drugi Rozbiór (1792-1793)* In: Stefan Kieniewicz and Witold Kula (Eds). *Historia Polski* (Warsaw, 1958), Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 297.

³⁴ Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Polska w czasie trzech rozbiorów 1772-1799* (Warsaw, 1903) Vol. 3, p. 104.

Vorontsov, Russia's decades-long ambassador in London: "*Vis-à-vis de la Turquie nous désirons sincèrement de conserver la tranquillité, et toutes nos actions démontrent la sincérité de nos intentions*".³⁵

In accordance with the aforesaid concerns of both states, their peace aspirations were very much real and yet, paradoxically enough, this alone could not guarantee a firm peace between them. Each party had well-founded reasons not to trust the other and as a result felt insecure. No one could make the Ottomans to ignore the potential danger of a Russian attack and the numerous apparent manifestations of Catherine's grande entreprise. In the same way, Russia could never be sure that the Ottomans, supported by some European power, would not decide to unfold the Holy Banner of the Prophet (*Sancağ-i Şerif*) once again, at the most undesirable moment. Such a situation, quite in line with the classical maxim *si vis pacem para bellum*, necessarily required from the statesmen of both countries that they still should be prepared for war even while contemplating the peace negotiations.

It appears from this, that probably the most important task for the extraordinary envoys, which were to set off on a long journey, would be to reassure the other side of the peaceful and amicable intentions of their sovereigns. The envoys and their entourages, enjoying the status of the "legal spies", would also clearly perform intelligence tasks so that to collect as much information as possible on the country of their stay. Apart from that, many practical questions relating to the recent war, like the fate of the prisoners of war, restitution of the arrested property of the Russian merchants, the new Trade Tariff etc. were to be dealt with. To represent their

³⁵ 'V. P. Kochubey to S. R. Vorontsov, 14 / 3 October, 1792' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 59.

countries in the capacity of extraordinary envoys at the foreign courts were chosen Mikhail Illarionovich Golenishchev-Kutuzov and Mustafa Rasih Pasha.

3.2.2. The Envoy of the Russian Empire

The Russian court first planned in February 1792 to send to Constantinople Count Alexander Nikolaievich Samoylov, a nephew of all-powerful Potiomkin. Owing to Samoylov's later appointment in September³⁶ to the office of General-Prosecutor (*General-prokuror*) of the Senate³⁷ it was decided to assign the ambassadorial mission to M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov, a prominent General and a hero of two previous Russo-Ottoman wars.³⁸ The official orders in that respect had been issued on November 5, 1792.³⁹

The Russian representative at the High Porte, Poruchik General⁴⁰ M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov was 47 years of age by the time of his appointment, having spent his entire life in the Russian military service and making a brilliant soldier career. At the age of twelve Kutuzov had been enlisted in the Artillery and Engineering School in St. Petersburg, then in 1761, being a 15 years old teenager,

³⁶ 'V. P. Kochubey to S. R. Vorontsov, 17 / 6 September, 1792' Ibidem, p. 47.

³⁷ General-Prokuror was the highest office in the central administration of imperial Russia, established by Peter the Great in January 1722. The General-Prokuror had a seat in the Senate, acting there as the "tsar's eye", to supervise all activities. After the establishment of the ministries in 1802 the minister of justice was entrusted with the duties of the general-prokuror. See: Sergei G. Pushkarev, *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh century to 1917* (New Haven; London, 1970), p. 19; Entry 'General-Prokuror' In: *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia* (16 Vols.; Moscow, 1961-1976), Vol. 4, columns 192-93.

³⁸ The personality of M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov is probably the most known for his successful command of the Russian military forces at the point of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812.

³⁹ I. M. El'terman. *Posol'stvo kutuzova v Turtsii v 1793-1794 g.g.* Dissertatsiia na soiskaniie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk. Moscow State University, 1945. [El'terman gives the date of Kutuzov's appointment according to Julian calendar (October 25), though throughout her work she never specifies which system of reckoning, Julian or Gregorian, she uses; See also the letter of V. P. Kochubey to S. R. Vorontsov, dated November 7 (October 27), 1792. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁰ Генерал-поручик – A military rank existing in Russian army since 1730 through 1798, which corresponded to that of Lieutenant General.

started his service in the regular army. Gradually growing in ranks, Kutuzov took part in military operations against the Polish confederates. On several occasions before and right after the annexation of the Crimea, he took part in suppressing the Crimean Tatar uprisings in the peninsula, and also participated in both wars against the Ottoman Empire under Catherine II.

During these wars Kutuzov was twice heavily wounded in the head and each time miraculously survived. First wound happened on 4 August, 1774 (by then the Küçük Kaynarca Peace Treaty (21 July) had been already signed and the war in fact ended, though the news did not reach the troops yet), in the middle of the pursuit of the Ottoman detachment, which two days earlier landed on the Crimean coast near Alushta. The bullet ran through Kutuzov's head entering at the left temple, went behind his eyes, and came out at his right temple. Everyone expected Kutuzov to die in a few days, but he, though lost his right eye, survived. The second wound, got by Kutuzov at the siege of Ochakov (Özi) on 29 August, 1788, was almost identical to the first one. Again bullet passed behind the eyes, by some unexplainable miracle leaving the brain and the eye nerves untouched. Kutuzov, already a General, was still able to continue his service in the army and distinguished himself in December 1790 at the assault on the Ottoman fortress of Izmail (Ismail).⁴¹ Immediately after the peace of Jassy Kutuzov was ordered to enter the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

⁴¹ P. A. Geisman, Golienishchev-Kutuzov-Smolenskii *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1903), Volume 9 'Knappe-Kiukhel'becker', pp. 628-695; Entry 'Kutuzov' In: *Sovietskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia* (16 Vols.; Moscow, 1961-1976), Vol. 8, columns 335-337; some general information is also available at: 'Kutuzov, Mikhail Illarionovich, Prince' *The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Micropaedia*. 15th edition. 1995. Volume 7, p. 49.

and throughout the summer of 1792 he fought against the Polish insurgents to suppress the May 3 Constitution.⁴²

What is striking about the Russian extraordinary envoy is that Kutuzov was a very skilled soldier rather than a professional diplomat. For many even in St. Petersburg such an appointment was somewhat unexpected.⁴³ On the other hand, an experienced officer could far better evaluate the military potential of the Ottomans. As it had been said earlier, along with the peace negotiations it was as much important for both sides to get intelligence on each other's strength, dispositions and plans. The language of Catherine's secret instruction was quite explicit and gives a good clue to why Kutuzov had been chosen:

We had also considered that, due to Your skills in the art of war, You will not miss to make all those surveillances, which *at the proper time can be useful and necessary to us* (italics are mine; V. M.), as regards the location of the places, the roads, the population, the fortifications, the troops dispositions, the ammunition reserves and all that relates to the ground and sea forces.⁴⁴

Thus by entrusting the ambassadorial mission to Kutuzov, the Russian Empress first of all was relying on his immense military experience in order to sound the ground about the Ottoman fighting potential and whether and to what extent the Ottomans would be able to attack the Russian borders in the near future. Second, as one can see from the quote above, despite her obvious need for peace Catherine II still was

⁴² Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Polska w czasie trzech rozbiorów 1772-1799* (Warsaw, 1903), Vol. 3, pp. 176-77.

⁴³ V. P. Kochubey to S. R. Vorontsov, 7 November (27 October), 1792. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁴ “Имели мы и то уважение, что по искусству Вашему в ремесле военном не упустите сделать все те наблюдения, кои в свое время для нас полезны и нужны быть могут о положении мест, о дорогах, о населениях, укреплениях, расположении войск, запасах военных и о всем к воинской части сухопутной и морской принадлежащем”. Directive of Catherine II to M. I. Kutuzov, with a secret instruction “On political matters”. 4 March (21 February), 1793. In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich. Dokumenty* (Moscow, 1950), p. 199.

leaving open the possibility of further fighting with the Ottomans, this time in all likelihood in the Balkans.

3.2.3. The Envoy of the Sublime Porte

Just like his Russian counterpart, the extraordinary envoy of the High Porte to the Tsarist court Mustafa Rasih Pasha⁴⁵ was not a professional qualified diplomat. What makes a huge difference between the two embassies is that the Russian side at this point had already had opened its mission in Istanbul again, headed by *chargé d'affaires* ad interim, Colonel Alexander Khvostov. In this way, upon his arrival Kutuzov could easily get acquainted with the overall situation in the Ottoman capital and would have at his disposal the trained diplomatic personnel of the Russian embassy. Moreover, even though Kutuzov was not a career diplomat, he could be quite useful as an experienced soldier, and Catherine's instructions leave no doubts about the advisability of Kutuzov's appointment. In case of Rasih Mustafa Pasha, he purely and simply lacked both the necessary diplomatic skills and experience, and did not have all the advantages that were at the disposal of his Russian colleague. In view of the then existing Ottoman diplomatic practices it could not, in fact, be otherwise.

⁴⁵ Mustafa Rasih normally had the title of Efendi. For the time of his special ambassadorial mission in Russia Rasih was conferred the rank of *Rumeli Beylerbeyi*, with the title of Pasha. See: Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 2, p. 348; Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1278), Vol. 5, p. 274.

Upon his return to the High Porte, Mustafa Rasih continued his service using again the title of Efendi and is mentioned by Mehmed Süreyya in "Sicil-i Osmanî", well-known compendium of biographies of the celebrated Ottoman statesmen, as Rasih Mustafa Efendi:

Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 2, pp. 347-48.

A biography of Mustafa Rasih has been also given at "Halifetü'r Rüesa", a collection of brief life accounts of the Ottomans, who at different times were performing the duties of *Reis-ül-Küttab*, an Ottoman vague semblance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs: Ahmed Resmî, *Halifetü'r-Rüesâ veya Sefinetü'r-Rüesâ* (İstanbul, 1269), pp. 140-41.

For long centuries, the Ottomans never troubled themselves with establishing permanent diplomatic missions abroad. More than that, they were not much interested in what was going outside the vast, mighty and majestic domains of the Sultan, the abode of the most magnificent civilization and the only true religion. Convinced in their own a priori cultural superiority over all other states and peoples, especially the Christian infidels, the Ottomans considered their state absolutely self-sufficient. To use the *mot juste* of Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote, to the Ottomans even in the second half of the 18th century “the world of Islam was still *the* world”.⁴⁶ In other words, such a worldview was based on the premise that the others may need and seek support, good will and generosity of the Ottoman Empire, but the Ottoman Empire does not need anyone. Consequently, little value was attached to the diplomatic art, which resulted in the fact that the Ottoman statesmen knew almost nothing about the outer world neither did they possess any understanding of the fundamentals and practices of European diplomacy. Under the given circumstances, all practical issues concerning the relations of the Porte with other states were always discussed and settled in Istanbul, in an environment of constant intrigues and conspiracies, bred by contending parties of European ambassadors and those of the Ottoman statesmen alike.

By the end of the 18th century, however, it was growing more evident that the Ottoman government could no longer afford the attitudes it used to display a few centuries before and happily ignore the later developments in European politics. Within a wide-ranging set of reforms conceived by Selim III, some fundamental changes were to be made as well in the heretofore completely disregarded field of

⁴⁶ Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote. *Mubadele: an Ottoman-Russian exchange of ambassadors* (Chicago, 1970), p. 13.

diplomacy.⁴⁷ Yet, at the moment, the Ottomans did have neither their own abroad embassies nor trained and skilled diplomats.⁴⁸

In this context, the Ottoman envoy to Russia could not be something other than what he was: bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of the bureaucratic system of the Ottoman state. Appointed to be the Sultan's extraordinary and plenipotentiary representative at the court of the Russian Empress in the end of May 1792⁴⁹, Mustafa Rasih Efendi was about the same age as his Russian fellow ambassador, or a couple of years older.⁵⁰ Unlike Kutuzov, Rasih made his career not on the battlefields but serving and getting experience in the chanceries of the Ottoman central state apparatus. Starting as a junior clerk at the Chancery of the Grand Vizier, and apparently owing to his marriage with daughter of Âtîfzade Ömer Vahid Efendi, a very influential high-standing bureaucrat during 1760-1770-s⁵¹, Rasih could easier

⁴⁷ For Ottoman traditional diplomatic practices and reforms consult: Thomas Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 (1963), pp. 295-315; J. C. Hurewitz, 'The Europeanization of the Ottoman Diplomacy: The Conversion from Unilateralism to Reciprocity in the Nineteenth Century' *Belleten*, XXV (1961), pp. 455-66; Carter V. Findley, 'The Foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: The Beginnings of Bureaucratic Reform under Selim III and Mahmud II' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (1972): 388-416; Idem, 'The Legacy of Tradition to Reform: Origins of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1 (1970), pp. 334-357; Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara, 1987); Ercümen Kuran, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı İkamet Elçiliklerinin Kuruluşu ve İlk Elçilerin Siyasi Faaliyetleri, 1793-1821* (Ankara, 1988); Hasan Korkut, *Osmanlı Elçileri Gözü ile Avrupa* (İstanbul, 2007); Chapters in books: 'Window to the West', in: Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and New: the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. 1789-1807* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 180-99; 'Diplomasi Alanında Islahat', in: Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları. Nizam-i Cedit, 1789-1807* (Ankara, 1988), pp. 163-86.

⁴⁸ The only exception in this case could be Phanariotes, the subjects of the Sultan originating from the wealthy Greek Orthodox families, traditionally very much influential in the Ottoman administration, who also composed the majority of the *dragomans* at the Porte and at the foreign missions in Istanbul.

⁴⁹ Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara, 1987), p. 164.

⁵⁰ The year of Kutuzov's birth, given in most of his biographies, is 1745. The age of Mustafa Rasih can be guessed from the data provided in his official biography by Mehmed Süreyya. It is stated there, that Rasih died on 14 Cemâziyelevvel, 1218 / 1 September, 1803, being sixty years old:

Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmâni yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 2, p. 348. Thus, according to this information, Mustafa Rasih must have been born around 1743.

⁵¹ Mustafa Rasih's father-in-law, among his other state offices, at different times occupied the posts of *Tersane emini* (Supervisor of the Naval Arsenal), *Reis-ül-küttap* (Director of Foreign affairs), *Defterdar-i şikk-i evvel* (First Treasurer). For biographies of Ömer Vahid Efendi see:

get his further promotions as *Topçu kâtibi* (Scribe in the Artillery corps), *Sûratçı nâzırı* (Superintendent in the Rapid-fire rifle corps), *Tezkire-i sani* (Second secretary of the Grand Vizier) (1787-1788), *Tezkire-i evvel* (1788-1789) (First Secretary of the Grand Vizier) and *Rikâb-i hümâyûn kethüdası* (Chief Attendant of the Sultan's retinue) (1790-1792), Rasih's last post before being appointed ambassador. Having received on 28 January, 1793⁵² in the audience at the Sultan's court the Royal letter (*Nâme-i Hümâyûn*) of Selim III to the Russian Empress, Mustafa Rasih set out on his journey two days later, on 30 January, 1793.⁵³

Conermann argues that in view of the high offices held by Mustafa Rasih, it is also possible to consider him a person who belonged to the narrow circle of the reformers of Selim III. He reinforces this argument by drawing attention to the fact that Mustafa Rasih was among the limited number of those higher officials, which upon the special request of the Sultan presented at the Imperial Council their own reform proposals (*lâyiha*) to launch the *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* reforms.⁵⁴ Though not taking an active part in the reforms, Rasih obviously was closely connected with the key figures of the *Nizâm-ı Cedîd*, including the Sultan himself. Being thus at least to some extent a confidant of the Ottoman reformers' circle with Selim III at the head, Rasih was expected, apart from the declared official purposes of his mission, to

Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 3, pp. 594-95; Ahmed Resmî, *Halifetü'r-Rüesâ veya Sefinetü'r-Rüesâ* (İstanbul, 1269), pp. 116-18.

⁵² Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1278), Vol. 5, p. 274; Hayreddin Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*. (İstanbul, 1333), p. 10.

⁵³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1278), Vol. 5, p. 274.

⁵⁴ Stephan Conermann, 'Das Eigene und das Fremde: der Bericht der Gesandtschaft Musafa Rasihs nach St. Petersburg 1792-1794', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 17 (1999), p. 263. More detailed account on the personalities of the *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* reformers and their reform proposals has been given by Stanford Shaw, in chapter 'The Reformers' of his book: Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and New: the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III.1789-1807* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 86-111. The texts of *lâyihâs* have been published in: Enver Ziya Karal, *Nizâm-ı Cedid'e dair lâyhalar Tarih vesikalari*, 1 (1941- 1942), pp. 414-25; *Tarih vesikalari*, 2 (1942-1943), pp. 104-11, 342-51, 424-32. The propositions made by Mustafa Rasih are also available here, at: Enver Ziya Karal, *Nizâm-ı Cedid'e dair lâyhalar. Tarih vesikalari*, 2 (1942-1943), pp. 107-8, 425-7.

provide the Porte in as much as he could with his observations on all the spheres of life in the country of his stay.

It should come then as no surprise that Rasih's official ambassadorial report (*sefâretnâme*)⁵⁵ presented to the Porte upon his return includes very detailed intelligence information on Russia. It is a rather extensive description of the Russian economy, society, army and state, and is far different from usual Ottoman *sefâretnâmes*, which were normally concentrated on ambassadors' technical tasks, diplomatic ceremonial procedures, many smaller formalities of protocol and how the ambassadors were doing their best to defend the honour of their monarchs. What is remarkable, the *sefâretnâme* of Mustafa Rasih touches not only upon the current affairs, but also upon the events of the Russian relatively recent history, telling about the all-encompassing reforms of Peter the Great and their beneficial effect on the results of the Northern war Russia waged at the Peter's time against Sweden.⁵⁶ These recordings of the Ottoman official, no doubt, are in close connection with the new reform movement of Selim III, giving an idea how Russia at the dawn of the 18th century managed to cope successfully with the problems similar to those the

⁵⁵ The *Sefâretnâme* of Mustafa Rasih Pasha's embassy was actually written not by the envoy himself, but by Seyyid Abdullah Efendi, a scribe at the mission: Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara, 1987), p. 163. The Latin transcription of the given *sefâretnâme*'s original Ottoman text is available at: Uğur İyigünler, *Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin Rusya Sefareti ve Sefaretnamesi*. MA thesis, Kırıkkale University, 1998. The author of this MA thesis for the most part has only transcribed the Ottoman manuscript into its more easily readable, rendered in printed Latin characters, verbatim version. No attempt of some analytical evaluation of its contents has been made, though.

⁵⁶ “Kral-i mesfûr [Peter the Great; V. M.] ... imparatorluğa nasb ve intihâb olunduğu helâlde Rusya'nın her hâlde fûnûn ve harf ve sanâyi'i nâkıs ve nâ-tamâm ve bi'l- cümle idâre-i umûr-i mülkiyye ve askeriyyesi bî-râbîta ve intizâm memleketin nizâmı... ancak bi'n-nefs Avrupa memâlikini geşt ü gûzar ile... ahâli ve asâkire lâzım ve mühimm olan hâlât ve keyfiyyâtı mu'âyene ve tedkik husûsuna muhtâc olduğunu mülâhaza itmeğle... kadîmden makarr-i devletinde müstakarr olan merâsim ve kavâ'idin ekserâsını tağyîr ve tebdîl ve emr-i ticâreti tervîc ve tekmîl ve ma'tûf-i askeriyyesin tertîb ve fûnûn-i harbiyyeyi tefhîm ve ta'lîm ve edevât ve levâzım-i beriyye ve merâkib-i bahriyyesini tanzîm ve ahâli-i diyârînin ziyî ve libâsların deşîğdirmek ikâ' iderek vaktinde İsveç Devletile âğâz-i muhâsama ve muhârebe eyledikde kendünün verdiği nizâma ve râbîtadan küllî intifâ' eylediğinden ihlâfî dahi eserine iktifâyı iltizâm itmişlerdir”. Uğur İyigünler, *Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin Rusya Sefareti*, pp. 6-7.

Ottomans were trying to solve presently. Among other things, special attention in Rasih's report was paid to the organization of the Russian army along the European patterns.⁵⁷ It can be said without any risk of exaggeration that, actually, one of the most tangible results achieved by the mission of Mustafa Rasih to Russia in 1793-1794 was that it gave the Ottoman government certainly by no means an exhaustive, but more or less detailed first-hand account of the Russian society.

At the same time, the capacities of the Ottoman embassy were quite limited from the very beginning. Mustafa Rasih, a high-standing bureaucrat going on a foreign mission, was supposed only to discuss the fate of the Ottoman prisoners of war. Neither having any diplomatic experience or knowing Western languages he likewise hardly could and in fact did not contact other European ambassadors at the Russian court.⁵⁸ The actual diplomatic game as regards the line and preferences of the Ottoman foreign policy, with participation of the diplomatic representatives of the main European powers, was traditionally going on at Istanbul.

3.2.4. Exchange of Embassies

It was not for the first time when under much the same circumstances the extraordinary embassies were reciprocally exchanged between the Ottoman and Russian states. A couple of decades earlier, in compliance with the Küçük Kaynarca peace treaty (1774) provisions, Abdülkerim Efendi (like Mustafa Rasih granted for a term of his mission the title of Pasha) on the part of Bâb-i Âli and General in Chief Prince Nikolai Vasil'evich Repnin on the part of the Russian court visited each

⁵⁷ İyigünler, *Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin*, pp. 27, 29, 31, 49.

⁵⁸ At least, as Hayreddin Nedim reasonably points out, should Mustafa Rasih have some meetings with other foreign ambassadors it would certainly be reflected in the Sefaretnâme and his letters to the Bâb-i Âli. However, any evidences of this kind are missing: Hayreddin Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*. (İstanbul, 1333), p. 107.

other's countries in 1775 as extraordinary and plenipotentiary representatives of their monarchs.⁵⁹ The similar exchange of embassies took place even earlier, in 1740, when after the Belgrade peace treaty (1739) Mehmed Emin Efendi and General in Chief Alexander Ivanovich Rumiantsev were sent to Russia and the Ottoman Empire respectively.⁶⁰ So, in terms of the ceremonial procedures to be held at the exchange of embassies, the sides had already the set precedents to follow.

The large trains⁶¹ of both embassies left their capitals in winter-early spring of 1793, and, with many rest stops on their way, moved at a slow pace towards the border dividing two countries. It took a few months for each embassy to reach the borderland areas of their empires. By the month of April the Ottoman plenipotentiary and his entourage encamped in the Moldovan town of Bender, situated on the right bank of the Dniester River that served as a boundary between the Ottoman and Russian domains. The Russian ambassador's headquarters were established in Elisabethgrad (nowadays- Kirovohrad, Ukraine), a town, only recently founded amidst the vast plains on the former Cossack-Tatar border and called to be the centre of the Southern steppe region newly acquired by Russia. At this point, as the distance between the embassies grew less, their correspondence became more intense.⁶² The sides were preparing for the official ceremony of exchange, though at the same time

⁵⁹ A detailed account on both these embassies, Ottoman and Russian, is available at: Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote, *Mubadele: an Ottoman-Russian exchange of ambassadors* (Chicago, 1970).

⁶⁰ P. A. Geisman, Rumiantsov Aleksandr Ivanovich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 Vols.; Petrograd, 1918), Volume 17 "Romanova-Riasovskii", p. 471.

⁶¹ The Russian embassy, for example, consisted of 476 only officially appointed members, not counting all kinds of lackeys and servants. Suffice it to say, that the team of musicians and the choir singers alone included 98 men. For the full list of the Russian embassy see: Personale des Gefolges der nach Constantinopel gehenden Gesandtschaft, in: Heinrich Christoph von Reimers, *Reise der Russisch-Kaiserlichen Ausserordentlichen Gesandtschaft an die Othomanische Pforte im Jahr 1793*. (St. Petersburg, 1803), Vol. 1, pp. 7-11. El'terman provides the figure of more than 650 people being enrolled with the Russian delegation: I. M. El'terman, *Posol'stvo Kutuzova*, p. 70.

⁶² The questions concerning the time and place of the exchange ceremony, as well as on which side's raft (the exchange was to be made in the middle of the Dniester River) it should take place, became the centrepiece of the given correspondence: Hayreddin Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*. (İstanbul, 1333), pp. 14-27.

some strange rumours about a possible break-up between the empires were floating in the air.⁶³ However trustworthy or not these rumours could be, in view of the officially declared intentions of both governments, they do clearly indicate that the fear of a new war was still widely shared by many people.

April and May passed in final preparations of all the necessary equipment and in waiting when the roads would dry out from the spring rains.⁶⁴ Meanwhile the place and the date of the prerequisite exchange ceremony were also being discussed. It was finally decided, in accordance with the request of the Russian side, that the exchange should be made in the vicinity of Dubossary,⁶⁵ a small border town situated on the left bank of the Dniester and only one year before, by virtue of the Jassy peace treaty, incorporated into the dominions of the Russian Empire. As for the date, the Russians at first proposed to chose 14 June. Considering that this day was falling on Friday (the day of obligatory public worship in Islam) it was agreed that the exchange ceremony would take place on the next day, that is, on Saturday, 15 June, 1793 / 6 Zilkade, 1207.⁶⁶

⁶³ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 41.

⁶⁴ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 43.

⁶⁵ Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II on the designation of the place for the “exchange” of the Russian and the Ottoman ambassadors. 8 May (27 April) 1793. In: L. G. Beskrovnyi, (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich. Dokumenty* (Moscow, 1950), p. 207-8; ‘Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II on the agreement about the place of the “exchange” of ambassadors. 21 / 10 May, 1793’. Ibidem, pp. 208-9.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 57; ‘Letter of M. I. Kutuzov to A. S. Khvostov (Russian Charge d’Affaires in Constantinople). 10 June (30 May), 1793’. In: L. G. Beskrovnyi, (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich. Dokumenty* (Moscow, 1950), p. 211; ‘Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II about the designation of the place for the “exchange” of the ambassadors. 12/1 June, 1793’. Ibidem, p. 211-12; Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1278), Vol. 5, p. 306.

It is amazing, but the vast majority of the authors, who were writing on this topic (See: F. Clément-Simon, ‘Un ambassadeur extraordinaire russe à l’époque de Catherine II et de Sélim III’ *Revue d’histoire diplomatique*, 21 (1907), pp. 25-39; Halil İnalçık, ‘Yaş Muahedesinde Sonra Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetleri (Rasih Efendi ve General Kutuzof elçilikleri)’ *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4 (1946), pp. 195-203; I. M. El’terman, *Posol’stvo Kutuzova v Turtsii v 1793-1794 g. g.*. Dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk. Moscow State University, 1945. N. P. Mun’kov, *Diplomaticheskaiia deyatel’nost’ M. I. Kutuzova (1792-1813 g.g.)* Kazan’ State University, 1958) went along rather uncritically with the issue of dates, and the repeated wrong, or rather unclear, dates are simply passing from one article to another. This problem

The exchange of the two embassies has been described by many authors, but probably one of the most exhaustive and original accounts belongs to Heinrich Christoph von Reimers, a 25 years old Russian nobleman, who was then a member of the Russian delegation.⁶⁷ Another young Russian official employed at the embassy, Johann Christian von Struve, has also left a very informative and important written description of his travels with the Russian ambassadorial train, where among other things he tells about what he saw on 15 June 1793 on the banks of the Dniester near Dubossary.⁶⁸ The most comprehensive Ottoman account of the exchange ceremony is given in the work of Hayreddin Nedim, published in 1914/1915 and thoroughly based upon the Ottoman documentary materials, and in the first place upon the *sefâretnâme* of Mustafa Rasih's embassy.⁶⁹

As far as the ceremony proper is concerned, it replicated the one held in 1775 down to the smallest detail.⁷⁰ It seems that both the Ottoman and the Russian courts

is, unfortunately, quite typical when it comes to the Russian history and the Russian sources. In many cases even the Russian historians forget that it was the Julian calendar that remained in use in Russia up until 1918, and that it a little differs from the Gregorian one. For that reason, the dates in sources are usually given according to the Julian system of time reckoning (though at times the dates provided can be Gregorian as well). Thus it is advisable to check any specific data, so that not to mix the Julian and the Gregorian calendar systems. Sometimes a comparison with the Hijri dates, if available, is very helpful.

⁶⁷ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, 1803, pp. 58-64. This is, in the strict sense, a collection of letters written throughout the embassy journey to an unknown friend in St. Petersburg. The French article of Clément-Simon in its part, which describes the exchange of the ambassadors, is obviously largely based on Reimers' evidence, and as well as in many other places it looks to be very close to the text of Reimers, even to the point of uncritical repetition of the Julian dates used by Russian official: F. Clément-Simon, 'Un ambassadeur extraordinaire russe à l'époque de Catherine II et de Sélim III' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 21 (1907): 25-39.

⁶⁸ Johann Christian von Struve, [published anonymously]. *Travels in the Crimea; a History of the Embassy from Petersburg to Constantinople in 1793, including Their Journey through Kremenschuck, Oczakow, Walachia & Moldavia with their Reception at the Court of Selim the Third.* (London, 1802), pp. 74-6.

⁶⁹ The Ottoman description of the exchange ceremony is available at: Hayreddin Nedim, *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*. (İstanbul, 1333), pp. 28-9.

⁷⁰ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II about the "exchange" between him and the Turkish ambassador. 18 / 7 June, 1793' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi, (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich. Dokumenty* (Moscow, 1950), pp. 212-13.

in this case, like in many others, never spared money for their imperial prestige. The splendour and magnificence of the ceremony must have been indeed amazing. In this respect an observation of Reimers looks interesting and deserves to be mentioned. A young Russian says, that throughout his life he was an eyewitness of many remarkable ceremonies, including the Betrothal of the Doge of Venice to the Adriatic Sea in 1788, the address of the Pope to about 26 thousand of believers gathered on the St. Peter's Square in Vatican and the Opening session of the Estates-General on 5 May 1789 in Versailles, though still the Exchange of the Ottoman and the Russian embassies on the Dniester in terms of its grandeur surpassed everything he had seen before.⁷¹

After the two delegations in dazzling pomp arrived at their sides of the Dniester, the ceremony of the exchange began. It was started with a cannon shot from the Russian bank that was immediately answered from the Ottoman territory.⁷² The ambassadors, slowly moving with their entourages to the banks, were again greeted by ten cannon rounds fired on each side of the border. Mustafa Rasih Pasha and Kutuzov, accompanied by the exchange commissars and interpreters, at the same time took off from the opposing banks of the river and simultaneously disembarked at the big raft fixed in the very middle of the Dniester, on the invisible yet real border line between the two empires.

The ambassadors, two men of almost the same age, sat down in the armchairs prepared for them on the raft since the early morning. A weathered soldier, father of five little daughters, and a practised bureaucrat, father of three sons, two of whom

⁷¹ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, pp. 58-9.

⁷² Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 60; Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 28.

were following him on his foreign mission⁷³, met in this way on the edge of the vast expanses of their countries. They greeted each other through the interpreters, and for a short time had a formal conversation. Then, again synchronously, Mustafa Rasih and Kutuzov stood up, and, each taken by the hand by their own commissars⁷⁴, were handed over to the commissar of the opposite side.⁷⁵ After that the Russian envoy and his entourage proceeded to the Ottoman bank, while his Ottoman colleague crossed the river in the opposite direction and stepped on the Russian territory.

Upon crossing the Dniester the ambassadorial trains stayed in their camps for another ten days, the Ottoman on the Russian side and vice versa, so that some curious young folks from the Russian embassy had even the time to visit the Ottoman camp. A French renegade in the Ottoman service, who was a physician of the ambassador, showed them the camp.⁷⁶ Finally, on 25 June 1793 each embassy set off to continue their journeys. Kutuzov's delegation moved in the direction of the Sultan's capital, and that one of Mustafa Rasih took the road through Yelizavetgrad, Kharkov and Moscow to St. Petersburg.⁷⁷

3.3. Ottoman Embassy in the Russian Empire

As to the duties of Mustafa Rasih's embassy, they were very much formal and had been confined to the delivering of the Sultan's Imperial letter to the Empress,

⁷³ Two sons of Mustafa Rasih, Mehmed Nuri Efendi and Ibrahim Edhem Efendi were members of the Ottoman ambassadorial delegation: Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 11.

⁷⁴ The commissars at the ceremony of the ambassadorial exchange were the Commandant of the Bender Fortress (*Bender Muhafızı*) Hasan Pasha on the Ottoman side, and the Governor General of Belorussia, General in Chief Piotr Bogdanovich Passek on the Russian side.

⁷⁵ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 64; Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost'*, pp. 44-5; For description of the previous similar exchange of the extraordinary ambassadors that took place in 1775 see: Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote, *Mubadele: an Ottoman-Russian exchange of ambassadors* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 125-9.

⁷⁶ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 72.

⁷⁷ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 75.

along with the presents for Catherine II and her courtiers. In accomplishing the norms of the ceremonial protocol, the Ottoman envoy was once again to confirm before the Russian government the peaceful intentions of the Porte. In addition, Mustafa Rasih had to discuss the issue about those Ottoman war prisoners that were still staying in Russia and apparently to gather more information on various Russian state and social institutions, which could be of interest for the Sultan and his circle of *Nizâm-i Cedîd* reformers. In view of the traditional attitudes towards the diplomatic art held for centuries at the Porte, the Ottoman extraordinary envoy to Russia was not supposed to conduct complicated political negotiations. According to the usual practice, as the Ottomans never had their own regular diplomatic representatives at other European courts, the matters concerning the foreign policy of the Porte were discussed in Istanbul at the conferences with the European ambassadors residing in the Ottoman capital.

Mustafa Rasih had been appointed to his ambassadorial mission to Russia in May 1792⁷⁸, though due to the fact that the Russian side finally decided upon the appointment of its own envoy only in autumn⁷⁹, the actual preparations for Mustafa Rasih's departure started at the beginning of 1793. On January 23, 1793 the Ottoman envoy received the presents he would deliver to the Russian Empress and other Russian state officials. The presents included very precious aigrette (سرغوج), gemstones, gilded belt, carpet (بساط), the horse harnesses gilded and studded with gemstones, stirrups, three gilded tea-services (طاقم زرین طلا), Chinese silks, various ointments and fragrances, with rose oil and balm from Mecca among these, and a huge costly nomad tent made of muslin and embroidered with a gold thread and

⁷⁸ Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (Ankara, 1987), p. 164.

⁷⁹ Kutuzov was assigned to his post on November 5, 1792.

pearls.⁸⁰ It took ten four-horse carriages in order to carry all of the presents.⁸¹ The overall importance attached by the Ottomans to their diplomatic mission that was to be sent for St. Petersburg could also be seen in a single fact that the High Porte had spent for it, despite its grave financial situation, more than 600,000 *guruş*.⁸² On January 28 Mustafa Rasih was given the Royal Letter (*Nâme-i Hümayun*) of the Sultan to Catherine II, and departed from Istanbul on January 30, 1793.⁸³

Upon the exchange ceremony that took place in the middle of the Dniester River in the vicinity of the city of Dubossary on 15 June, 1793 Mustafa Rasih Pasha entered the Russian soil. On the Russian side of the Dniester a special tent was already prepared for the Ottoman ambassador, wherein he proceeded in the company of the Commissar at the Exchange ceremony General in Chief Piotr Passek and the Guiding Officer (*Mihmandar*- Ottom.; *Pristav*- Russ.) Major General Il'ya Bezborodko, brother of the Russian Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bezborodko. Inside the tent all of the guests were served coffee, fruits and sweets.⁸⁴ Both the Ottoman and the Russian embassies stayed for another ten days on the opposing banks of the Dniester, and then on the same day, 25 June 1793, embarked on their further journeys across the foreign lands.⁸⁵

The road of the Ottoman delegation was going through Elizavetgrad, Aleksopol (nowadays Tsarychanka village in Dnipropetrovs'k region, Ukraine), Kremenchuk,

⁸⁰ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 10.

⁸¹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 11.

⁸² Thomas Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 (1963), p. 304.

⁸³ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 10-11.

⁸⁴ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 75.

Poltava, Kharkov, Kursk⁸⁶ and then Tula and Moscow towards St. Petersburg. All the way the envoy of the Sultan and his mission due to their status were rendered special attention by local authorities. Whenever the embassy happened to pass by the Russian fortresses the latter honoured the Ottoman ambassador with artillery rounds and fireworks.⁸⁷

As the delegation proceeded on its way, from time to time it was approached by the Muslim prisoners of war, men and women, who applied for protection at the embassy. Apparently, the first and foremost question Mustafa Rasih asked his guides as soon as he crossed the Russian border was the situation with those Ottoman prisoners of war, which still stayed in the Russian captivity. Much to his regret, the envoy of Selim III could not get any satisfactory answer as the Russian guiding officers refused to talk about this matter saying that they did not know anything about it and that the whole issue was not in their responsibility.⁸⁸ Mustafa Rasih put all his complaints on paper, largely exaggerating the grievances he suffered, in his opinion, from the Russian side. The Sultan himself noted that his ambassador was unnecessarily making things more complicated than they actually were.⁸⁹ Be that as it may, Mustafa Rasih during the whole term of his stay in Russia still had that serious problem of the Muslim prisoners, those he gave refuge at the embassy and those which remained in Russia as ostensibly newly baptized Orthodox Christians. In this respect the ambassador experienced continuous quarrels with his guiding officers, both en route and after arrival at St. Petersburg.

⁸⁶ P. Kititsyn, 'Turetskoie posol'stvo v 1793 godu' *Kievskaia starina*, 23 (1888), № 10, pp. 26-9; Idem., 'Proiezd chrez Yekaterinoslavskoie namestnichestvo turetskogo posol'stva, v 1793 godu' *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei (ZOOID)*, 10 (1877), pp. 504-6.

⁸⁷ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 31.

⁸⁸ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 33.

⁸⁹ Upon one of Mustafa Rasih's reports Selim III wrote: "*Rasih Paşa ama çok hadis yazmış*". Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 33.

On the way to the Russian capital among the most remarkable places visited by the embassy were Tula, traditional centre of Russian “military-industrial complex” since the times of Peter the Great, and Moscow, the ancient capital of the Muscovite principality. As the Ottoman delegation came in late July to the town of Tula, the ambassador and other members of his entourage (two sons of Rasih, *Hazinedar* (treasurer) of the embassy, the author of embassy’s *sefâretnâme* Abdullah Efendi, and some other persons from the mission) were shown eight Tula arms factories (*alât-i harbiye kârhaneleri*), which were working on the energy of moving water and produced rifles, pistols, sabres and all kinds of ironware. The Ottoman guests noted the industrial specialization of the factory workers and the high quality of the manufactured products.⁹⁰ Following this visit the ambassador was presented with a gift of two skilfully made pistols, a pen-case, and a polished steel rosary. For other visiting members of the Ottoman delegation there were given two pairs of pistols and three double-barrelled rifles. Then Mustafa Rasih and his companions were shown the Arsenal (*cebhane*) situated in the centre of the town.⁹¹ Apparently, such a display of modern weaponry manufacture, apart from reasons of usual hospitality, would pursue the objective to proudly show the Ottoman side the successes of Russian modernization.

Mustafa Rasih’s embassy departed from Tula on 1 August, 1793 / 23 Zilhicce, 1207, and bypassing Serpukhov, the ancient fortress of the Muscovite principality, on 7 August, 1793 / 29 Zilhicce, 1207 arrived at Moscow.⁹² It looks that the whole

⁹⁰ “*Maharet kasdiyle sarf-i dikkat itmeleri muayene-i ma’mulat san’atleri olmuştur*”. Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 34.

⁹¹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 34.

⁹² Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 35.

month of Muharram the embassy stayed there, since the date of its departure from the first capital of the Muscovite state is given in the official ambassadorial record as 5 Safer⁹³, which falls on 12 September 1793. While in Moscow, the Ottoman delegation were shown the ancient treasury of the Russian crown, and particularly the throne of the Muscovite monarchs, the chambers filled with jewels and precious stones, ancient suits of armour, chain-mails, gold and silver utensils, rifles and pistols. The soldier guardian, whether trying to aggrandize the history of his state in the eyes of the foreigners, or, what is probable, not knowing himself the earlier history of the Muscovite principality, told the Ottoman guests that the presents in the treasury are being collected for a fabulous period of 800 years.⁹⁴

Despite all of the distortions and misspellings of the Ottoman orthography, as well as extremely hard for an ear of the Ottoman scribes Russian place-names, it is quite possible, having armed oneself with maps of modern Tula, Moscow, Tver, Novgorod and Leningrad oblasts of the Russian Federation, to trace down the way of Mustafa Rasih's mission, as it is given in the ambassadorial record. It is amazing, but the smaller places the Ottoman embassy had been passing by more than two hundred years ago did not change their names neither during the tsarist, nor Soviet, nor post-Soviet times. More than that, the general route by which the Ottomans were moving, obviously due to the local topographic features, almost completely corresponds to the web of the modern high roads.

Accordingly, the Ottoman embassy proceeded through Klin (nowadays a town in Moscow oblast), village of Zavidovo (Konakovo district, Tver oblast), village of

⁹³ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 36.

⁹⁴ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 35-36.

Gorodnia (Konakovo district, Tver oblast), Tver, village of Mednoye (28 km West of Tver), Torzhok (Tver oblast). At this point, in Torzhok, the Ottomans encountered with the Russian winter, since they were right there when the snow first fell that year, on 13 Safer, 1208 / 20 September 1793.⁹⁵ Then the mission of Mustafa Rasih continued its way making stations at Vdropuzhsk, Vyshniy Volochek (both- in Tver oblast), then across the Msta River the embassy headed for the village of Khotilovo (Tver oblast), Yedrovo (Valday district, Novgorod oblast), Valday, Yazhelbitsy, Krestry, villages of Zaytsevo and Bronnitsa (all- in Novgorod oblast). On 29 Safer 1208 / 6 October 1793 Mustafa Rasih Pasha arrived at Novgorod.⁹⁶ From here Mustafa Rasih sent the letters to the leading Russian officials in St. Petersburg (to Chancellor Ivan Osterman, Foreign Minister Alexander Bezborodko and the Tsarina's minion (*imparatoriçe cenabına musahib ve mukarreb*) General Platon Zubov) informing about his arrival. This was done in correspondence with the precedent of the previous Ottoman embassy to Russia of Abdulkerim Pasha, who, while he had been away from Moscow at approximately the same distance, also sent the similar letters to the Russian government.⁹⁷ On the next day, 1 Rebiülevvel 1208 / 7 October 1793, Mustafa Rasih left Novgorod and, going through Podberez'ye, Spasskaya Polist' (both-Novgorod oblast) and Liuban' (Leningrad oblast), on 12 Rebiülevvel 1208 / 18 October 1793 finally arrived at St. Petersburg.⁹⁸ Thus the Ottoman embassy reached the capital of the Russian Empire after four months since it entered the Russian lands. In two days (on 20 October) the extraordinary ambassador of the Sultan paid a visit to the Chancellor (*Başvekil*) Ivan Andreievich Osterman. Then, on the next day, Mustafa Rasih was a guest of the Foreign Minister

⁹⁵ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 36.

⁹⁶ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 37.

⁹⁷ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 38.

⁹⁸ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 38.

(*Hariciye Naziri*, or also at times called in the Ottoman text *Vekil-i Sani*, the Second minister) Alexander Andreievich Bezborodko.⁹⁹

By coincidence, the Ottoman delegation entered the Russian capital at the special moment. Nine days earlier St. Petersburg had become the scene of wedding of the grandson of Catherine II, 15-year-old Grand Duke Alexander Pavlovich (future Emperor Alexander I),¹⁰⁰ and the festivities that were organized on this occasion (*vürudumuzden mukaddemce velime-i tezvic*) still continued at the time of the arrival of Mustafa Rasih's embassy.¹⁰¹ The Ottoman guests were also invited to a masquerade with illumination (*came-i tebdil fişenk şenliği*), where they could see in the evening sky along with the fire flowers and various figures of motley colours the flaming names of the Empress, heir apparent and the closest courtiers.¹⁰²

On 19 Rebiülevvel 1208 / 25 October 1793 the reception at the Empress' palace took place. Mustafa Rasih arrived at the palace with the presents, which were placed on thirty two plates and trays. After the greeting speeches made by the ambassador and the Russian chancellor Osterman, Mustafa Rasih handed over to the Russian authorities the imperial letter (*Nâme-i Hümayun*) of Selim III¹⁰³ that after the numerous official titles of the Russian Empress and the Ottoman Sultan was containing the general wishes to stop the enmity and keep the eternal peace between the two countries.

⁹⁹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁰ Kititsyn, *Turetskoie posol'stvo*, p. 28. On 9 October, 1793 Alexander married 14 year old Louise of Baden, who took the name Elizabeth Alekseevna.

¹⁰¹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 47.

¹⁰² The description of the festivity and illumination is available at: Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰³ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 47-48.

In this way, in delivering the Sultan's imperial letter to the Russian Empress the Ottoman envoy accomplished the official duty of his mission. Mustafa Rasih was now waiting for the Empress' answer to the Sultan and he concerned himself with another important issue that was in his responsibility, namely the fate of the Muslim prisoners of war (or, to use the Ottoman term, *üsera-i muharebe*). According to the 8th Article of the Jassy Peace Treaty all of the prisoners of war who did not change their religion were to be set free without any ransom. The issue seems to be much complicated in view of the fact that sometimes the conversions on both sides could be forceful as well, and in realities of the time along with the change of religion the individual also changed his/her name. Moreover, as far as the Ottoman prisoners are concerned, the Christians who fought in the last war on the Ottoman side, like the subjects of the two Danubian principalities, Poles, Greeks, Georgians etc. were also to be released from captivity. Mustafa Rasih Pasha had instructions to help such people, who would address him during his stay in Russia, with clothing and money, and to secure their return back home.¹⁰⁴

It can be said without any doubt that this question embittered the whole stay of Mustafa Rasih in St. Petersburg. During the first month of his sojourn in the Russian capital, the Sultan's envoy met with his guiding officer, Major General Il'ya Andreievich Bezborodko and the Russian career diplomat and dragoman Sergei Lazarevich Lashkarev on several occasions¹⁰⁵, to discuss the sore subject of the

¹⁰⁴ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁵ In the Ottoman records, and respectively in some few Turkish publications relating to the subject, Sergei Lashkarev appears as mysterious "*Ceneral Serciyus*". Lashkarev, though born in Russia, was of the Georgian descent, and in his youth years was enlisted at the Russian Collegium of Foreign Affairs (predecessor of the Foreign Ministry) as a student in the Oriental languages. Having finished his studies and knowing ten languages (most of which were the Near Eastern ones, like Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Tatar, Georgian, Armenian), Lashkarev since 1760-s started his service at the Russian Embassy in Istanbul. By the early 1790-s he had already a unique experience, being probably the most knowledgeable Russian expert in the sphere of Russian affairs with the Ottoman court. Lashkarev was

Ottoman captives.¹⁰⁶ Again, like with the issue of the customs tariff (see the section on the Russian embassy in Istanbul), the arguments of the Ottomans rather referred to the initial spirit of the concluded treaties, while the position of the Russian side was based on the formal observance of their clauses. Mustafa Rasih argued that those people who were addressing to his embassy were in fact Muslims, as they came to the Ottoman embassy on their own free will, testified their Muslim religious affiliation, and thus should be released according to the 8th article of the Jassy treaty. The Russians simply replied that, of course, Mustafa Rasih was right, and the Muslim prisoners in accordance with the treaties should be returned back home. However, those people whom the Ottoman ambassador was talking about and whom he by force held in the building of the embassy were all Orthodox Christians now. Therefore the Ottoman side has no right to claim these people, and they as serfs will stay in Russia with their masters.

Mustafa Rasih ordered his dragoman to compose the list of the prisoners in French and to hand it over to Alexander Bezborodko, Russia's Foreign Minister and brother of Il'ya Bezborodko. The Ottoman ambassador became enraged with the fact that the dragoman of the embassy, who was supposed to discuss the same problem with Alexander Bezborodko, due to various excuses made by the Russian side for one month could not get through to the Russian minister. Another point, which incurred the displeasure of Mustafa Rasih, were the guards put at the street entrance

also the third Russian representative (*murahas-i salis*), who signed the peace treaty of Jassy. A rather exhausted and very interesting biography of Lashkarev has been published in Russia in late 1980-s: G. L. Kessel'brenner, *Khronika odnoi diplomaticheskoi karyery: Diplomat vostokoved S. L. Lashkariov i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1987).

¹⁰⁶ See the minutes of conferences held by Mustafa Rasih with Il'ya Bezborodko and Sergei Lashkarev at: Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 52-55.

and at the stairs of the embassy building, so that nobody would neither freely enter nor come out of the embassy.¹⁰⁷

Finally, on 16 November 1793 / 11 Rebiülahir 1208 the Foreign Minister received the Ottoman dragoman. Bezborodko did not say anything new, agreeing that the Muslim prisoners should be returned, whereas Mustafa Rasih should not keep by force anyone in his embassy and to give all of the prisoners who applied to the Ottoman ambassador to the Russian authorities. Then there will be made an investigation, and the Muslims would be given back to the Ottoman side, while the Orthodox would be returned to their masters (*vaftiz ve hristiyan olan sahibine virilür*).¹⁰⁸ As to the complaints of Mustafa Rasih about the guard, which had been stationed at the entrance to the building of his embassy, the Russian side replied that even the palace of the Empress was being guarded and that there is nothing special about it. This was done exclusively from considerations of safety of the Ottoman guests, so that no one would disturb them.¹⁰⁹

Besides the general demands, the Ottoman ambassador would also wish the Russians to extradite him the two special prisoners that fell into the Russian hands during the last war. The first was Janikli Tayyar Bey¹¹⁰, of the Janikli dynasty of the local notables of North Eastern Anatolia. He and his father, Battal Hüseyin Pasha,¹¹¹ during the last war with Russia were appointed to defend the Caucasus and Anapa.

¹⁰⁷ “Konağımızı vefret üzere soldatlar (nöbetçiler) mahsur idüb tarafımıza bir kimesne gelüb gidemez”, Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 59. Also, see: Uğur İyigünler, *Mustafa Rasih Efendi'nin Rusya Sefareti*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁸ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 59.

¹¹⁰ He is mentioned in the large compendium of the biographies of the renowned Ottoman officials, composed by Mehmed Süreyya, as Tayyar Mahmud Pasha: Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 3, pp. 258-259.

¹¹¹ Some information on Battal Pasha's biography is available at: Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 2, pp. 217-218.

Because of internecine feuds and feeling offended by the Ottoman government in their rights to succeed the Trabzon governorship after the death of Janikli Ali Pasha (the founder of Janikli dynasty), instead of defending Anapa Battal and Tayyar surrendered it to the enemy, and themselves also defected to the Russian side. While after the peace of Jassy Battal Pasha due to the Russian patronage was restored on his posts at Sinop and Janik, Tayyar remained in Russia.¹¹² Another important prisoner whom Mustafa Rasih mentioned during his conferences with the Russian government was Sheikh Mansur (Ushurma), the leader of the Caucasian mountaineers who raised an anti-Russian uprising in the Northern Caucasus in 1785 and was captured by the Russians at the fall of the Ottoman fortress of Anapa in summer 1791.

In both cases, the Russian government claimed that the demands of the High Porte were groundless. Alexander Bezborodko brought to notice of the Ottoman dragoman that Tayyar Bey was not a prisoner and fled to Russia on his own free will out of fear for the Porte. Thus he was not a prisoner of war, but a refugee, and in this way was not a subject to extradition. At the moment Tayyar Bey has a military rank of Russian colonel, and those having such a rank would certainly not be given by Russia to some other state.¹¹³ As for Sheikh Mansur, he simply was declared a criminal, who, in addition, was not a subject of the Ottoman Sultan.

The reports of Mustafa Rasih addressed to *Reis-ül-Küttab* (dated by 11 January 1794¹¹⁴ and 26 January 1794¹¹⁵) provide a distinct idea of the character of further

¹¹² More detailed account of Janikli Battal Hüseyin Pasha and Janikli Tayyar Pasha is available at: Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New*, p. 216.

¹¹³ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 61-62.

¹¹⁴ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 101-104.

negotiations with the Russian authorities, which continued throughout December 1793 and January 1794. The Ottoman ambassador bombarded the Russian government with many notes and each note, much to the indignation of Mustafa Rasih who had to wait again and again, was answered in the term of ten to fifteen days. Nothing new appeared, however, in the argumentation of the Russian side, whose position was still firm and unchanging. Except may be for Tayyar Bey, about whom the Russian officials said that the Russian state did not accept him and that no one knew where he was at the present moment.¹¹⁶

Fruitless discussions continued, the Cossacks with the approval of the Russian government were arresting the Muslim prisoners on the streets of St. Petersburg¹¹⁷, and Mustafa Rasih was angered by his own inability to intervene. Having no necessary diplomatic experience, all the Ottoman extraordinary envoy could do was to complain on and on, at times rather excessively, to his government in Istanbul. These complaints were of little use and not welcomed by the Sultan.¹¹⁸

One more very symptomatic event that came upon Mustafa Rasih during his mission in Russia should be mentioned. While still on the way, the personnel of the embassy in best traditions of the Janissary revolts refused to move further until they were paid additional salary. Having arrived at Moscow they told the ambassador that the previous embassy of Abdülkerim Pasha came only to Moscow, and in order to make his personnel go to St. Petersburg Mustafa Rasih must pay one hundred *guruş* more for each of them. Should the ambassador not do this, they would feel free to

¹¹⁵ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 78-79.

¹¹⁶ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 79.

¹¹⁷ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 76.

¹¹⁸ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 64, 74.

ask this money from the Russian Empress. Thus in the letter to *Reis-ül-Küttab* Mustafa Rasih informs his government that he had to spend additional 8.500 *guruş*. Later on, already in St. Petersburg, the ambassador allotted for the living expenses of the whole personnel the sum of 1000 roubles. And once again the officials of the embassy protested, saying that previously each member of the delegation was given 150 roubles. All attempts of the Ottoman ambassador to appeal to their conscience, to remind them that they dishonour themselves, their state and their sovereign were of no avail.¹¹⁹

As one would clearly see the members of Mustafa Rasih's ambassadorial train even in Russia remained an integral part of the over-corrupted Ottoman state machine. The embassy personnel, in the same way as the smaller drop of water still is a part of the bigger ocean, had brought to Russia a small piece of the Ottoman Empire. All those practices Selim III so ardently tried to change and to get rid of in his domains manifested themselves even on the Russian soil, many miles away from the Ottoman borders. It seems that for the overwhelming majority of the embassy personnel their own well-being was much more important than anything else, including the pride for their country. The Ottoman envoy, initially inexperienced in the diplomatic art, apart from having continuous complicated debates with the Russian officials, had also to cope somehow with his own personnel, which were supposed to help him.

The formal answer of the Russian government to the Imperial Letter (*Nâme-i Hümayun*) of Selim III was finally transferred to Mustafa Rasih on 21 January

¹¹⁹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 68-69.

1794.¹²⁰ His official duty at the Russian court thus could be considered finished. On 8 February 1794 the Ottoman embassy left the Russian capital¹²¹, and in the end of May¹²² came to Dubossary. There, on 5 June 1794¹²³ the exchange ceremony with the Russian embassy of Kutuzov, who was also returning back home, took place. Upon his return Mustafa Rasih was deprived of his temporary title of Pasha, and again assumed the title of Efendi.¹²⁴ Stephan Conermann rightly calls the ambassadorial mission of Mustafa Rasih Efendi one of the highest points of his career.¹²⁵ However, it was surely not the highest one. Mustafa Rasih was yet to become twice the *Reis-ül-Küttab*,¹²⁶ though not due to some exclusive merits. A portrait, given to Mustafa Rasih by Thomas Naff in the context of his activities as the head of the Ottoman foreign affairs office, would also explain much with respect to his mission in Russia:

An ineffectual, upright individual who was incapable of comprehending general political affairs, to say nothing of the intricacies of diplomatic relations. Rasih had, in fact been appointed, as a compromise candidate acceptable to the various rival political factions.¹²⁷

Returning to the embassy of Mustafa Rasih in Russia, it is possible to observe that throughout the three months since his arrival to St. Petersburg the Ottoman

¹²⁰ The text of the answer of Catherine II to the Sultan's Nâme-i Hümayun is available at: Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 74-75.

¹²¹ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 88.

¹²² Kititsyn, *Proyez chrez Yekaterinoslavskoe namestnichestvo*, p. 505.

¹²³ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 88-89.

¹²⁴ Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, p. 91; Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî yâhûd Tezkire-i meşâhir-i 'Osmâniyye* (4 vols.; Istanbul, 1311), Vol. 2, p. 347.

¹²⁵ Stephan Conermann, 'Das Eigene und das Fremde: der Bericht der Gesandtschaft Musafa Rasihs nach St. Petersburg 1792-1794' *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 17 (1999), p. 263.

¹²⁶ First term: 17.08.1796- 18.08.1797; second term: 14.04.1799 -24.07.1800. See: Ahmed Resmî, *Halifeti'r-Rüesâ veya Sefineti'r-Rüesâ* (İstanbul, 1269), pp. 140-41.

¹²⁷ Thomas Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 (1963), p. 297. The narrow-mindedness and indecision of Rasih when he occupied the post of Reis Efendi are also mentioned by the French ambassador to the Porte in 1796-1797 Aubert du Bayet and the representative of the Polish émigrés Michał Ogiński who stayed in Istanbul at the same period. See: İsmail Soysal, *Fransız ihtilali ve Türk-Fransız diplomasi münasebetleri (1789-1802)* (Ankara, 1999), p. 154; Michał Kleofas Ogiński, *Mémoires de Michel Oginski sur la Pologne et les Polonais, depuis 1788 jusqu'à la fin de 1815*. (4 vols.; Paris, 1826), Vol. 2, p. 209.

ambassador was engaged in futile discussions concerning the situation of those Ottoman prisoners of war who were still staying in Russia. Being unable to change something, or to influence somehow the Russian side, Mustafa Rasih was simply continuously, at times in a childish manner, complaining about innumerable injustices he suffered from the Russian bureaucrats. Even Selim III became somewhat irritated at these permanent complaints. At the same time Mustafa Rasih made no political negotiations or meetings with the ambassadors of other countries, neither did other foreign ambassadors visit him.¹²⁸ In general, without the necessary diplomatic experience and not knowing any European languages, Mustafa Rasih did not become something more than just a technical envoy, whose mission appeared to be confined to delivering of the royal letter of his sovereign to the foreign court and receiving the official answer to it. Another most tangible result of Mustafa Rasih's mission were the detailed observations of the Russian economy, finances, army and society collected in *sefâretnâme*, the ambassadorial report presented at the Porte upon the mission's return.

3.4. Russian Embassy in the Ottoman Empire

Since the very beginning, as it is seen from the secret instruction "On political matters", signed by Catherine II and given to Kutuzov before his departure¹²⁹, the plans of the Russian court as regards the Ottoman state were of a two-fold kind. On

¹²⁸ For example, Mustafa Rasih wrote to the Porte, that no one of the foreign ambassadors visited him since his arrival. However, it looks like the Ottoman ambassador was only waiting until his other colleagues from the diplomatic corps would pay him their visits, making no attempts to meet with them: "*Şimdiye kadar* [this relates to mid-November 1793; V.M.] *kübrai devletlerinden kimesne ile görüşülüb söhbet olamadı. On güne mütecevirdir bir kimesnenin tarafıma geldiği yokdur*", Nedim. *Bir elçinin tarihçe-i sefareti*, pp. 66-67.

¹²⁹ 'Directive of Catherine II to M. I. Kutuzov with a secret instruction "On political matters". 4 March (21 February) 1793' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, pp. 195-203.

the one hand, right at the moment Catherine needed peace. On the other hand, though, it was as well clear that she was not going to give up her earlier projects concerning the fate of the Ottoman Empire, and under the different circumstances would take a chance to put them into practice.

So, in view of the heavy financial burden inflicted upon the treasury by all the recent wars, and being preoccupied by a whole set of troubles in and around the Polish- Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian government regarded the new war with the Ottomans at this point much undesirable. Therefore, Kutuzov got clear-cut instructions to do his best to prevent any possibility of the Ottoman entrance into war. In practice this meant to counteract the influences of other foreign diplomats, first and foremost the French, who might be and indeed were trying to drag the High Porte into another open conflict with Russia. Moreover, aware of the reform movement of Selim III, St. Petersburg was very interested to know about the combat capability of the Ottoman army and to what extent the Sultan could progress with his military reforms.¹³⁰ A career soldier, Kutuzov was the right man to make his own observations and conclusions on that matter.

It was also important that the Ottomans would stay indifferent to the developments going on in Poland. The ambassador was recommended not to raise the Polish issue at all, unless the Ottoman side itself touches upon this subject. In this case Kutuzov was to answer that he has not any idea about it, and that his only duty is to reinforce friendly relations between his own government and that one of the Sultan. Should the Ottomans still insist, Kutuzov had to resort to the veiled threat.

¹³⁰ L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 196.

Acting secretly through his agents in order not to risk the reputation of his embassy, the Russian ambassador was to inculcate the Ottoman officials indirectly with the thought that interfering into the matters that were so unrelated to those of their own would be quite dangerous for the Ottoman state itself.¹³¹

At this very point, while seeking peace with the Porte, the Russian government by no means abandoned the idea that someday the war against the Ottomans would be resumed, and, should that day come, it wanted to be properly prepared. First, it was quite a logical step to acquire more sympathizers inside the Ottoman society. Catherine's instructions to Kutuzov prescribed her extraordinary envoy by all means to maintain good relations with the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan, encourage the anti-Ottoman feelings among them and to reassure in Russia's unchanging sympathies towards its coreligionists. Making allusions on the history of the Muscovite Principality and suggesting that it got its independence from the Golden Horde in an open fight, Kutuzov was to make it clear, though, that in order to get rid of the Muslim oppression (*igo agarianskoie*) the Ottoman Christians should only be using every effort on their own.¹³² In other words, the Russian envoy was instructed to gain and nurture the sympathies of the Ottoman Orthodox subjects by confining himself only with broad promises of support. Needless to say, that all these activities were to be conducted with an extreme caution and kept in the deep secrecy.

Further still, another specific activity common in the work of all diplomatic missions has to be mentioned. Sending an embassy to the Ottoman Empire was naturally viewed in St. Petersburg as a superb opportunity to gather vast first-hand

¹³¹ L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, pp. 197-98.

¹³² L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, pp. 198-99.

intelligence information on the country. Along with all kinds of secretaries, interpreters, quartermasters, musicians, doctors and servants, a large group of military experts, engineers, topographers and draughtsmen had been also included into the Russian ambassadorial delegation. Among these, in particular, were Lieutenant Colonel (*Podpolkovnik*) Korf, First Major (*Premier Maior*) Len, Captain Derenikin, Naval Lieutenant (*Flota Poruchik*) Petinioti, Navigator (*Shturman*) Lepini and Engineer Lieutenant Colonel (*Inzhener-Podpolkovnik*) Trusson.¹³³

In the same time when the embassy was slowly moving on through the Ottoman lands, many of its staff thus were busy reconnoitring the local topographies, drawing maps, calculating natural resources, getting the plans of fortresses and composing the schemes for conducting war operations in the area all the way to Istanbul. Hardly this hypothetical new war with the Ottoman state was regarded by Russia as defensive, in view of the fact that it was the territories of the Ottoman Balkan possessions that were viewed as a potential theatre of hostilities.¹³⁴ As to the usual snail pace with which the ambassadorial train was crawling for the whole summer of 1793 towards its destination, doing many rest breaks on the way¹³⁵, it must have greatly facilitated the work of the Russian military experts.

¹³³ I. M. El'terman, *Posol'stvo Kutuzova*, p. 70.

¹³⁴ Very remarkable in this context is a description of the way from Ruschuk (now Ruse in Bulgaria) to Istanbul, quite specific in terms of its contents and aims, made in 1793 by an anonymous member of Kutuzov's entourage. This manuscript, published in the tsarist Russia in 1878 (a year when yet another Russo-Ottoman war broke out) provides a more than eloquent testimony of the fact that Catherine II at the point of making peace was exploring the possibilities of the offensive warfare against the Ottomans. See: ' Podrobnoie opisanie puti chrezvychaynogo i polnomochnogo rossiiskago imperatorskogo posol'stva, posle Yasskago mira, ot Rushchuka chrez Shumlu v Konstantinopol', v 1793 godu. S voennymi zamechaniyami o zemle, s pokazaniem sposoba proved' i prodovol'stvovat' ot 30-ti do 40-ka tysiach voiska' *Russkaia starina*, 21 (1878), pp. 100-124.

¹³⁵ A thorough roster of the journey with the stations, distances between them and the time spent at each place is available at: Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, pp. 203-205. Between the village of Kriulen on the right bank of the Dniester and Istanbul the Russian embassy had made in total 52 resting stations.

What is more, by crossing in such a manner the dominions of the Sultan, the embassy officials could see with their own eyes the real state of affairs in the Ottoman Rumelia. Both Reimers and Struve equally mention that the Rumelian countryside was infested with the highway robbers, and the Porte despite implementing severe punishments could not cope with that situation. Throughout their way the Russian officials saw many by then already putrefied in the summer sun bodies of the criminals, who were impaled alive and exposed to the general public to serve as a striking example of the fate awaiting those who disobeyed the central authorities.¹³⁶ However, as the Russian officials observed, even such brutal repressive measures were useless in preventing disorders and chaos in the Ottoman provinces.

The Russian delegation finally arrived at Istanbul on 7 October 1793¹³⁷ and, as it turned out later, was to stay in the Sultan's capital for almost half a year. Its numerous staff with Kutuzov at the head had been quartered in Pera¹³⁸, a suburb district of Istanbul known as a home of large European community. It was right here, on the other side of the Golden Horn, where resided most of the European merchants as well as members of the diplomatic corps. The building of the Russian embassy was likewise situated in Pera.

¹³⁶ Johann Christian von Struve, [published anonymously]. *Travels in the Crimea; a History of the Embassy from Petersburg to Constantinople in 1793, including Their Journey through Kremenschuck, Oczakow, Walachia & Moldavia with their Reception at the Court of Selim the Third* (London, 1802), pp. 141-42; Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, pp. 185-186.

¹³⁷ Struve, *Travels*, p. 158; Reimers gives the Julian date, which is 26 September: Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 1, p. 207.

¹³⁸ Nowadays this area is known as Beyoğlu district, which is the very heart of the bustling modern metropolis of Istanbul, lying to the North of the Golden Horn inlet of the European bank of the Bosphorus.

On the next day after the Russian mission's arrival to Istanbul the First Dragoman of the Porte visited the Russian embassy and on behalf of the Grand Vizier handed over the presents for Kutuzov and his entourage. During the next few days the representatives of the diplomatic corps of other foreign powers accredited at the High Porte also paid courtesy visits to the Russian extraordinary ambassador.¹³⁹ In return, observing the usual formality, Kutuzov in the same way visited his colleagues the ambassadors of the European states resident in Istanbul. Not only an interesting, but also a very meaningful detail to point out is the order of priority according to which Kutuzov's official visits to other foreign representatives had been made. The first European diplomat Kutuzov went to see was the British ambassador Sir Robert Ainsley. Then the ambassadors of other countries had also been visited, in the following order: Venetian, Austrian, Prussian, Swedish and some days later Neapolitan, Danish and Spanish.¹⁴⁰ The yet formally unrecognized by the Ottomans representative of the French Republic Citizen Marie Louis Henri Descorches for quite obvious reasons was ignored. More than that, it was strictly forbidden for all personnel of the Russian embassy to have any contacts whatsoever with the French republicans.¹⁴¹

The official reception at the Porte was to take place only some month later after the arrival of the Russian delegation, by the mid-November. In the meantime Kutuzov was paying visits to his colleagues-ambassadors, taking over the ambassadorial duties from the Charge d'Affaires Colonel Khvostov and writing reports to the Russian Empress, while many people of the numerous staff of his mission had an opportunity to explore the beauties and places of interest of the

¹³⁹ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 24.

¹⁴¹ Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost' M. I. Kutuzova*, p. 57.

Ottoman capital. Some of them were interested, though, not only in beauties of nature or old relics and monuments.

Owing to the written accounts left by the members of the delegation, Reimers and Struve, a historian has a unique possibility to look in detail at the circumstances of the Russian embassy's stay in Istanbul in autumn 1793- winter 1794 through the eyes of ordinary officials of Kutuzov's mission. Having come to the ultimate destination of their journey, the people of the embassy staff each had their own set of responsibilities, which determined the type of work they were doing and eventually their free time. Quite naturally, the lesser officials had more time to walk around the city and to learn about the daily life of the Ottoman society. For many of them their duties with the embassy consisted for the most part in attendance at numerous official ceremonies.

The inner side of the embassy work like gathering the intelligence information or conducting various political negotiations was a special realm accessible only to a limited group of persons among the whole number of the embassy staff. While the auxiliary personnel were enjoying the sights of Istanbul, the ambassador and his team continued to fulfil their duties without a break either during the journey through the Ottoman Balkan dominions nor, and all the more so, in the Ottoman capital proper. Understandably, the Russian military experts were doing their own specific job as well. For example, Reimers, who obviously did not have a special aim to describe this sort of activities, incidentally gives a clue about what some members of the Russian embassy were occupied with when in Istanbul. A Russian Engineer with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel made a trip along the Bosphorus taking the plans of its

coasts. Then being invited by a commandant of the Ottoman fortress situated at the entrance into the Black Sea, this Russian Lieutenant Colonel made his observations about the fortress and its strong and weak points.¹⁴² Similarly, Struve in his travel notes mentions that when the Russian embassy was already returning back home, in April 1794, Kutuzov sent to the local commandant in Silivri (an area close to Istanbul, along the Sea of Marmara coast) a Colonel of artillery accompanied with two officers ostensibly to thank for an escort of two hundred men he provided for the Russian ambassadorial train, and to give him the presents of gratitude. On the other hand, as Struve puts it, “the secret motive of his mission was to observe the works of the fortress and to bring away the plan of it”.¹⁴³

It should be mentioned that the usual practice at the time was to use the services of paid agents, and the embassy of Kutuzov was not an exception to the rule. The Russian ambassador was secretly getting information from an engineer named Kaufer, who was employed in the reinforcement of the Ottoman Danube fortresses.¹⁴⁴ Besides, the secretary of the Kapudan Pasha Küçük Hüseyin, Hançerli, even though Kutuzov had reasons not to trust him completely, provided the Russian ambassador with the secret materials about the proceedings at the Divan from time to time.¹⁴⁵

Outwardly the stay of the Russian delegation in Istanbul might have looked as an unending succession of receptions and balls, organized by various Ottoman officials, other European diplomatic representations and Kutuzov himself. The first

¹⁴² Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 42-43.

¹⁴³ Struve, *Travels*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Letter of M.I. Kutuzov to P. A. Zubov, on condition of the Turkish border fortresses. 13 / 2 July 1793’ In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 216.

¹⁴⁵ I. M. El'terman, *Posol'stvo Kutuzova*, pp. 122-23.

formal audience at the High Porte was held on 9 November 1793, when the Russian delegation was received by the Grand Vizier.¹⁴⁶ Three days later, on 12 November, took place Kutuzov's audience with the Sultan.¹⁴⁷ These ceremonies were accompanied with reciprocal exchange of fabulously expensive presents¹⁴⁸, serving the purpose of showing the wealth and dignity of both empires. Formal assurances of both courts' peaceful intentions had been made, and during the audience with Selim III, which in the very strict sense lasted not more than fifteen minutes¹⁴⁹, the Russian extraordinary envoy handed over the imperial letter of his monarchess addressed to the Sultan.

Following the ceremony at the Topkapı Palace¹⁵⁰, Kutuzov attended the galas especially organized in his honour by all of the highest statesmen of the Ottoman Empire in turn. First Kutuzov was a guest of the Grand Vizier (18 November)¹⁵¹, then of the Kapudan Pasha (Grand Admiral) (28 November)¹⁵², the Kâhya Bey (Minister for Home Affairs) (3 December)¹⁵³, the Yeniçeri Ağası (Commander in chief of the Janissary corps) (9 December)¹⁵⁴, the Defterdar (Minister of Finance) (14

¹⁴⁶ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-50; Struve, *Travels*, pp. 173-78.

¹⁴⁷ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 53-65; Struve, *Travels*, pp. 178-81.

¹⁴⁸ I. M. El'terman, *Posol'stvo Kutuzova*, pp. 72. The presents delivered to the Sultan included the brilliant pen studded with various jewels valued at 40.000 roubles, golden incense-burner, as well studded with diamonds, emeralds and other precious stones (24.316 roubles), a tray, also decorated with gemstones (12.000 roubles); among the gifts for the Grand Vizier there were a dagger in golden sheath with gemstones, a ring and a clock. Besides, rich presents were given to all of the leading Ottoman statesmen. The overall value of the presents for all Ottoman officials reached the sum of more than half a million roubles.

¹⁴⁹ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 65.

¹⁵⁰ Famous official residence of the Ottoman Sultans until 1853.

¹⁵¹ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 70-76; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p. 32.

¹⁵² Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 84-92; Struve, *Travels*, pp. 185-90; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p.33; 'Letter of M. I. Kutuzov to his wife, E. I. Kutuzova. 18 / 7 December 1793' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 270. The witnesses unanimously agree, that the gala made by the Kapudan Pasha exceeded in its splendour even the one organized by the Grand Vizier.

¹⁵³ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 95-98; Struve, *Travels*, p. 190; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p. 34.

¹⁵⁴ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 102; Struve, *Travels*, p. 191; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p. 34.

December)¹⁵⁵ and the Reis-ül-Küttab (Minister for Foreign Affairs) (26 December)¹⁵⁶ respectively.

As an extraordinary and plenipotentiary envoy of the Russian Empire Kutuzov was giving the official receptions as well as visiting them. One of the most impressive receptions in the Russian embassy occurred on the occasion of the Saint Catherine's day (the Patron Saint of the Russian Empress) on 5 December 1793.¹⁵⁷ Made mainly for the European diplomatic corps, it witnessed also some Ottoman officials, present incognito. These included the *mihmandar*¹⁵⁸ of Kutuzov Abdullah Bey¹⁵⁹, the Kapudan Pasha and the Topçubaşı (Master-General of the Artillery).¹⁶⁰ On this and other similar occasions no expenses were spared to demonstrate the grandeur of the Russian state and its Empress. In letter, written to his wife, Kutuzov indicates, that on that day the evening meal was served for 200 persons.¹⁶¹

Against the background of all the mentioned festivities but behind the scenes, as is usually the case, the important political issues involving the interests of the main European powers had been addressed. Among the most pressing themes regarding the relations of the two neighbouring empires there were the fears of both sides of the new war. Neither the Ottomans nor Russians each for their own specific reasons wished at the time to engage into a new massive conflict. The former

¹⁵⁵ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 103.

¹⁵⁶ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 127-34; Struve, *Travels*, pp. 191-92.

¹⁵⁷ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 98-100; Struve, op. cit., p. 183; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p. 35-36. The Russian Orthodox Church commemorates the day of St. Catherine on 24 November (Julian style), which corresponds to 5 December (Gregorian style).

¹⁵⁸ An officer, appointed to receive and escort foreign ambassadors on their way through the Ottoman territories

¹⁵⁹ Abdullah had the title of Kapıcıbaşı, which in the Ottoman court-rank system was meaning the Head of the Palace door-keepers.

¹⁶⁰ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 99; Clément-Simon, *Un ambassadeur extraordinaire*, p. 36.

¹⁶¹ 'Letter of M. I. Kutuzov to E. I. Kutuzova. 18 / 7 December 1793' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 270.

embarked on large-scale reforms and were facing a number of serious challenges inside the country, whereas the latter following the abolition of the 3 May Constitution faced the uprising of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility and currently were busy with the Second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state.¹⁶²

St. Petersburg was greatly concerned about the possible reaction and the stand of the Porte regarding the affairs in Poland, as it was seen from the instructions, which Kutuzov got from the Empress. These concerns were even more substantiated in view of the fact that the representative of the French Republic Descorches, who arrived to Istanbul that very year exactly four months earlier than Kutuzov, on 7 June 1793¹⁶³, did his best to make the Ottomans to recognize the French republican government and to persuade them again to declare war on Russia. Descorches promised the Ottomans that they would not stay alone within a wider framework of anti-Russian coalition including the Poles, Swedes, Tatars and Cossacks, which could easily be created with the help of France.¹⁶⁴ On 19 October 1793 the French representative even presented to the Porte a note proposing an alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁵ Thus, insofar as the Russian ambassador was concerned, the main aims of his activities in Istanbul, apart from mentioned earlier gathering of intelligence, were first, to secure the Ottoman neutrality in Polish affairs; and second, to counteract and whenever possible to downplay the French

¹⁶² The Russo-Prussian Convention about the second partition of Rzeczpospolita had been signed on 23 January 1793, and finally confirmed by the Grodno Sejm in the end of September 1793, i.e. approximately at the time of Kutuzov's arrival to Istanbul.

¹⁶³ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 117.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, the instructions of the French Foreign Minister Lebrun given to Descorches on 19 January 1793, before the departure of the latter from Paris to the Ottoman Empire: Soysal, op. cit., p. 99.

¹⁶⁵ Constantin de Grunwald, 'Une Ambassade Russe à Constantinople au XVIII^e Siecle' *Miroir de l'Histoire*, 82 (1956), p. 496.

influence at the Porte. Throughout the 1790-s both remained the primary objects of the Russian diplomatic activities in Constantinople.

The Sultan's government, in its turn, acting in line with its own interests and not with those of the Russian, French or some other ambassadors, was to frame a course of policy which would correspond to the Ottoman perspective of the current international situation. Despite the traditionally strong French influence at the Porte and personal pro-French sympathies of many Ottoman statesmen, including the Sultan himself, the Porte was persistent in its desire to stay neutral and avoid conflict with any of the warring states in Europe. In this respect the French projects to draw the Ottoman state into a new war against Russia, for the third time after two defeats, in its present troubling times, in face of wide European anti-French coalition, stood very little chance of success.

All these were explained again and again by the leading Ottoman officials at their conferences with the French representative in winter-spring 1794.¹⁶⁶ Objectively the Ottoman Empire was in no position to enter into alliance with France and to support the cause of the Polish insurgents openly, although its sympathies were with them and it even secretly assisted them financially.¹⁶⁷ This fact, as well as diplomatic support of other diplomatic missions of the anti-French in Constantinople, without a doubt played in the hands of the Russian diplomacy. The recent developments on the international arena and in Ottoman domestic politics largely facilitated the tasks assigned to Kutuzov and his embassy. The Ottomans themselves

¹⁶⁶ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, pp. 123-25; Grunwald, *Une Ambassade Russe*, p. 497.

¹⁶⁷ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II, about the order received from Turkey by the Moldovan Hospodar M. Soutzo to deliver 120 thousand *chervonnie* (gold coins) to T. Kościuszko. 6 June (26 May) 1794' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 337.

were not going to fight against Russia, neither were they ready to put to risk their own chance for peace on behalf of Poland, or France, or both of them.

Besides, there were some vexed questions remaining in the Ottoman-Russian relations which still gravely threatened the durability of the newly concluded peace. These were by no means resolved and continued to be a bone of contention between the two empires well until the end of 1790-s when a new international situation emerged. Furthermore, they could even potentially trigger a new conflict at any moment, leaving both countries poised for a war continuously, notwithstanding all of the mutual peaceful assurances. Should any party decide to go to war it would already have a number of convenient pretexts at hand.¹⁶⁸ Still, in large part due to the unwillingness of both sides to escalate the existing tension at this point, a new Ottoman-Russian war did not ensue.

The controversial affairs were simply pending without being resolved for years, though not leading to any dangerous and massive confrontation. One of the most disputed issues was concerning the customs tariff on import and export duties for Russian merchants trading with the Ottoman Empire. According to the Ottoman-Russian Commercial treaty of 1783¹⁶⁹ (Article 20) the customs tariff was established at 3 per cent of total value of the imported/exported products. The value of the products had been calculated in prices existing in 1783. In view of inflation, ten

¹⁶⁸ The French, as it could be expected, tried to make use of this fact for their propaganda purposes. *Le Moniteur Universel*, the official newspaper of the French Republic, in particular published the following comments of an anonymous author as regards the Ottoman-Russian negotiations in Istanbul: “Catherine II a, selon son usage, caché dans ses derniers traités avec la Porte les semences de querelles toujours prêtes à revivre à sa volonté. Déjà des explications ont eu lieu sur des tarifs de douanes et sur demarcations de frontières, source commode et interminable de chicanes politiques”, *Le Moniteur Universel*, № 130, 10 pluviôse, l’an II (29 January 1794). Quoted in: Edouard de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople : la politique orientale de la Révolution française* (2 vols.; Paris, 1927), Vol. 2, p. 86.

¹⁶⁹ Russian text: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXI, № 15757, columns 939-56.

years later the actual prices quite naturally increased, whereas on paper, according to the fixed treaties, they stayed just the same as used to be a decade ago. In this way the duties that were paid were in fact much less than those specified by the treaty. No wonder that the Ottoman government sought, while keeping the tariff of 3 per cent unchanged, to reconsider the customs duties according to the current prices. The Russian side defended its own position through referring to the legal basis, insisting that all the earlier treaties had been recognized by the Porte at Jassy and thus nothing should be changed at all.¹⁷⁰ In the end the Ottomans stepped back from their claims in June 1794¹⁷¹, although the issue on the whole came to a deadlock and stayed unresolved throughout 1790-s.

Another sore, and by no means minor, subject in the Ottoman-Russian relations were the raids of the Circassian tribes into the Russian territory across the Kuban River. The Circassians who were nominally the subjects of the Ottoman Sultan during 1792-1796 made a number of raids against the Black Sea Cossacks inflicting the latter certain damage. The Russian side through its ambassadors demanded from the Porte compensation, which had been finally paid in 1798.¹⁷²

Yet the most important issue for St. Petersburg, one way or another, was to know whether there was any possibility that the Ottomans could attack. The reports Kutuzov addressed to the Empress and other Russian officials regularly touched upon this subject and always the extraordinary envoy voiced an opinion that the declaration of war on the part of the Ottoman Empire was very much unlikely. The

¹⁷⁰ G. A. Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz 1799 goda*. In *Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet. Istoricheskii Fakul'tet. Doklady i soobshcheniia*. Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1945), p. 16.

¹⁷¹ Nicolae Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (Gotha, 1913), Vol. 5, p. 111.

¹⁷² Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 16.

line of argumentation of Kutuzov came down to the following basic points. First, as an experienced soldier Kutuzov pointed out the fact that the Ottomans were still militarily unprepared, the reinforcements of the fortresses of Ruschuk, Bendery and Ismail were uncompleted, and it would be an absolute folly to start war under such conditions.¹⁷³ Second, the Porte was struggling hard to assert central authority all over the Empire; the Russian envoy mentioned the movements of Abd-al-Wahhab, Mahmud Pasha of Skutari, the uprising near Trapezund (Trabzon) and the general chaos in Rumelia among other troubles. Kutuzov stated that Mahmud Pasha was currently so strong that the Porte simply could not think of war with Russia or some other state.¹⁷⁴ Third, the issue of customs tariff, whatever important it may be, would not alone make the Porte to put in danger the advantages of peace. The Ottomans would not be silent, they would continuously protest, but would not risk going further.¹⁷⁵

Thus, at least in the most important respect, the embassy of Kutuzov brought the Russian Empress certain additional reassurance that despite all the circulating rumours currently there was not much danger of the Ottoman attack. However, no radical overall improvements in the Ottoman-Russian relations took place. Catherine II due to various circumstances apparently just postponed her earlier aggressive projects as regards the Balkan domains of the Sultan and was not going to refuse from them completely, the proof of which could be seen in taking the plans of the roads, places and fortresses on the Ottoman soil; there were still unresolved vexed

¹⁷³ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II, 1 September (21 August) 1793' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, pp. 225-26.

¹⁷⁴ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II, 31 / 20 December 1793' L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 275-77; 'Letter of M. I. Kutuzov to A. V. Suvorov, 17 / 6 March 1794' L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 317.

¹⁷⁵ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II, 31 / 20 December 1793' L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 275-77.

issues (customs tariff, border skirmishes between the Kuban Cossacks and the Circassians), which at any time could exacerbate the relations between the two empires and even grow into a new conflict. The spectre of yet another war, much undesired in St. Petersburg in view of the complications in Poland, was even more threatening for the Ottoman side, which tried to complete the military preparations and reinforcements of the border fortresses as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the concentration of the Russian troops within the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, just like the Ottomans' armaments along their borders with Russia, would not contribute to feelings of security on both sides of the Dniester. Even though decreased, the potential threat remained and had to be counted with by both neighbouring powers. Departing back home, Kutuzov left his successor Viktor Pavlovich Kochubei, appointed to be the Russian permanent ambassador at the Porte, a lot of work to do.

By the early spring of 1794 the official mission of the extraordinary Russian embassy with General Kutuzov at its head was completed. On 11 March 1794 the Russian envoy, followed by 17 men from his delegation, bade a farewell to the Sultan Selim III.¹⁷⁶ In two days, on 13 March, Kutuzov took leave of the Grand Vizier,¹⁷⁷ and on 26 March the embassy train set out on the way back to Russia.¹⁷⁸ The exchange ceremony with the Ottoman embassy of Mustafa Rasih that was returning from its mission at the Russian Empress' court took place on 5 June¹⁷⁹,

¹⁷⁶ Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost' M. I. Kutuzova*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁷ Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost' M. I. Kutuzova*, p. 84.

¹⁷⁸ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 201.

¹⁷⁹ 'Report of M. I. Kutuzov to Catherine II about the exchange ceremony with the Turkish Ambassador. 5 June (26 May) 1794' In: L. G. Beskrovnyi (Ed.) *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 336.

while one and a half months later, on 13 July 1794¹⁸⁰, Kutuzov arrived in St. Petersburg.

3.5. Conclusions

The peace Treaty of Jassy marked the beginning of a new era in the Ottoman-Russian relations. It confirmed the crucial geopolitical changes that took place in the Black Sea region as a result of the earlier Ottoman-Russian wars waged throughout the 18th century. The Black Sea, which for centuries used to be virtually an Ottoman lake, faced on its northern shores the rise of a new mighty power of the Muscovites. Within a few generations the old Muscovite principality became the nemesis of the Ottomans and grew into the huge Russian Empire that placed under its control the vast territories along the northern coast of the Black Sea, including the Crimean Peninsula. The long history of the Ottoman-Russian confrontation could not develop in both nations other feelings than those of mutual distrust and hatred. While the notorious *grand entreprise* of Catherine II contemplated the ousting of the Ottomans from the Balkans, the Ottoman side with Selim III at the head was determined to bring back the territories lost to Russia. Especially grievous in this sense was the recent loss of the Crimea, which became the first predominantly Muslim territory under the Ottoman suzerainty that fell into the hands of the infidels.

Despite all of the previous conflicts and animosity, by the early 1790-s St. Petersburg and the Porte appeared in a situation when to wage war against each other would be equally destructive for both. For Russia the difficult financial situation, the expenses of almost unceasing wars that continued for the last several decades, the

¹⁸⁰ Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost' M. I. Kutuzova*, p. 86.

serious consequences of the Pugachov uprising, the unpredictable unfolding of the French Revolution and the Polish problems were a sufficient cause to seek an agreement with the Ottoman Empire.

In regard to the Porte, by the time under discussion it had to deal with a serious internal crisis threatening the very existence of the Ottoman state. By the end of the 18th century the central Ottoman authorities could not effectively cope with the growing disorder and anarchy in virtually all spheres of life, the Ottoman countryside being dependent on the Sultan's government only in name. Even though he might cherish secret hopes to return the Crimea and other lost territories, Selim III was not going to aggravate his already very precarious positions with a new war. For another thing, the Porte badly needed a breathing space for the projected large-scale reforms of *Nizâm-i Cedîd*.

According to the 10th article of the Jassy Peace Treaty, the extraordinary ambassadors were to be sent reciprocally to Constantinople and St. Petersburg in order to confirm the recently concluded peace treaty and to assure the opposite side in peaceful intentions of their sovereigns. The secret part of both missions, however, was gathering of intelligence information on the countries of their stay. Both neighbouring powers could not exclude the possibility when the war one day would be renewed and for that reason continued with their war preparations even while seeking peace.

It is worthy of note that the Russian side was represented by M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov, a very experienced military commander and not a career

diplomat. Apparently, a professional soldier like Kutuzov could far better than any diplomat evaluate the military potential of the Ottoman state along with the current fighting capacity of the Ottoman army, and thus to calculate whether the Ottomans would be able to attack Russia in the nearest future. For St. Petersburg it was especially important to know this in the context of the Polish affairs and the planned last partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In order to gather the secret information such as the location of the places, the roads, the population, the fortifications, the dispositions of the troops, the ammunition depots etc., the Russian delegation included a large group of military experts, engineers, topographers and draughtsmen. Moreover, the slow movement of the embassy train through the Balkans helped the Russian specialists to do their job in the most effective way. Considering the fact that it was the territories of the Ottoman Balkan possessions that were viewed as a potential theatre of hostilities, the hypothetical war the Russians were preparing for was expected to be offensive. Obviously, with the same end in view the Russian extraordinary envoy was instructed to secretly cultivate the sympathies of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan.

Just like Kutuzov, the Ottoman envoy Mustafa Rasih Pasha was not a professional diplomat either. In accordance with a long tradition of handling its affairs with other countries, the Porte by this time simply had neither experienced diplomatic staff nor permanent diplomatic missions abroad. The extraordinary embassy to Russia was thus entrusted to a high standing Ottoman bureaucrat, initially lacking the necessary experience, and who had no trained diplomatic personnel at his disposal. Notably, the members of the Ottoman delegation instead of supporting the envoy rebelled on their way to the Russian capital, demanding the increased salaries

and not caring at all about the prestige of their state. Having delivered the letter of the Sultan (*Nâme-i Hümayûn*) to the Russian Empress, Mustafa Rasih Pasha completed the formal part of his mission. As to the negotiations with the Russian side about the Muslim prisoners of war still kept in Russia, they continued for the whole three-month stay of the Ottoman envoy in St. Petersburg and ended inconclusively. Probably one of the most important results of the embassy of Mustafa Rasih Pasha was the ambassadorial report (*sefâretnâme*) of his mission, containing a rather extensive description of the Russian economy, society, army and state. This kind of information, no doubt, was of special interest for the Sultan Selim's circle of the *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* reformers.

Following the exchange of the extraordinary embassies the Ottoman-Russian relations remained strained. Apart from continuous distrust, there were still some unresolved practical issues, like revision of the Trade Tariff or the raids of the Circassian tribes, which negatively influenced the relations between the two empires. The threat of a new war was still a big concern for both parties. However, both extraordinary embassies confirmed the mutual wish of St. Petersburg and the Porte to maintain the current status quo. In a way, both sides could be satisfied. The Russians had now their hands untied in order to deal with the Polish question, and the Ottomans gained an opportunity to use the advantages of peace for their massive internal reforms.

CHAPTER IV

WAR CANNOT BE PEACE, 1794-1798

Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum
(Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus,
“Epitoma Rei Militaris”, Liber III)

4.1. Arrival of V. P. Kochubei to Istanbul and the Polish-Lithuanian question

To handle its affairs with the Porte St. Petersburg appointed Viktor Pavlovich Kochubei, a scion of the noble Ukrainian Cossack family of Tatar descent and nephew of the influential Catherinian statesman Alexander Andreievich Bezborodko. It was, actually, to the latter circumstance that the new Russian ambassador in Istanbul owed his appointment, which was made when Kochubei still was 23 years old (he celebrated his 24th birthday exactly one month later).¹ At the age of 8 Kochubei was taken from his native home in Ukraine and subsequently brought up in the house of his uncle in St. Petersburg. When he was sixteen, Kochubei got his first

¹ Kochubei was born on 22 / 11 November, 1768 and the Decree of his appointment as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Constantinople had been signed on 22 / 11 October, 1792. For this and other details of Kochubei's biography see: N. Chechulin, Kochubei Viktor Pavlovich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1903), Vol. 9 “Knappe-Kiukhelbecker”, pp. 366-82; the date of Kochubei's appointment has also been confirmed by himself, in letter to S. R. Vorontsov, written on the next day of this event. See: ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 23 / 12 October, 1792’ In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 63.

diplomatic experience, being sent for two years to Sweden. In 1784-1786 he stayed at the Russian mission in Stockholm, at the same time attending lectures at Uppsala University. After a short return to Russia and escorting the Empress during her famous trip to the Crimea, Kochubei had been again appointed to the Russian mission abroad. In the spring of 1789 he arrived at London, where at the request of his uncle he was put under the special care of the Russian ambassador in the Great Britain, Semion Romanovich Vorontsov. For the rest of his life, Kochubei retained a close friendship both with the ambassador Vorontsov and the whole Vorontsov family, the best proof of which is the voluminous correspondence published in “The Archive of Prince Vorontsov”.

In summer 1792 Kochubei was called back to Russia, in view of the plans of Bezborodko regarding his nephew’s further career. Among the existing options there were ambassadorial posts in Madrid or Istanbul, though the whole issue of the expected Kochubei’s appointment was known then only to a very limited circle of the highest Russian officials. While Bezborodko and Catherine II were willing to see Kochubei as the Russian envoy at the Porte, Bezborodko’s nephew himself would rather prefer Madrid and was not much enthusiastic about his prospected sojourn in the Ottoman capital. In his letters, regularly written to London, Kochubei was constantly conferring on this subject with S. R. Vorontsov², asking for his advice whether to accept the post of ambassador in Istanbul or to wait for some other position.

² ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 28 / 17 August, 1792’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 40; ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 4 September (24 August), 1792’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 42-45.

Despite the fact that the place prepared by Bezborodko for his nephew was both highly prestigious and very profitable, the doubts of Kochubei about accepting this post were quite explainable. The young man of his age, lacking experience, was from the very beginning to be faced with a vast field of difficult and complicated work demanding huge responsibility and sound professional background. Moreover, Kochubei was afraid that his tenure in Istanbul would estrange him in his young age from society and the social environment he used to live in while in St. Petersburg and Western Europe (*“la vie qu'on mène dans la capital turque me rendra étranger à la société”*) and would not allow him, still, any leisure time to proceed with the studies of some other subjects he was interested in.

Even though Bezborodko's nephew was not too eager to go to the Ottoman Empire, it is clear from his own correspondence with S. R. Vorontsov that his appointment was already decided in principle between his uncle and the Empress. It simply remained for him to wait throughout the summer and autumn of 1792 for the official imperial order, which at last had been issued on 22 / 11 October, 1792. Awaiting in St. Petersburg for his final appointment, young Kochubei struck up a friendship with the heir apparent to the throne Pavel Petrovich (future Emperor Paul I) and his son, crown prince Alexander Pavlovich (future Emperor Alexander I). Later on, this detail of Kochubei's biography would also have an important effect upon his life.

Upon the completion of all formalities, in late 1792 Kochubei left St. Petersburg for Vienna, where he was again to wait, for the whole summer and autumn of 1793, when the extraordinary mission of General Kutuzov would be

finished. The slow pace with which Kutuzov's embassy was moving, and then its rather long stay in Istanbul, was the object of some private complaints by Kochubei who felt at a loose end in the Austrian capital and would prefer to start his duties immediately.³

Finally, in late February of 1794 the new Russian ambassador arrived at the shores of Bosphorus. Kutuzov's mission by this time was closing to the end though the huge Russian delegation still remained in Istanbul. Heinrich Christoph von Reimers, one of the numerous members of Kutuzov's extraordinary embassy, left a short comment of his general impression about Kochubei when the latter just came to his new post. Reimers speaks of the nephew of Bezborodko as "a nice, young, well-educated man of about 26-27 years of age (Kochubei was 25 then; V. M.), who was brought up mostly in France and then spent a few years in England. He owes this important office to his uncle, Count Bezborodko".⁴ As was the usual practice, upon his arrival Kochubei paid on 1 March (18 February) an official visit to the Grand Vizier, followed by an audience with the Sultan, which took place on 4 March (21 February), 1794.⁵ In this way, the young Russian ambassador, who in view of his family name (Kochubei's name was of Turkic origin, being a derivative of "Küçük bey" or, "little lord") sometimes had been called in joke "Büyük bey" (big lord) by the Ottomans⁶, started to serve on the first post of high responsibility in his subsequently long and successful career.⁷

³ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 31 / 20 July, 1793' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, pp. 11-12.

⁴ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 188.

⁵ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, pp. 192-99. Reimers, who in accordance with the order of Kutuzov together with some other members of the Russian delegation had joined the entourage of the new ambassador during the latter's visit to the Sultan, gives an expanded account of this particular audience.

⁶ Reimers, *Reise*, Vol. 2, p. 189.

⁷ V. P. Kochubei, as a close friend of Emperor Alexander I would later become a quite influential person in Russian foreign and domestic policy, being a member of the celebrated Alexander's Privy

Kochubei was destined to appear in Istanbul in those early spring days of 1794 when the rest of Europe witnessed the ever-accelerating course of both appalling and fascinating developments of the French revolution, and on the East of the continent the Polish rebels with General Kościuszko at their head were preparing to engage into heroic but largely doomed attempt to liberate their country from foreign oppression. The Polish uprising officially started on 24 March 1794, as General Kościuszko at the market of the ancient Polish capital, the city of Kraków, declared its beginning and took a solemn oath to stand at its head. At the same time in France, the period of unrestricted authority of the Committee of the Public Safety, known as the Reign of Terror, reached its climax, which meant as well the highest point of the revolution. The summer month of Thermidor, however, was also closing in.

On the very day when Kościuszko was taking his oath in Kraków, the execution of such an iconic revolutionary figure as Jaques Hébert took place in Paris. A few weeks later, on 5 April, there were guillotined other living symbols of revolution Georges Danton and Camille Desmoulins. Moreover, the war France had been waging against almost all Europe was still underway. Thus, in terms of their foreign policy both the Polish patriots and the French revolutionary government at the moment were very much interested in gathering international support of any kind. Both hoped to find it first of all at the court of the Ottoman Sultan. For Russian ambassador in Istanbul, respectively, the principal task was to prevent the possibility of the Polish-Ottoman or Franco-Ottoman alliance and to derail the attempts of the French diplomacy to set the Ottoman and Russian Empires at loggerheads.

Committee, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (1801-1802), twice the Minister of the Interior (1802-1807 and 1819-1823) and the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers (1827-1832), to name just the most important of his future offices.

When still waiting in Vienna for the departure to the place of his new duty, Kochubei shared the general nature of instructions he got for the forthcoming diplomatic mission in Istanbul with S. R. Vorontsov. These instructions unambiguously prescribed the Russian ambassador to maintain amicable relations with the Ottomans, indicating the wish of St. Petersburg to avoid any conflicts on the Southern border of the empire at this point. For all that, Kochubei was not to make whatever concessions the Ottoman side might demand in some controversial issues, but insist on the strict adherence to all previously concluded treaties.⁸

It should be mentioned as well that the current desire of St. Petersburg for peace did not exclude other more aggressive plans for settlement of the Eastern question, which were, no doubt, also contemplated by the Russian Empress. There are many evidences, like the earlier ideas of *grande entreprise*, specific instructions of Catherine II to Kutuzov, persistent rumours about the impending war, which may serve as a proof of bellicose attitudes towards the Ottoman state existing in Russia. What is more, some Russian noblemen at the beginning of 1794 believed that the war was unavoidable. For instance, F. V. Rostopchin, in the future the Foreign minister of Paul I and the governor of Moscow during the Napoléon's invasion, who was at this time only a young courtier close to the heir apparent Pavel Petrovich, and who was not much liked by Catherine, wrote to S. R. Vorontsov:

Il me semble que la guerre est inévitable pour la Russie, puisque l'Impératrice la veut, malgré les réponses modérées et pacifiques de la Porte. Elle persiste dans l'intention de parvenir à son but et de remplir les gazettes du bombardement de Constantinople. Elle dit, à sa table,

⁸ V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 18 January, 1794. In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 75.

*qu'elle perdra un jour patience et fera voir aux Turcs qu'il est aussi aisé d'aller à leur capitale que de faire le voyage de la Crimée.*⁹

That the expectations of the new war in the 1st half of 1794 were quite real can also be clearly seen in the official correspondence between St. Petersburg and the Headquarters of the Black Sea Admiralty Department in Nikolayev (currently Mykolayiv, Ukraine), concerning the combat readiness of the Black Sea fleet. In January 1794 Catherine II issued the order to the then Chief of the Black Sea Admiralty Department Admiral Nikolay Semionovich Mordvinov to get the fleet fully operational in the event of war with “the enemy of the Christian name”.¹⁰ Whereas in the first lines of this document it is implied that the Ottomans, encouraged by the French incitements and the current imbroglio in Poland, may break the peace and attack Russia, it had also been prescribed for the Black Sea fleet not to confine itself only to defensive operations, but to be ready as well to deliver a preventive strike on the Ottoman naval forces dispersed in the area, so that the latter would not have enough time to join up. Nevertheless, the general contents of some other related documents suggests, that the Russian Empire was rather more agitated by the possibility of the Ottoman aggression, and first of all sought to ensure the security of its own borders, rather than embark on offensive campaign, still having unresolved problems in Poland and experiencing substantial financial difficulties caused by the last war.¹¹ The clear-cut supposition of Rostopchin indicates, though, that the Russian Empress despite the requirements of current situation still could entertain some designs about the Ottoman Empire.

⁹ ‘F. V. Rostopchin to S. R. Vorontsov, 20 / 9 March, 1794’ In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 24, p. 260.

¹⁰ ‘Order of Catherine II, 27 / 16 January, 1794’ R. N. Mordvinov (ed.) *Admiral Ushakov* (3 vols.; Moscow, 1951) Vol. 1, pp. 597-600.

¹¹ ‘Letter of N. S. Mordvinov to P. A. Zubov, 20 / 9 May, 1794’ In: Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 604-605; ‘F. F. Ushakov to N. S. Mordvinov, 1 July (20 June) 1794’, Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 611-12.

Thus one of the driving forces behind the Ottoman war preparations was the anticipation of the Russian assault, much as the similar military preparations of the Russian side were triggered in no small part by the apprehension of the Ottoman attack as a result of the hypothetical alliance of the Porte with France and/or the Polish insurgents. For that reason the Ottoman-Russian relations at the moment could hardly be called unstrained. The representatives of both the Sultan and the Russian Empress while speaking at the conferences about mutual peaceful intentions clearly could not rule out in their minds the still existent possibility of war.

The whole situation may be defined by a formula “war cannot be peace”, and it was up to both sides to decide where to put comma, after the first word or before the last one. Despite their own ideal preferences both the Ottomans and Russians, taking into consideration their best interests and the circumstances of the current moment, were more inclined to choose the second, peaceful option. Another war would be madness and come equally destructive for each side.

Particularly deplorable was the situation of the Ottoman state. After having stayed for about half a year in the Ottoman Empire Kutuzov, for instance, was quite positive that the Ottomans by no means would start the new war on their own will. Upon his return the Russian extraordinary ambassador was pointing out that the Ottoman fortresses were not yet prepared to meet full defensive requirements, the Ottoman fleet was not yet strong enough, the reformatory activity of the government was still immature, and, above all, the Ottoman state was harassed by domestic disturbances in all parts of the vast empire from the Balkans to the Arabic peninsula.

As a result, Kutuzov was making a conclusion that the declaration of war would be against any common sense and for sure not in the interests of the Ottoman government.¹²

An attitude, taken by the Porte in regard to the Polish uprising along with the climb-down over the issue of the new Trade Tariff in summer 1794¹³ offer a sharp evidence of the Ottoman wish to stay out of war. At the conferences with the Russian ambassador throughout spring and summer 1794, the Ottoman officials repeatedly assured Kochubei that the Porte would always keep its neutrality in the Polish affairs. Kochubei, in his turn, tried to soothe the concerns of the Ottoman side about the Russian armaments in close vicinity to the Ottoman border and on the Black Sea.¹⁴ Meanwhile the French representative in Istanbul Marie Louis Descorches¹⁵, acting also on behalf of the Polish insurgents, unsuccessfully sought to gain from the Porte the official recognition of the French Republic. At the moment this seemed highly unlikely, the same as an open support by the Porte of the Polish uprising. To do that would mean for the Ottomans to incur the enmity not only of Russia but also the other two co-participants of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth - Austria and Prussia, as well as all adversaries of the French, that is, the whole Europe.

¹² 'M. I. Kutuzov to General Field-Marshal P. A. Rumiantsev, 11 June (29 May) 1794' In: Beskrovnyi, *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 339; Mun'kov, *Diplomaticheskaja deyatel'nost'*, pp. 74-75.

¹³ The Porte gave up its claims regarding the new Trade Tariff on 26 June. See: Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 5, p. 111; Also see: 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 July, 1794' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 79.

¹⁴ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 26 April, 1794' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 31; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 June (30 May), 1794' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, pp. 32-34; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 June, 1794' (the date is the same as that one of the previous letter). *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, pp. 34-36.

¹⁵ Since the French Republic by then was not officially recognized by the Ottoman government, Descorches stayed in Istanbul incognito, as a simple merchant and under an assumed name, d'Aubry. See: Onnik Jamgocyan, 'La Révolution Française Vue et Vécue de Constantinople (1789-1795)' *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 282 (1990), p. 465.

Neither the long-standing sympathies for France, nor the attractive, albeit chimerical, propositions of Descorches, nor the French help with military instructors and engineers, nor even the deep anti-Russian feelings, could make the Ottoman side to openly discard the adopted principle of neutrality in the international politics. Also, the above mentioned advantages of the French side seemed even more not at all that convincing as compared with the most telling Russian trump card, which was, by a witty observation of Kochubei, 60 thousand men and count Suvorov on the Ottoman borders.¹⁶ The policy implemented at this point by the Ottoman government in its foreign relations appeared to be the best advisable under the given circumstances, that is, not to interfere into any rivalries of big European powers and in the meantime to concentrate on its own military preparations.

It is beyond any doubt that the Sultan's government, despite the urgent necessity of the moment to keep neutrality, could not remain indifferent to the events in the neighbouring Poland. Yet to openly declare itself a champion of the Polish independence and to start war, as it had happened in 1768, was absolutely impossible for the Porte. According to Kochubei, the Ottomans apparently were sympathising with the Polish uprising since it diverted the attention and resources of St. Petersburg, which otherwise could be used against the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, evaluating the chance of the Ottoman interference into the Polish affairs, the Russian ambassador deemed that the Ottomans could hardly lend a substantial support to the rebels of General Kościuszko.¹⁷

¹⁶ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 June, 1794' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 35.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

Descorches, who had not so long ago been the French ambassador in Warsaw¹⁸, was doing his best to call attention of the Ottoman highest officials to the Polish question. On 11 May 1794 the representative of as yet unrecognised French Republic delivered a note to the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Mehmed Rashid, asking for assistance to the Poles. Then Descorches was once again accepted by the *Reis-ül-Küttab* on 29 July. Mehmed Rashid reassured him that the well-being of Poland was very important for the Ottoman Empire, that the Porte felt great sympathy for Poles, but at the present moment could not help them. At the same time Reis Efendi gave his word that the Ottomans, even though not rendering direct assistance to the Polish patriots, in the same way would not prevent the secret attempts to provide them a helping hand.¹⁹

In fact, while constantly emphasizing to the Russian ambassador in Istanbul their expressed neutrality in the Polish question, the Ottomans whenever possible indeed were facilitating the struggle of the Polish insurgents. Many political refugees from Poland as well as the rebellious Polish officers in search of asylum, much to the annoyance of the Russian side, were accepted on the Ottoman territory. Furthermore, a sum of 20 thousand Flemish ducats had been secretly sent to Kościuszko through the agency of the Moldavian Hospodar Michael Soutzos (Mihai Suțu).²⁰ Another by no means unimportant point is that already by its own continuing military preparations the Ottoman Empire indirectly aided the cause of the Polish rebels, as

¹⁸ Marie Louis Descorches, or d'Escorches de Saint-Croix (after the Revolution he changed the aristocratic spelling of his name) served as the French ambassador to Poland during July 1791- August 1792. Catherine II issued a special order (27 / 16 August 1792) to the Russian military commander in Poland General Kachowski, prescribing him to make sure that the French representative would be expelled from Poland. See: Władysław Smoleński, *Konfederacja Targowicka* (Cracow, 1903) pp. 307-308, 370-71.

¹⁹ Jan Reychman, '1794 Polonya İsyanı ve Türkiye' *Belleten*, 31 (1967), pp. 87-88.

²⁰ Reychman, *1794 Polonya İsyanı*, pp. 88-89; 'M. I. Kutuzov to General Field-Marshal P. A. Rumiantsev, 11 June (29 May) 1794' In: Beskrovnyi, *Kutuzov Mikhail Illarionovich*, p. 339.

Russia was thus bound to keep a sizeable part of its troops on the Ottoman border, instead of using them in Poland.

On the whole, by the autumn of 1794 the relations of Istanbul and St. Petersburg remained just distrustful as earlier, though neither side was willing to rush into both devastating and unnecessary war. At the end of September Kochubei wrote to S. R. Vorontsov that the Russian court is “full of good will to keep the best possible terms with the Porte” and the Ottomans at the moment “want to stay in tranquillity”. Kochubei for this reason was making a conclusion that until winter nothing would change, and only then it would be possible to judge more or less thoroughly about the further intentions of the Porte.²¹ In other words, everything was going just as the Russian diplomatic representatives in Istanbul, first Kutuzov and then Kochubei, envisioned it in their reports. The Porte obviously could not run the risk of breaking the peace with Russia, becoming after the suppression of the Polish uprising in the end of the year more and more convinced that the line of policy it chose was the only one possible.

All of the indefatigable efforts of Descorches to win the Ottomans on his side appeared in vain. On the verge of the final defeat of Kościuszko’s armies Piotr Krutka, former interpreter (*tercüman*) at the old embassy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth appointed to act in the capacity of plenipotentiary of the Polish insurrectionist government (*Rada Najwyższa Narodowa*), arrived at Constantinople. Having come to the Ottoman capital early in November, Krutka was to give the Porte the first hand information about the uprising and to ask for help with one thousand

²¹ ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 22 / 14 September, 1794’ In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 85-86.

ducats and 40 thousand rifles.²² By this time not only Kościuszko had already been captured by Russians for about one month (after the battle of Maciejowice, on 10 October), but also Warsaw fell (on 5 November). The fight was over and before long the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth would be wiped out from the map of Europe for good.²³

The military success in Poland evidently strengthened the Russian positions in Istanbul and caused additional difficulties for Descorches. In Kochubei's opinion, the Ottomans even earlier never thought to interfere into the Polish affairs seriously. As he put it, they "were listening to the Swedes and to the French, they may be were giving some hopes, and that is all".²⁴ By the end of November, the Russian ambassador at the Porte was fully confident that, after receiving the news about the capture of Kościuszko and overall defeat of the Polish uprising, the Ottoman government, would certainly not dare to open hostilities against Russia at least until the next year. Kochubei was positive that if Russia would take the whole Poland, not to mention undertaking another partition, there would be no need to be afraid of the Ottoman attack.²⁵

The subsequent developments showed that the Russian ambassador was right in his assumption. As Iorga observes, the Ottoman government received the news of the destruction of Poland with great sorrow, as it might mean a grave omen for the Porte itself as well. However, Descorches still did not manage to persuade it into declaring

²² Reychman, *1794 Polonya İsyanı*, p. 90.

²³ The third, and last, partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth officially took place on 24 October 1795, when the three partitioning powers (Russia, Prussia and Austria) signed a treaty, dividing the remaining territories of the Commonwealth.

²⁴ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 27 / 16 November, 1794' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 37.

²⁵ Ibidem; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 December (24 November), 1794' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 40.

a war on Russia.²⁶ The only thing, which the Porte could afford at the moment was a protest against “the massacres in Poland” made by Reis Efendi to Kochubei in December 1794.²⁷ To risk its own interests for the sake of the doomed Poland, though, would be a complete folly. Without breaking their neutrality, trying to keep up peaceful relations with Russia and not seeking war, the Ottomans simply felt bound to prepare for it as best as they could, all the more after the downfall of Poland.

4.2. Diplomatic struggle at the Ottoman capital throughout 1795-1796

Meanwhile the French Republic was gradually gaining the upper hand against its enemies at the western end of the European continent. At the very beginning of 1795 the Batavian Republic, the first among the French client states of the epoch of the Revolutionary wars, had been proclaimed.²⁸ On 5 April, in Basel France signed peace with Prussia. The Prussian king recognised the French Republic and all of its territorial acquisitions on the left bank of Rhine. Somewhat later, in summer, the similar treaty had been signed with Spain, terminating the War of the Pyrenees.²⁹ As for the Ottomans, who earlier were in no haste to recognise the French revolutionary government as long as some other state would do it first³⁰, the recognition of the

²⁶ Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 5, p. 111.

²⁷ Edouard de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople: la politique orientale de la Révolution française*, (2 vols.; Paris, 1927), Vol. 2, p. 144.

²⁸ 19 January, 1795.

²⁹ War between Spain and the French Republic, waged throughout 17 April 1793- 22 July 1795.

³⁰ Many times the officials of the Sultan’s government were explaining to Descorches that the Ottoman Empire would not be the last state to recognise the French Republic, though at the same time it could not be the first one. For example, see: Onnik Jamgocyan, ‘La Révolution Française Vue et Vécue de Constantinople (1789-1795)’ *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 282 (1990), p. 465.

revolutionary France by Prussia, one of the bigger European powers, cleared the way for the Porte to follow the same path.

Therefore, when Raymond de Verninac³¹, the new diplomatic representative of the National Convention, arrived on 14 April to Istanbul³² the hearsay was floating in the air that the Porte may recognise the French Republic and Verninac as its official ambassador quite soon. In a letter written to S. R. Vorontsov on 10 May 1795, i.e. one week before the recognition of Verninac, Kochubei shared with his friend and senior colleague his apprehension that the Porte might follow the example of Prussia, though he hoped that there were still chances for this not to happen.³³ The Russian ambassador in Istanbul noted at the same time that all the French projects to raise the Ottomans against Russia and the Habsburg Empire could by no means be achieved this year, since the Porte was not yet ready either on sea or on land.³⁴ Regarding the Swedish diplomatic cooperation with the French in the attempts to bring the Ottoman government into some kind of anti-Russian coalition, Kochubei thought that the Swedes rather wished to obtain both the French and Ottoman subsidies than to fight against Russia. Kochubei concluded his letter by deriving a clear satisfaction from the fact that at the moment the Porte more than ever before distrusted the Christian powers and suspected all of them. Such a state of affairs when the Porte trusts no one, concludes Kochubei, was very favourable for Russia as the Ottoman

³¹ Raymond de Verninac Saint-Maur (1762-1822) before his appointment to Istanbul represented France at the court of the Swedish king, in 1792. Apart from being a diplomat he was also a poet. It may worth remarking that Verninac was brother-in-law of famous French painter of the 19th century Eugène Delacroix, as he married the older sister of Delacroix. See: Maurice Tourneux, A foreword to "Journal intime de l'abbé Mulot". In: *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, 29 (1902), p. 26.

³² Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, Vol. 2, p. 247.

³³ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 May, 1795' In: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 50.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

government in any case never trusted the Russians as its natural enemies (*n'a jamais eu de confiance en nous, comme dans son ennemi naturel*).³⁵

As expected, Verninac was recognised by the Porte as plenipotentiary of the republican France on 18 May 1795. “The Porte recognised the French Republic”, - this was the very first sentence Kochubei wrote in his next letter to S. R. Vorontsov. From now on, as the Russian ambassador characteristically puts it, “the door of Verninac was decorated with the coat of arms of anarchy, of which he was a representative”.³⁶ A natural consequence of such an event would be an even more increased diplomatic activity of France within the Sultan’s domains. Despite this fact, Kochubei once again repeated his opinion that the Porte would retain its neutrality at least until the end of the current year, remaining an “indifferent spectatrix” of the developments going on in Europe.³⁷ Moreover, the very personality of Verninac compared poorly to that one of Descorches. As Iorga stated, the Porte after all the solemn ceremonies was not taking Verninac seriously and his cause seemed to be lost from the very beginning.³⁸ Kochubei, already after Verninac’s stay in Istanbul for more than one year, also thought that Descorches had been a much more talented person than his successor.³⁹ Not everything depended on the French ambassador alone, though.

For the time being, the Ottoman government used the peace as an opportunity to continue its military preparations and the large-scale reformative programme of

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 52.

³⁶ ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 26 / 15 May, 1795’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 53.

³⁷ Ibidem; ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 June (30 May), 1795’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 93.

³⁸ Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 5, p. 113.

³⁹ ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 / 14 August, 1796’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 116.

Nizâm-ı Cedîd. In general, the two widespread concerns among the people of the Ottoman Empire at this time were the childlessness of Selim III and his various innovations.⁴⁰ The scope of the work to be done was extensive, including the attempts to create new troops trained and organised along the European lines, building new battleships for the navy, the reinforcement of the old border fortresses (Bender, Akkerman, Ismail) and the construction of the new ones (in Burgas, at the mouth of the Danube, and at the entrance of the Black Sea), the creation of the new factories for production of the gunpowder and artillery foundries.⁴¹ This drove the need for many experts in the respective areas, able to perform the required tasks. Quite understandably these were to be invited from abroad. It is worthy of note, that the Porte, guided by its own interests, was using the engineers, workers, military and naval instructors from the Western Europe quite regardless of their nationality. In the Ottoman Empire at the same time were working the French, the British and the Swedes, i.e. the representatives of the states currently fighting with each other in Europe jointly served the Sultan.⁴²

Touching upon the subject of the European military instructors serving in the Ottoman army, one simply cannot avoid mentioning the fact that in September 1795 a young French General Napoléon Bonaparte, then aged twenty-six and having no inviting career prospects in France, also presented a report to the National Convention expressing his wish to go to the Ottoman Empire in the capacity of an

⁴⁰ ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 May, 1795’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 51.

⁴¹ Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, pp. 139-44.

⁴² In this way, the British engineer White and six Swedish naval officers arrived to serve at the Ottoman Empire in summer 1795. See: ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 / 14 June, 1795’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 55; ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 August (30 July), 1795’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 95-96; Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 160.

artillery instructor.⁴³ A bit more than a fortnight after this request, when Bonaparte was already preparing for departure to the domains of the Sultan, a fateful event occurred in Paris that changed all of these plans and young General Bonaparte's future life and career altogether. The successful suppression of the royalist insurrection in Paris on 13 Vendémiaire an IV (5 October 1795) under the direct command of Bonaparte paved the way for the young General's fast rise to prominence. As a result, Napoléon Bonaparte was to step on the Ottoman land somewhat later and in quite different circumstances.

It is easy to notice that the majority of the Ottoman fortresses and other strategic locations to be fortified in the first place were either situated not far from the Russian border (like Bender, Akkerman, Ismail or Khotyn) or could easily be exposed to a hypothetical Russian aggression (the Ottoman Black Sea littoral). Objectively, even in time of peace, Russia remained the most serious external threat for the Ottoman state and the vast military preparations rather of defensive than the offensive character, made by the Porte, were a good proof of the Ottoman living concerns about the Russian attack.

To sum up, the continuing reforms, the military unpreparedness, the internal crisis, the decentralization tendencies and ineffectiveness of the central authorities, the growing wide dissatisfaction with the reformative movement of the Sultan, the lack of security for life and property of the subjects, and on top of that the spread of plague⁴⁴ would not allow the Ottoman Empire to wish at this point something other

⁴³ The full text of this request, dated 17 September 1795, is given in the Turkish translation at: Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 162.

⁴⁴ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 August (30 July), 1795' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 96-97.

than tranquillity and peace. Despite all of the ongoing armaments, the declaring of war against Russia was for the Porte out of the question.⁴⁵

For the same reason, the Ottoman reaction to the third and final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the end of 1795 was in full accordance with the earlier predictions of the Russian ambassador made already a year before.⁴⁶ After the partition had been completed, Kochubei commented in December 1795 on the Ottoman attitudes towards this issue:

Our Polish affair has been accepted here as a grievous and predestined event... For now I am even more assured that it [the Porte; M.V.] would keep the tranquillity with us for long, and, without any unexpected occurrences, neither the French nor the Swedes would manage to shake the beards that belong to here [meaning the beards of the Ottoman officials; M. V.](*не удастся поколебать здешних бород*).⁴⁷

Although the defeat of the Polish insurrection and the ensuing final partition of the Commonwealth further undermined the chance of involving the Ottomans into any kind of military anti-Russian alliance, the French diplomacy kept working towards its goals. The first and foremost was the conclusion of an offensive alliance between Paris and the Porte. In spite of this primary objective of the French the only thing Verninac managed to achieve by the spring 1796 was a project of a defensive alliance, adopted by Selim III and then additionally discussed and agreed upon by the Consultative Council (*Meclis-i Meşveret*) under the presidency of the Grand Vizier

⁴⁵ The idea that the Ottoman Empire badly needs peace and would not declare war on Russia on its own will constantly recurs in the letters of Kochubei, written throughout the summer-autumn 1795. Check: 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 August (30 July), 1795' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 94-97; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 3 November, 1795' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 97-100; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 24 / 13 December, 1795' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, pp. 100-103.

⁴⁶ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 27 / 16 November, 1794' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 37.

⁴⁷ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 24 / 13 December, 1795' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 102.

on 19 May 1796.⁴⁸ On 24 May, it was signed by the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Ratıb Efendi and Verninac. According to this project, France was assuming the obligation to aid the Ottoman Empire, should it be attacked by some other state, with the army of 30 thousand men, or eight ships of the line and twelve frigates, or the subsidy in the amount necessary for maintaining of such a military force. The Ottoman side also guaranteed that the Black Sea would be opened to the French commercial vessels. By a special clause the Kingdom of Great Britain was excluded from the countries this treaty would be directed against. In other words, instead of the offensive treaty, which had been expected in Paris, Verninac could sign only a defensive one. What is more, according to the project of treaty the Porte was not obliged to help France in its war against Britain.

On 28 May 1796 (7 prairial an IV) Verninac sent the text to the Foreign minister Charles-François Delacroix, his future father-in-law,⁴⁹ asking to accept the conditions of the proposed Ottoman-French defensive alliance.⁵⁰ The given treaty, being rather exclusively in the interests of the Ottoman state and not exactly the one Paris hoped for, was not ratified by France. At the beginning of August Verninac received the negative answer from his ministry, of which he had to inform the Ottoman government. The Porte, understandably, remained stunned upon learning this news.⁵¹ In such a manner by August 1796 the French Directory had discredited itself enough in the eyes of the Ottomans.

⁴⁸ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 142.

⁴⁹ In 1798 Raymond de Verninac would marry Henriette Delacroix, the only daughter of Charles-François Delacroix (the French Foreign minister in 1795-1797) and the older sister of painter Eugène Delacroix. A. Dry [Fleury Adrien]. *Soldats ambassadeurs sous le Directoire, an IV- an VIII* (Paris, 1906), p. 41.

⁵⁰ Dry, *Soldats ambassadeurs*, pp. 142-43.

⁵¹ Dry, *Soldats ambassadeurs*, p. 144.

While Verninac was occupied with the ill-fated project of the allied treaty, a representative of the Polish emigrant circles appeared on the shores of the Bosphorus as well. Already in early November 1795, Michał Kleofas Ogiński departed incognito from Venice for Istanbul.⁵² It is impossible not to mention that Ogiński, aside from his diplomatic duties, was also a composer and is the very same author of the immortal sounds of the polonaise “Farewell to the Homeland” (*Pożegnanie Ojczyzny*) for which he is more widely known than for his other activities. In fact, with the aid of the French consul (then not yet a political term) in Livorno Ogiński sailed off from this port only on 5 February 1796 and arrived at Smyrna (Izmir) after about one and a half months of the sea trip.⁵³ In the end Ogiński came to Istanbul, judging by his own memoirs, somewhere in April 1796.

As is seen from the written directives⁵⁴ given to Ogiński by the Polish emigrant committee based in Paris, the objectives of his mission much corresponded with those of Verninac. In the first place, as it might have been expected, the Polish émigrés aspired to restore the Polish state and for that reason were seeking the military support from any country which could be regarded as a potential ally. Among the most general tasks formulated in Ogiński’s instructions were to work for the Ottoman recognition of independent Poland and conclusion of an offensive military alliance between the Poles and the Ottomans that was to be directed against the common enemies. This actually meant that the High Porte was supposed to take the burden of fighting against the three co-participants of the Polish-Lithuanian

⁵² Ogiński left Venice on 4 November 1795 accompanied by another Polish émigré, Brigadier General Kolysko. Both used the false British passports and the assumed names. Michał Kleofas Ogiński, *Mémoires de Michel Oginski sur la Pologne et les Polonais, depuis 1788 jusqu’à la fin de 1815* (4 vols.; Paris, 1826), Vol. 2, p. 115.

⁵³ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 120-21.

⁵⁴ The full text of the orders sent to Ogiński by the Polish emigrant committee is available at: Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 104-113.

partitions. To bring the Ottomans to the prospected alliance, Ogiński, much like the French ambassadors, was recommended to entice the Porte with the promises to return the Crimea and all of the territories that had been lost during the recent war.

Besides, it was planned to create a broad anti-Russian coalition including France, the Polish insurrectionists, Sweden, Denmark and the Ottoman Empire. Along with such a fundamental purpose Ogiński had more specific orders, like to securing asylum for the Polish émigrés in the Danubian principalities of the Ottoman Empire and creating an effective combat unit from them to continue the fight for independent Poland. Should the Ottoman government agree to give asylum for the Polish insurrectionists, Ogiński was also to procure the Porte's permission to transport through the Ottoman territories the French munitions and artillery, which Paris might have sent in military aid for the Poles. In addition, the instructions of the Polish emigrant committee prescribed Ogiński to keep correspondence with two other Polish diplomatic agents in Stockholm and Copenhagen, and to act in close cooperation with the French ambassador.

On the day of his arrival to Istanbul, Ogiński was met by dragoman from the French embassy, citizen Dantan, who carried him to the Hôtel de France⁵⁵ to meet with Verninac. This was the time of intensive negotiations over the eventually failed Franco-Ottoman treaty of alliance, mentioned earlier. The French ambassador, then still waiting for the Ottoman reply to his propositions, told Ogiński that he had orders to help the representative of the Polish emigrants, and he suggested to join their efforts, and advised Ogiński to be careful and to avoid other foreign diplomats

⁵⁵ The building of the French Embassy in Istanbul, where Verninac was officially residing

residing in Istanbul in order not to disclose his incognito.⁵⁶ It was Verninac who organized the meeting of Ogiński with the First dragoman (*Baş Tercüman*) of the Porte Gheorghe Moruzi (Mourousis),⁵⁷ which took place on 13 June 1796. That day Ogiński visited Moruzi at his home at seven in the evening,⁵⁸ and the conversation, focused on the Polish question, lasted deep into the night.

The First dragoman voiced the position of the Porte regarding the affairs of Poland, which did not add to the optimism of the emissary of the Polish emigrants. Ogiński became assured that the Ottomans were paying careful attention to everything which was going on in Poland. Much to Ogiński's surprise, Moruzi described him the characters of all principal figures of the Polish politics in detail and told that the Porte had its secret agents there and was receiving the necessary information through the Danube principalities.⁵⁹ The Ottoman official assured that his government, beyond all doubt, sympathized with the Poles and had no reasons to like Russians, but this could not change anything at the moment. Moruzi also pointed out that if it were not for the Ottomans who indirectly helped the Poles by diverting certain part of the Russian forces from the battlefields in Poland to the Russo-Ottoman border, the Kościuszko uprising would have been suppressed far earlier.⁶⁰ Moreover, the First dragoman reproached the Poles for lack of unity among them, showing Ogiński a huge batch of letters, memoirs and projects proposing mutually

⁵⁶ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 125-26. Despite these precautionary measures the arrival of the Polish agent was well known to the Russian ambassador, and Ogiński all the time was under the strict watch of the spies working for the Russian embassy. Kochubei, the ambassador, was perusing all correspondence of the Polish diplomatic representative. Later, in 1802 Kochubei himself told about this to Ogiński when the latter returned to Poland, which remained under the Russian rule. See: Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 199.

⁵⁷ His brother Alexander Moruzi was the Hospodar of Wallachia (1793-1796; 1799-1801) and Moldavia (1792; 1802-1806; 1806-1807).

⁵⁸ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 165.

⁵⁹ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 166-68.

⁶⁰ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 171.

exclusive measures and sent to the Porte by many separate groups of Polish emigrants. Upon that Moruzi quoted the French ambassador in Basel Bartélemy, noting that the latter had reason in saying that *il fallait tout fair pour les Polonais, sans les Polonais*.⁶¹ In Moruzi's opinion, it was not fair of the Poles to accuse the Ottomans of indifference towards the Polish cause, and it was in fact France who forgot about Poland while signing the Basel peace treaty with Prussia. On the other hand, the First dragoman asked whether the Poles would expect the Ottoman Empire fighting for their cause against the three co-participants of Poland's partitions alone.⁶²

Approaching to the issue rather more from the Polish perspective and obviously ignoring the Ottoman considerations in this respect, Ogiński in return replied that if the Porte would not confine itself to passive military demonstrations and would attack Russia during the uprising of Kościuszko, there would be more chances for the Poles' victory. As a result, the strong Poland would always keep Russians on the alert, which meant that the Ottoman Empire could also be less worried about possible Russian aggression. The Polish agent reminded Moruzi of Catherine's intentions to create an Orthodox state in the Balkans for her grandson, adding that the Porte would be sorry for its current indecisiveness when Russia would occupy Moldavia and Wallachia, excite the Greeks, augment its naval forces on the Black Sea.⁶³ It was hard not to agree with Ogiński, whose arguments looked quite logical and consistent. Indeed, a strong Poland would be a good ally for the Porte, and to cancel out the consequences of the last war with Russia would be in itself a perfect idea. The evil was, as usual, in the details.

⁶¹ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 173.

⁶² Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 173-74.

⁶³ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, pp. 176-177.

In course of his conversation with the Ottoman First dragoman Ogiński grew more and more convinced that the Porte assumed a wait-and-see attitude and was not going to undertake any serious steps to change its current policy of neutrality in international affairs. In point of view of the Ottoman side any hasty moves would be disastrous. All what was needed was to continue with the yet unfinished military preparations in order to face the dangers so dramatically described by Ogiński. The Ottoman official was not at all surprised by the gloomy predictions he heard, but remarked that the Sultan's empire still had enough resources to frustrate the threatening projects of the Russian empress, and a lot of water will flow in the Danube till these plans could be realized.⁶⁴ As for the Poles, Moruzi once again assured in the Ottoman sympathies towards them, promised that in case of the successful Swedish diversion against Russia the Ottomans would also start hostilities, and for the time being wished the Poles to keep patience and prudence. In practice the meeting ended in nothing but vague promises made by the Ottoman side and the increased the disappointment of the Polish agent at his clear inability to change the Ottoman resolution to stay away from the war.

In the meantime, according to the testimony of the Russian ambassador in the Ottoman Empire Kochubei, in spring-summer 1796 the rumours about the close break-off between the Porte and Russia, spread in large part by the French emissaries, became quite an ordinary event in Istanbul.⁶⁵ However, it seems that

⁶⁴ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 / 14 May, 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 110; 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 9 July (28 June), 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 113.

these rumours did not result in any detrimental consequences on the general character of the Ottoman-Russian relations then.

Both the Ottomans and Russians simply continued to monitor each other's motions closely, without embarking on hostilities. Thus the Ottoman authorities were well aware of the inspection tour of General Suvorov made in summer 1796 to examine the Russian forces quartered along the Ottoman border, despite the fact that Suvorov moved rather fast and was followed by the staff of not more than 15-20 men. The route of Suvorov went through Kamyanets' (Ott. *Kamaniçe*) and Zhvanets' (Ott. *İjvaniçe*, situated on the left bank of Dniester in front of the Ottoman fortress of Khotyn; nowadays a village in Kmelnytskyi oblast', Ukraine), then the Russian commander marched past the Ottoman fortress of Bender and moved further to Khadjibey (Ott. *Hocabey*; nowadays Odesa, Ukraine) and the Crimea.⁶⁶ Apparently the Porte could not but be alarmed by any military developments in the immediate vicinity of its borders, even though the Russians, in contradiction with their actual deeds, kept telling about their amicable dispositions and that there was no danger for the Ottoman Empire. In any case, according to the observation of Kochubei, the Ottomans seemed to be nurturing pacific dispositions, in spite of the fact that, as Kochubei puts it, "Suvorov and his army did everything to bring about the contrary".⁶⁷

As a matter of fact, the Porte just continued the policy best suited for its own interests, seeking to avoid an untimely conflict with the Northern neighbour. The

⁶⁶ A report addressed to the Commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army, dated 17 Safer 1211 (22 August 1796). T. C. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey], *Hatt-i Hümayun*, Dosya no. 201, Gömlek no. 10314.

⁶⁷ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 12 / 1 August, 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 66.

French and the Polish diplomatic agents, having not reached their objectives of dragging the Ottoman Empire into an offensive military alliance against Russia, usually made reference to the increased Russian influence in Istanbul by the second half of 1796. Such a view seems to be somewhat exaggerated, as it ascribes the Ottoman neutral stance on the international arena almost exclusively to the intrigues of the Russian diplomacy and some transcendental treacherousness of the Ottoman side, refusing to look at the problem from the Ottoman perspective.

Appointed to the post of the French consul in Bucharest and waiting in vain for the Ottoman approval of his appointment, Constantine Stamaty (Konstantinos Stamatis) wrote about the Ottomans in summer 1796: “One had to be Russian or German to be well received by this vile and grovelling canaille”.⁶⁸ Neither was optimistic the Polish representative Ogiński, noting towards the end of summer that the influence of the French ambassador declined while that one of his Russian counterpart augmented. The dismissal of the pro-French Reis-ül-Küttab Ebubekir Ratib Efendi⁶⁹ and the Grand Dragoman Gheorghe Morouzi, which took place on 19 August 1796 (14 Safer 1211)⁷⁰, and their replacement with Mustafa Rasih Efendi and Constantine Ypsilanti (Konstantinos Ypsilantis; the son of the then Hospodar of Wallachia) respectively, who were both deemed to be pro-Russian, normally was considered as a token of growing influence of Russia at the Porte.⁷¹ Another inauspicious sign for the French and Polish diplomacy was the Russo-Swedish

⁶⁸ “*Il faut être russe ou allemand pour être bien reçu par cette canaille vile et rampante*”. Letter of Constantine Stamaty to M. -L. Descorches, 22 Thermidor an IV (30 July 1796). In: Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, p. 285.

⁶⁹ More information about Ebubekir Ratib’s career is available at: Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî*, Vol. 2, p. 346; Ahmed Resmî, *Halifetü'r-Rüesâ*, p. 139.

⁷⁰ Recep Ahışhalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtında Reisülküttâblık (XVIII. Yüzyıl)* (İstanbul, 2001), p. 45.

⁷¹ On the next day, 20 August 1796, Ogiński discussed this occurrence with a French renegade at the Ottoman service, named Ibrahim. Ogiński, *Mémoires*, Vol. 2, p. 209; Also see the letter of V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 / 14 August, 1796. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 116.

rapprochement, and, consequently, the estrangement between the French and Swedish embassies in Istanbul.⁷²

Inability of the French to make the Porte to come out openly on their side, beyond all doubt, played into the hands of St. Petersburg and its representative at the Ottoman capital. For all that, it was largely not due to the special wish of the Ottoman officials to listen to the Russian ambassador that the Sultan's government refused to accept the French propositions of the offensive anti-Russian alliance. A number of external and domestic factors had been necessarily reflected in the Ottoman foreign policy making, determining that discreet attitude the Porte had adopted. Among these were the fear of the Russian aggression, substantiated by the Russian military presence on the borders of the Empire, the overall strengthened strategic positions of Russia after partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian state, the Ottoman own massive internal crisis and ongoing large-scale reforms. Taking into account the abovementioned circumstances it would be more logical to speak not about the increased Russian influence at the Sultan's court, but rather of inefficiency of the French and Polish political propaganda.

Despite all odds, the French diplomacy continued its attempts to win the Ottomans to its side. By the end of 1796 the mission of unsuccessful Verninac was taken over by Jean Baptiste Annibal Aubert-Dubayet.⁷³ The new ambassador of the French Republic was quite a conspicuous figure, holding the rank of General and being both soldier and politician. Born in 1757 in New Orleans, then a part of the

⁷² Letter of Constantine Stamaty to M. -L. Descorches, 22 Thermidor an IV (30 July 1796). In: Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, Vol. 2, p. 285.

⁷³ Some details of his biography are available at: Charles Gayarré, *Aubert Dubayet or the Two Sister Republics* (Boston, 1882); Dry, *Soldats ambassadors*, pp. 347-486.

overseas French colony of Louisiana (New France), Aubert-Dubayet took part in the American War for Independence under command of the famed General Lafayette, during the French Revolution was elected to the National Legislative Assembly, and for two weeks even held the office of its President (8-22 July 1792). Following the establishment of the Directory and before nomination to the post of ambassador in the Ottoman Empire, Aubert-Dubayet was the War Minister of France (3 November 1795 - 8 February 1796). The new French ambassador arrived to his Istanbul residence on 2 October 1796⁷⁴, at seven in the evening, whereupon on the same day was introduced by Verninac to the Polish diplomatic agent Ogiński. Aubert-Dubayet explained Ogiński that among the objectives of his mission were the restoration of Poland and the retrieval of the Crimea from Russia.⁷⁵ As is seen from instructions given to Aubert-Dubayet in Paris, the French ambassador was to work towards conclusion of the defensive and offensive alliance with the Ottomans, to which it was planned to bring also Sweden, Denmark and Prussia. Moreover, it would also be helpful to stir up a rebellion among the Cossacks and the Tatars.⁷⁶

Along with Aubert-Dubayet arrived a large group of military experts, engineers and craftsmen of all trades, mainly to work at the Ottoman naval construction facilities.⁷⁷ However, it did not help Aubert-Dubayet to persuade the Ottomans to

⁷⁴ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 220; Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 151; Aubert-Dubayet was accompanied by four army officers: Carra Saint-Cyr, Menant, Caulaincourt, Castéra. Dry, *Soldats ambassadors*, p. 373; Russian ambassador Kochubei also mentioned in his letter to S. R. Vorontsov that in early October the embassy of the French Directory arrived at Istanbul. Its chief Aubert-Dubayet, a Creole from New Orleans, was escorted by two secretaries and three or four other persons. ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 October, 1796’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 117.

⁷⁵ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 221.

⁷⁶ Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, pp. 259-62.

⁷⁷ Kochubei mentions more than hundred craftsmen. ‘V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 November / 30 October, 1796’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 117, p. 119; Ogiński speaks about around 300 of the French craftsmen and workers, disembarked at Istanbul port on 21 October 1796. Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 226.

accept the alliance with France. The majority of these people stayed in Istanbul not more than half a year, and left the Ottoman Empire in June 1797.⁷⁸

Since the very beginning of his arrival Aubert-Dubayet experienced both vague and ambiguous ways in which the Ottoman side preferred to talk. Only a few days after his arrival, answering to Ogiński's question about how he felt in Istanbul, the French ambassador replied that he could not stand the word "*bakalım*" (Ottom./ Tur.: We will see). It was this word Aubert-Dubayet always heard from the Ottoman officials as a reaction to all his propositions. The time was passing by and at each meeting with Ogiński Aubert-Dubayet used to repeat ironically "*bakalım*".⁷⁹ Apparently this meant nothing other than unwillingness of the Ottomans to commit themselves to the obligations France asked from them for the moment, and which they could not carry out into practice under the current circumstances.

Thus, the proposition of an offensive alliance made by the French ambassador in early November 1796 was declined by the Porte.⁸⁰ Equally unsuccessful were the two Persian emissaries, who came to Istanbul in mid-January 1797 and also sought to drag the Ottomans into the war against Russia.⁸¹ The Ottoman government at the time was more preoccupied with the danger of the Russian aggression rather than planning its own attack. As Kochubei put it, the Ottomans "think, see and dream about nothing but us."⁸² In this respect great attention was paid by the Porte, among other things, to enlargement of its naval forces so that to make them able to compete

⁷⁸ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 159.

⁷⁹ Ogiński, *Mémoires*, p. 226.

⁸⁰ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 156.

⁸¹ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 February, n.s., 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 130.

⁸² 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 12 / 1 November, 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), p. Vol. 14, p. 69.

with the Russian Black Sea fleet. On the other hand, the Porte was equally disturbed by the recent successes of the French arms in Europe by the end of 1796.⁸³

4.3. Two empires after the death of Catherine II: A thaw in relations, 1797-1798

On 17 November 1796 at about ten in the evening⁸⁴ the reign of Catherine II, which proved to be so disastrous for the Ottoman state, ended. The Russian Empress passed away, and was succeeded by her son Pavel, who had been known to be unloved by his mother. This news was received by the Ottomans with unconcealed joy as well as with some credence for Pavel's peaceable intentions.⁸⁵ Upon his ascending the throne, Paul I indeed declared his amicable dispositions towards all of his neighbours and in the first place turned to domestic affairs, in all earnestness trying to get rid of the abuses that were taking place during the rule of his mother.

The Russian ambassador in Istanbul hoped that under the new emperor the relations between two countries would change for the better and that he himself would also feel much more tranquil.⁸⁶ Kochubei wrote to S. R. Vorontsov, his senior colleague in London, about his personal satisfaction with the "wise system, which we have adopted for our policy with the Porte."⁸⁷ "The instructions I have received and

⁸³ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 / 14 November, 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 122.

⁸⁴ 'F. V. Rostopchin to S. R. Vorontsov, 18 / 7 November, 1796' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1876), Vol. 8, p. 157; 'A Note of Prince Rostopchin about the last day of life of Empress Catherine II and the first day of reign of Paul I' *Ibidem*, p. 170.

⁸⁵ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 26 / 15 February, 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 74.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 February, n.s., 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 128.

the frank manner of the Emperor to express himself”, continued Kochubei, “make me believe that all we wish is to have peace with all our neighbours.”⁸⁸

In general, the tension in the Ottoman-Russian relations began gradually subside starting from the end of 1796. At the time the Ottomans continued to follow the political developments in Europe closely and kept reinforcing their land and naval forces. The Russian side in its turn had any reason to believe that the risk of an Ottoman assault was minimal, if any. This did not mean, however, that the necessary defensive measures were not taken. With a view to protect Russia from any unexpected dangers, in case of a hypothetical Ottoman-French attack, the commanders of the Russian Black Sea fleet were given orders to regularly monitor the situation in the Ottoman Empire and on the borders, to strengthen the coastal fortifications as well as patrol the Black Sea along the Russian coastline.⁸⁹ What is worth noticing is that the instructions to the Russian naval forces at the given point look to be of exclusively defensive character. Even the doctrine of preventive naval strike, quite common a couple of years ago during the rule of Catherine II⁹⁰, had been not mentioned. Preparing to protect his Empire from the smallest possibility of foreign aggression, Paul I himself did not contemplate any aggression of his own then.

A good example of Ottoman-Russian peaceful coexistence at the moment may be seen in the situation around the frigate “Tsar Konstantin”, a vessel of the Russian

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

⁸⁹ ‘Rear Admiral P. V. Pustoshkin to F. F. Ushakov, 26 / 15 February, 1797’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 643-44; ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 26 / 15 February, 1797’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, p. 644; ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 7 March (24 February) 1797’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 646-47.

⁹⁰ See, for example: ‘N. S. Mordvinov to P. A. Zubov, 20 / 9 May, 1794’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, 604-5.

Black Sea fleet that had to spend the winter of 1796-1797 in Istanbul. In November 1796 “Tsar Konstantin” headed out to the sea from Ochakov, carrying various cargos for Sevastopol. Because of heavy weather she sustained a serious damage and had been drifted to the Ottoman coast, after which she had to enter Bosphorus and to stay there for the whole winter.⁹¹ The officers of “Tsar Konstantin”, apart from the Ottoman naval preparations that were going on in Istanbul with the participation of some French specialists, also noted in their reports the kind treatment afforded them by the Ottoman side. These officers of the Russian navy “except friendliness did not notice anything that would indicate at the hostile attitudes on the part of the Porte”, and, according to their evidence, “one could not see any troubles in Constantinople” and the Russian merchant vessels were treated with the “utmost politeness, quietude and pleasantry”.⁹²

“Tsar Konstantin” arrived in Sevastopol only in late April 1797. The Ottoman official who escorted the Russian ship received a warm welcome in Sevastopol and was offered a gold watch, fox fur and 200 roubles as a present.⁹³ Moreover, Vice Admiral F. F. Ushakov, a hero of the recent Ottoman-Russian war and for that moment the Deputy Head of the Black Sea Admiralty, asked the Russian ambassador at the Porte V. P. Kochubei to express his gratitude personally to *Kapudan Pasha* (the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy).⁹⁴ Ushakov also ordered to send to the Ottoman Admiralty two anchors and two naval ropes, which had been lent by the Ottomans instead of those the Russian frigate lost in the storm.⁹⁵ The occurrence

⁹¹ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, p. 662.

⁹² ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 May (20 April) 1797’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 662-64.

⁹³ ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. P. Kochubei, 4 June (17 May) 1797’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 664-65.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 664.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 665.

with “Tsar Konstantin” is yet more proof showing that by spring-summer 1797 the Ottoman-Russian relations experienced even if not an outright warming, at least certain détente.

When it comes to the further French military successes in Europe, the Porte obviously could not turn a blind eye to the new territorial acquisitions made by France throughout 1796. At a time when the bellicosity of the French Republic kept growing and General Napoléon Bonaparte started to gain one by one his first victories as an army commander on the battlefields in the Northern Italy, the potential French expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean necessarily raised the Ottoman concerns. These concerns proved well-founded especially after the French secured themselves a foothold not only on the Apennine Peninsula, but also on the Ionian Archipelago not far off the coast of continental Greece and Albania.

In spite of the fact that the Ionian Islands were officially transferred to France in the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed on 17 October 1797, the French had de facto occupied them already in summer.⁹⁶ Such a neighbourhood naturally disturbed the Porte, as the Russian ambassador Kochubei put it, “not because it [the Porte; V. M.] suspects the intentions of the Directory, but because the French orders are dangerous on their own”.⁹⁷ The Sultan’s government grew more anxious with the forthcoming evidences of the French revolutionary propaganda among the Ottoman subjects in the Balkans. Moreover, the French emissaries were seeking contacts with the powerful

⁹⁶ The Island of Corfu was occupied on 29 June 1797, later the French troops landed also on other islands

⁹⁷ ‘V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 26 / 15 January, 1798’ The Archive of the Foreign Politics of the Russian Empire (*Архив Внешней Политики Российской Империи*), Moscow. (Hereafter AVPRI). Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 8/4. Delo 862, f. 29.

Ottoman local power magnates Osman Pazvantoğlu and Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, who were de facto independent rulers in their Balkan possessions.⁹⁸

The governor of Morea Hasan Pasha informed the Porte in late 1797 about the surreptitious French propaganda activities in Greece. Hasan Pasha even assumed that, together with the Ionian Islands, France could be secretly guaranteed other old Venetian territories in the Mediterranean including Crete and Morea, which had later been conquered by the Ottomans in the 17th century. No matter how wrong the assumptions of the Morean Pasha could be, his report only added to the Ottoman suspicions in regard to the French intentions.⁹⁹ Somewhat later, the Ottomans also intercepted the proclamation of General Bonaparte inciting the Greeks and Albanians to rebellion. In reply to the queries submitted by the Ottomans to the French government Talleyrand on 15 March 1798 (i.e. when the project of Egyptian expedition had been already officially confirmed) falsely assured that the Directory never engaged in anything like that and would always be a good friend of the Ottoman state.¹⁰⁰ Obviously, that evasive answer of the French Foreign minister could hardly satisfy the Ottoman side.

As one would expect, the anxiety of the Porte about the French vicinity to the Ottoman borders and possible pernicious consequences of such a neighbourhood was gladly observed by the Russians. V. P. Kochubei wrote in September 1797, that the Ottomans were very anxious in view of the neighbourhood of the French. So, the Ottoman authorities monitored the trip of some French officers from the Island of Zante to Patras in the Peloponnese Peninsula with utter suspicion. It was generally

⁹⁸ Enver Ziya Karal, *Fransa-Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1797-1802* (İstanbul, 1938), p. 42.

⁹⁹ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁰ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 173.

accepted in Istanbul that under the pretext of the touristic curiosity they could have well used their journey for field reconnoitring.¹⁰¹ From the Russian point of view, sure enough, the more distrust would appear between the French and the Ottomans the more favourably would stand the Russian positions at the Porte. In this respect Kochubei noted that the Sultan's government was quite satisfied with Russia and he would like to see the French "occupy our place in their [the Ottomans'; V.M.] hearts and mouths".¹⁰² What is more, Kochubei by the end of September 1797 did not even exclude the possibility of the Ottoman – Russian alliance:

*La Porte s'est très-bien conduite dans cette occasion, et je puis assurer votre excellence que ses intentions à notre égard sont on ne peut pas meilleures. Elle se méfie et craint les Français depuis qu'ils sont venus se nicher dans les îles vénitiennes, et je ne serais même pas surprise, bien entre nous soit dit, qu'elle voulût se rapprocher beaucoup plus intimement de nous. Une alliance avec les Turcs serait sans doute un événement assez singulier en politique.*¹⁰³

It came to the point when the Russian ambassador at his secret meeting with Reis Efendi on 8 December 1797 in a friendly way warned the Ottoman minister about the disturbing activities of the agents of General Bonaparte in Greece and Albania. Kochubei, in spite of his personal opinion that the French would not have enough forces to attack the Balkans, still recommended the Ottomans to be always ready to face such a possibility. Besides, Kochubei advised the Porte to send the secret agents to Italy and to dispatch the necessary instructions to its ambassador in Paris, Esseyid Ali Efendi.¹⁰⁴ Somewhat later, in January 1798 Kochubei again was admonishing the

¹⁰¹ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 9 September, n.s., 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 87.

¹⁰² 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 25 (14) September, 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 88.

¹⁰³ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 26 (15) September, 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 90.

¹⁰⁴ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 173.

Ottoman side against the dangerous diplomatic intrigues of Paris, which Esseyid Ali Efendi with the best will in the world could not cope with.¹⁰⁵

Under the present circumstances, the prospect of a new Ottoman-Russian war had increasingly diminished. The new Russian Emperor consistently made it clear that he was not going to engage in risky projects of his mother, whereas for the Ottoman government the war with Russia was also out of the question. The Porte appeared to be faced at this time not only with the new threat stemming from the fact of the common borders with the French Republic, but also found itself in an open armed conflict with rebellious governor of Vidin Osman Pazvantoglu by the end of 1797. In the full sense of the word this was a real wide-scale war that had been taking the most of attention and resources of the central Ottoman government throughout the second half of 1797- the first half of 1798. Quite obviously, the Porte was simply in no position to embark on hostilities also with Russia.

Despite the apparent anxiety of the Ottoman government as to the immediate neighbourhood with the French Republic the possibility that the Ottomans may conclude an alliance with France, albeit out of mere fear of the French might, had also been considered in St. Petersburg. In the end of 1797 Paul I issued the order demanding that the Russian Black Sea fleet should be prepared at any time to fend off a hypothetical Franco-Ottoman attack. Equally the Russian army in the Crimea under the command of General Mikhail Vasilievich Kakhovskii received the orders to concentrate in the Peninsula around Karasubazar and the River of Salgir in order to prevent the chances for landing of the foreign troops in the Crimea. What is worth

¹⁰⁵ 'V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 26 / 15 January, 1798' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 8/4. Delo 862, f. f. 27- 27 ob.

of attention is that all the above mentioned defensive measures were to be taken secretly, with an obvious aim not to affect the currently pacific relations with Istanbul.¹⁰⁶

Along with having apprehensions about a possible Franco-Ottoman alliance, the Russian side also kept an eye on the developments around the rebellion of Pazvantoğlu in Rumelia. A selfdependent rule of the latter over the large territories between the Danube and the Balkan range remained the source of a constant headache for the Porte, and, as it was already said, the strained relations between the Vidin governor and the central Ottoman government escalated by the end of 1797 to the point of war. When it comes to Russia, its chief concern lied in the presence of sizeable Ottoman military forces in close vicinity from the Russian border. Thus the regular fortnightly reports of V. P. Kochubei to St. Petersburg necessarily included the observations of the Porte's military preparations against Pazvantoğlu.

At the very beginning of 1798 Kochubei informed Paul I about the meeting that took place on 4 January (24 December 1797, Old style) between the dragoman of the Russian embassy Fonton and the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Rashid Efendi. The Ottoman minister was authorised by the Sultan to officially notify the Russian ambassador on the measures taken by the Porte to subdue the disobedient Governor of Vidin. The conversation that followed reflected the wish of the Ottoman government to reassure the Russian side that it did not have any hidden motives behind the sending of a large army to the Danube area and to emphasize once more the peaceful character of relations between the two empires. Rashid Efendi told that he would also like to

¹⁰⁶ 'Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 11 November (31 October) 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, p. 695; Also published in: *Arkhiv grafov Mordvinovykh* (St. Petersburg, 1901), Vol. 1, pp. 653-54.

dispel the rumours about the purposes and final destination of the squadron of three or four combat ships ready to set off from Istanbul. This was to proceed to Varna and enter the mouth of the Danube, being sent exclusively against the Pazvantoğlu rebels.¹⁰⁷

On the next day, on 5 January 1798 (25 December 1797, Old style), Kochubei sent his answer to the *Reis-ül-Küttab* in which indicated that all these peaceful assurances made by the Porte were unnecessary, and that he personally never had any doubts as regards to the true purpose of the ongoing Ottoman armaments. In Kochubei's words, addressed to Rashid Efendi, it was not Russia, but France and the French policy oriented towards the total domination everywhere (“*владычествовать везде*”) that constituted a real threat for the Ottoman state. The Russian ambassador continued that Paul I, on the contrary, intended to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, which appeared necessary for keeping the existing balance of power in Europe.¹⁰⁸

It is very interesting and ironical, though to some extent may be wandering off the point, that approximately at the same time when Kochubei sent his note to Rashid Efendi, the opinion of certain French diplomatic agents regarding the Ottoman Empire was quite similar to that one of the Russian ambassador. The only difference was that according to the French perspective the Ottoman dominions were threatened by “the ambitious views of the two Powers [meaning the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg; V. M.], which for a long time have been coveting these beautiful

¹⁰⁷ ‘Report of V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 12/1 January 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 862, f.f. 1- 2a ob.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, f.f. 2a ob- 3 ob.

lands”¹⁰⁹ and it was the French Republic alone who could save the integrity of the Ottoman state.

Turning back to the note of the Russian ambassador to *Reis-ül-Küttab*, apart from the declarations of friendship and warnings against the potential French encroachments, Kochubei even offered the Ottomans the Russian help. He pointed out that in view of the different religions in Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and some related to this difference circumstances, he was not proposing the assistance with the army, but should the communication between Istanbul and the Danube region be interrupted, Russia could help the Porte with delivering munitions, artillery, rifles etc.¹¹⁰ However, this was nothing more than a tricky diplomatic move, as Kochubei himself in his report to the tsar wrote that “the offer like that... was made by me in full persuasion that it would not be accepted”.¹¹¹

As a matter of fact, Russia was not willing to upset relations neither with the Porte nor with Pazvantoğlu. General A. A. Bekleshov, the Military Governor of Kamenets-Podolskiy (nowadays Kamyanets-Podilskyi, Ukraine) exercising control over Volhynian, Minsk and Podolsk Provinces, and the highest commander of the troops located on the South-Western borders of the Russian empire, received the respective instructions from Kochubei in January 1798. The ambassador demanded that in case if Pazvantoğlu suffered a defeat and applied to the Russian border authorities for asylum, he should be denied access to Russia under the pretext of the border quarantine. The orders concerning this delicate subject, continued Kochubei,

¹⁰⁹ ‘Dubois Thainville to Foreign Minister Talleyrand, 5 Brumaire an VI / 26 October 1797’ *Archive des Affaires Étrangères, Paris. (AAE), CP Turquie 197*, fol. 56.

¹¹⁰ ‘V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 12/1 January 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 862, f. 4 ob.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 5.

should be issued with the utmost care so that neither the Porte nor Pazvantoğlu would know about the abovementioned Russian decision. On the one hand, the Porte could feel offended as on this occasion it would definitely like to see Pazvantoğlu arrested and given over to the Ottoman authorities. On the other hand, should the rebellious Vidin Governor learn of the intentions of the Russian side, the interests of the Russian merchants conducting trade across the Danube would be seriously jeopardized.¹¹²

When for Russia it was sufficient to know that nothing threatened its southern borders for the moment, for the Sultan's government the conflict with Pazvantoğlu became the most central issue of the first half of 1798. Meticulous preparations of the costly punitive expedition against Vidin, under the Kapudan Pasha Küçük Hüseyin, continued throughout the winter and spring. The Porte spent about 28 thousand purses, or 14 million gurushes for the whole expedition.¹¹³ In compliance with the advice of the court astrologers the departure of Küçük Hüseyin and his expedition from Istanbul took place on 9 April at six hours and eighteen minutes in the morning.¹¹⁴ Having gathered his forces at the place called Davutpaşa, Küçük Hüseyin Pasha moved on 12 April towards Vidin.¹¹⁵ The army amounting to about 80 thousand men¹¹⁶ besieged Pazvantoğlu in his well-fortified capital city of Vidin. For all that, to gain a victory over Pazvantoğlu appeared not that easy. Due to the

¹¹² V. P. Kochubei to General A. A. Bekleshov. (No date). Ibidem, f.f. 34-35.

¹¹³ V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 April, 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 15 ob.

¹¹⁴ V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 12 / 1 April, 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 4.

¹¹⁵ Записка Константинопольских вестей и разглашений [Note of Constantinople News and Announcements]. April 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 19.

¹¹⁶ Dry, *Soldats ambassadors*, p. 484.

lack of coordination among the Ottoman forces¹¹⁷ and the impregnable fortifications of Vidin, the rebellious Pasha managed to withstand the siege. Upon the news of the French aggression against Egypt in summer 1798 the siege of Vidin became even more inefficient and did not bring the desired results.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Ottoman-Russian border the Russian authorities kept watching the events that were taking place on the Danube. Even though the chances of the serious threat to the Russian dominions were quite small, if at all, the Russian Black Sea fleet still had the orders of Paul I to stay on high alert. Taking into consideration that the Porte intended to send a naval squadron to the Black Sea, which was to proceed to Varna and then to the mouth of the Danube with the alleged aim of acting against Pazvantoğlu, the Russian emperor demanded from the Black Sea fleet Commander-in-Chief Admiral N. S. Mordvinov to place both the fleet and the coastal fortifications in operational readiness.¹¹⁸

Moreover, upon receiving the news about the martial preparations going on in the Ottoman Empire, there appeared some rumours on the Ottoman-Russian border to the effect that these would be directed not against the governor of Vidin, but rather against Russia. The commander of the Russian Dniester army General Bekleshov, shared his concerns in this respect with Kochubei, asking whether it was possible that the Ottomans could give a free passage to the French troops moving towards the

¹¹⁷ There were even certain bloody conflicts among the soldiers of different military units of the Ottoman army. So, for example, in April 1798 a quarrel had been reported between the troops of the Anatolian Beylerbey and those of Kurd Osman Pasha, both participating in the same expedition against Vidin. Several dozens of men on both sides were killed. See: *Zapiska Tsaregradskikh vestei I razglashenii*. April 1798.. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 40.

¹¹⁸ 'Paul I to N. S. Mordvinov, 15 / 4 February, 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 3; 'Paul I to N. S. Mordvinov, 15 / 4 February, 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 4-5. Also: *Arkhiv grafov Mordvinovykh* Vol. 1, pp. 265-67.

Russian borders. The Russian ambassador at the Porte, in his turn, ruled out such a possibility completely. Kochubei believed that the French merely did not have the necessary amount of troops in the Adriatics and, furthermore, the Ottomans would have never accepted the French into their domains inhabited by the Christian peoples who could easily be affected by the “ideas of freedom”. In conclusion, Kochubei wrote: “You should not be surprised on hearing that the Divan and a part of people look on us, may be, as on their best friends”.¹¹⁹

Following the principle that caution is the parent of safety, the Russian side in winter – spring 1798 obviously still sought to exclude all surprises on the part of the Ottomans. First, although the Russian ambassador in Istanbul reported in January 1798 that the Sultan’s government at the moment was greatly satisfied with Russia and would hardly conclude an alliance with France,¹²⁰ St. Petersburg never abandoned the concerns about the preponderance of the French influence upon the Porte, in which case it could lead to the latter’s decision to open war on Russia.¹²¹ Second, the fact of the presence of the Ottoman naval squadron not far from the Russian coasts was itself a reasonable cause for the Russian authorities to increase the vigilance on the borders. Together with this, the instructions of Paul I to his commanders emphasized the wish of the Russian Emperor that “all the good harmony that exists now with the Ottoman Porte and there would be not the slightest pretext to upset it” should be observed.¹²² In this way, even while taking the necessary precautions against a surprise attack, St. Petersburg preferred to keep the

¹¹⁹ Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 15.

¹²⁰ “Порта с трудом склонится заключить союз сей, ежели б Франция оным лакомить её и теперь вздумала, будучи наипаче совершенно спокойна и до крайности Россиею довольная”. ‘V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 26 / 15 January, 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 8/4. Delo 862, f. 30.

¹²¹ ‘Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 15 / 4 February, 1798’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 5.

¹²² ‘Paul I to N. S. Mordvinov, 15 / 4 February, 1798’ Ibidem, p. p. 4-5.

existing peaceful state of affairs with the Ottoman Empire and tried not to provoke undesired conflicts on its southern borders.

Consequently, as regards the Ottoman-Russian relations during the discussed period, neither party intended to attack the other and both had all reasons to be satisfied with their neighbours. On the other hand, one still had to take the necessary defensive precautions in order to be ready for any unexpected surprises that might come up. It is important to note that both the Ottomans and the Russians were not planning any offensive moves and were in the first place preoccupied with considerations of their own security.

4.4. Arrival of V. S. Tomara, the new Russian ambassador at the High Porte

Vasilii Stepanovich Tomara (1746 – 1819)¹²³, the successor of Kochubei at the ambassadorial post in Istanbul, and like him also of the Ukrainian origin, had been appointed ambassador to the Porte under the imperial decree signed by Paul I on 8 June (28 May) 1797.¹²⁴ The instructions concerning Tomara's future mission, dated by 25 / 14 October 1797, once again clarified the focal points of the Russian policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Paul I ordered his new ambassador to further maintain good relations with the Porte, as well as continue to counteract the French attempts to restore the former influence of Paris on the shores of the Bosphorus. "Our main wish is to preserve peace and good harmony with the Ottoman Porte... Any spirit of

¹²³ For Tomara's detailed biography see: P[avlov] S[il'vanskii], N. Tomara Vasilii Stepanovich. *Russkii biograficheski slovar'* (25 vols.; Moscow, 1999), Vol. 7 (additional) "Tobizen- Turgenev", pp. 129-33.

¹²⁴ 'A. A. Bezborodko to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 June, 1797' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1289, f. 2.

conquest is alien to us...”, were the words of the Russian Emperor addressed to Tomara,¹²⁵ who finally arrived at the Ottoman capital on 24 / 13 March 1798.¹²⁶

In a week the previous ambassador Kochubei paid a farewell visit to the Grand Vizier (2 April (22 March) 1798)¹²⁷ while Tomara was first received by the Grand Vizier (16 / 5 April 1798)¹²⁸ and then by the Sultan (24 / 13 April 1798).¹²⁹ On 25 / 14 April 1798, that is, the day after the new ambassador had been presented to the Sultan, his predecessor Kochubei departed from Constantinople.¹³⁰ The latter soon afterwards became a member of the board of the College of Foreign Affairs, Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and in 1802 took the post of the first Minister of the Interior of Russia.

Tomara descended from the Ukrainian Cossack aristocratic family of Greek origin. As it was usual at that time in Russia, he received his first education at home (outstanding Ukrainian philosopher of the 18th century Hryhorii Skovoroda is reported to be his tutor) and continued his studies in Italy and Germany. Since 1768, at the age of 22, Tomara started his diplomatic career at the College of Foreign Affairs. Then, in 1772, during the war with the Ottoman Empire, Tomara was assigned to serve at the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army P. A.

¹²⁵ A. M. Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deyatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova v Gretsii 1798-1800 g.g.* (Moscow, 1983), p. 66.

¹²⁶ ‘V. S. Tomara to Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko. 26 / 15 March, 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 879, f. 11.

¹²⁷ V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 April, 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 5 ob.

¹²⁸ Zapiska bytnosti Chrezvychnogo Poslannika i Polnomochnogo Ministra Tomary na tseremonial'nyi visit u Verkhovnogo Viziria izzet Mehmed Pashi Aprelia 5/16 1798 goda. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f.f. 23- 24 ob.

¹²⁹ Zapiska bytnosti Chrezvychnogo Poslannika i Polnomochnogo Ministra Tomary na audiyentsii Ego Sultanova Velichestva Aprelia 13/24 1798 goda. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f.f. 25- 26 ob.

¹³⁰ V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 April, 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, L. 15.

Rumiantsev- Zadunaiskii, and took part in the negotiations of the Küçük Kaynarca Peace treaty. Thereupon he was attached to the office of the Russian Charge d’Affaires in Istanbul Kh. I. Peterson as a translator. At that point, it was yet unknown that this 28 years old young man would return to Istanbul some quarter of century later, in the capacity of the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Russia at the Porte.

For one year (1777-1778) Tomara served at the Russian embassy in Madrid, and left his mark in history as the person who brought the ratified copy of the Georgievsk Treaty (1783) from the Caucasus to St. Petersburg.¹³¹ He later participated in the war of 1787-1792 staying at the headquarters of the Russian and the Austrian armies. At the very end of the war, early in 1791, Tomara was appointed by Prince Potemkin to command the Russian flotilla in the Aegean Archipelago, composed partly of the vessels bought in Europe and armed in Syracuse, and partly of the squadron of the Greek vessels of Lambros Katsonis. However, due to the fact that in August 1791 truce had already been signed, Tomara was not able to engage into the sea combats. Having not received any new appointment, Tomara resigned in May 1796, half a year before the death of Catherine II. As it happened to many other state officials buried in oblivion during the Catherinian times, during the reign of Paul I Tomara had been remembered and appointed the Russian ambassador to Constantinople.

From the very beginning of Tomara’s arrival to the Ottoman capital, the new ambassador continued the line of conduct, which had earlier been adopted by

¹³¹ The famous treaty that placed Georgia under the formal Russian protectorate, signed on 4 August (24 July) 1783 by the King of Kartli-Kakheti Erekle II at the fortress of St. George (Georgievsk, Northern Caucasus).

Kochubei. Like Tomara himself put it in his first report to the Tsar, “for some time past my predecessor here had adopted the tone of Minister of a state, which was sincerely interested in prosperity of the Porte”.¹³² Accordingly, since the notification of his arrival, Tomara pursued the same aim, which was defined by Kochubei in the letter addressed to his successor as “to consolidate the amicable dispositions of the Porte towards Russia, to remove her suspicions against Russia, and to strengthen her belief in Russia’s sympathy towards her”.¹³³ Assurances of mutual friendship were repeated once and again by both the Russian diplomatic representatives and the Ottoman officials. For instance, in April 1798 at the reception on the occasion of the notification of the ambassador’s arrival, the first dragoman of the Porte told the counsellor of the Russian embassy Iakovlev: “What a difference we came to see in our affairs with Russia; formerly each your word caused distrust, and now this is one of the most friendly powers for us”.¹³⁴ Even though these words could be somewhat exaggerated, the very fact that they had been pronounced was by no means unimportant.

The audience of the newly arrived Tomara with the Sultan took place, as was mentioned before, on 24 / 13 April 1798. At 4.30 in the morning the ambassador left his residence in Pera, followed by the retinue, *mihmandar* (an Ottoman official assigned to the foreign delegations as a guide) and a company (*orta*) of the Janissary honour guard. The Russian delegation came down to the shore of the Golden Horn at the Tophane quay, crossed to the other side of the gulf and moved on to the Topkapı Palace, the celebrated residence of the Ottoman Sultans. After having approached the

¹³² ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 April, 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 2 ob.

¹³³ Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 17.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 2.

Procession Pavillion (Ottom. *Alay Köşkü*) the Russian ambassador, in conformity with tradition, stopped and waited for the Grand Vizier to come. Then Tomara was taken inside the palace. There, at the second gate, the ambassador dismounted and was met by the First Dragoman of the Porte. Then, he sat on the bench waiting for a permission to proceed to the Divan.

After waiting for some time, Tomara continued his way, now met by the *Çavuşbaşı*, and while approaching to the Divan the ambassador was welcomed by the *Kapıcılar Kâhyası*. As Tomara entered the Divan, from the side-door appeared the Grand Vizier, who delivered a greeting speech to the ambassador through the Dragoman of the Porte. When the official part of the ceremony was over, the tables were brought and the meeting in the Divan ended with a meal. The ambassador was invited to the table of the Grand Vizier, whereas other members of the delegation occupied two other tables together with the *Defterdar* and the *Nişancı Efendi*. Upon the completion of the meal, sprinkling with rose water and fumigation, the master of ceremonies guided the Russian ambassador to the third gate, where Tomara was clad in a sable fur coat, and the rest of the delegation members were also given fur coats. Once again the ambassador was to wait.

Then, as the Grand Vizier came to the Audience Chamber, the ambassador and twelve members of his retinue, each accompanied by two guardians, were taken in. The Sultan was sitting on the throne, with the Grand Vizier and *Miralem* (since the *Kapudan Pasha* was away in the expedition against Pazvantoğlu) on his right and the Eunuchs on his left. Tomara, after bowing for three times, gave a speech whereupon handed over his letter of credence to *Miralem*, the latter passed it to the Grand Vizier, and the Grand Vizier upon a sign made by the Sultan put the credentials of the

Russian ambassador on the throne near his monarch. Afterwards the Grand Vizier made a speech in return, and the audience ended. Tomara, followed by the Ottoman guardians, and again having made three bows, walked backwards until he left the Audience Chamber.¹³⁵

Following the ceremonial receptions, there started the normal day-to-day diplomatic activities of the new Russian ambassador. Thus, one and a half week after the audience with the Sultan, on 4 May 1798, Tomara met with *Reis-ül-Küttab* Ahmed Atif Efendi, who also only recently took up his post.¹³⁶ For about of two hours they talked on the mutual friendly approaches, and the situation around the Pazvantöglü's uprising. The Russian ambassador especially tried to draw attention to the threat of the French revolutionary propaganda, equally pernicious "for all the thrones in the world", including the Ottoman one.¹³⁷ In this regard, the Ottoman statesman chose to speak in the same vein as the Russian ambassador, mentioning the threat of the French republican system, somewhat flattering the Russian side. Ahmed Atif Efendi told Tomara, for example, that "the only means to protect oneself from the influences of the visible, though secret, enmity of this nation [the French; V. M.] is the close, and not overshadowed by any kind of cupidity, mutual friendship of the great sovereigns".¹³⁸ To what extent was Reis Efendi sincere with the Russian ambassador is not clear, though it is obvious that the Ottoman side was rather interested in the yet unresolved issue of the trade tariff, as Ahmed Atif Efendi

¹³⁵ 'Zapiska bytnosti Chrezvychainogo Poslannika i Polnomochnogo Ministra Tomary na audiientsii Ego Sultanova Velichestva Aprelia 13 / 24 1798 года' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f.f. 25- 26 ob.

¹³⁶ Ahmed Atif Efendi had been appointed to the office of *Reis-ül-Kittab* on 5 March, 1798 after the unexpected death of his predecessor, Mehmed Raşid Efendi. Ahışalı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtında Reisülküttâblık*, p. 45.

¹³⁷ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 May, 1798' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 32 ob.

¹³⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 33.

touched upon it in the further conversation.¹³⁹ Together with this, both the Russians and the Ottomans by spring 1798 were indeed much alarmed with the growing might of the French and the potential French threat, first of all to the domains of the Sultan.

4.5. On the way towards further Ottoman- Russian rapprochement

Not only the fact of the French possessions adjoining the Ottoman border but also the preparations of the French fleet that were going on in Toulon raised a great deal of suspicion in Europe as regards the plans and intentions of France. Some rumours ascribed the preparations in Toulon to the aim of aggression against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. According to other comments one could also expect the appearance of the French fleet in the Black Sea. Besides, even the French agents, in order to conceal the real destination of the squadron anchored in Toulon (i.e. Egypt), were themselves spreading various rumours concerning the potential aim of the prepared expedition. Neither the Russian nor the Ottoman Empires could ignore such a threat, all the more when it was looking quite plausible. So, already in February 1798 the Ottomans were contemplating the defensive measures in case of the French aggression against the Morea,¹⁴⁰ while Paul I ordered Vice-Admiral F. F. Ushakov to set the Russian Black Sea fleet ready for a possible appearance of the French combat ships in the vicinity of the Russian shores.¹⁴¹ Even if it seemed very unlikely that the Porte would give the French fleet a free passage to the Black Sea, Paul I preferred to be prepared for any challenge that might occur. The Russian Emperor in a similar order to Ushakov, issued in early July 1798, compared the situation with an approaching storm when, regardless of whether it would rain or not,

¹³⁹ Ibidem, f.f. 33- 33 ob.

¹⁴⁰ Moskovskiiie Vedomosti, 10 April, 1798.

¹⁴¹ 'Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 20 / 9 April, 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 21.

one should still think of rain protection.¹⁴² For all that, the relations between Istanbul and St. Petersburg remained more amicable than ever before.

Despite the rumours coming from time to time from Wallachia, saying that the armies of the High Porte after the victory over Pazvantoğlu would turn against Russia, Tomara assured the Tsar that such rumours were completely unfounded and thus fully rejected any possibility of the Ottoman aggression. The Russian ambassador in Istanbul wrote to Paul I in his report of 19 April 1798: “I cannot fail to notice in every their [the Ottomans’; V. M.] deed both towards my predecessor and towards me, the apparent feelings of respect towards Your might and forces, the great credence to Your practices, as well as the inclination for inertness and rest”.¹⁴³ Tomara also added that the Porte was respecting Paul I not under constraint, as it had been the case with Catherine II, but due to the difference of his policy. As regards the rumours of an imminent war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, the Russian ambassador addressed the Porte asking to prevent their spreading, and the latter issued the necessary orders.¹⁴⁴

When it comes to the Ottoman view of the international situation that had developed in Europe by the spring 1798, a very valuable piece of information can be retrieved from a memo composed at this time by *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atıf Efendi.¹⁴⁵ Starting with an analysis of the recent past, the Ottoman minister in the first instance spoke about the calamitous consequences of the French revolution that set all of

¹⁴² ‘Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 2 July (21 June), 1798’ *Arkhiv grafov Mordvinovykh*, Vol. 1, p. 669.

¹⁴³ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 19 / 8 April, 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 12 ob.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, f. f. 12 ob – 13.

¹⁴⁵ *Muvâzene-i politikaya dâir Reis-ül-Küttab Atıf Efendi’nin lâyihası*. Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1294), Vol. 6, pp. 311-17.

Europe aflame. The establishment of the republican form of government, the anti-monarchical fervour and the massive campaign of dechristianisation, followed by the purposeful spread of the revolutionary propaganda abroad made several European nations to unite against France. By then, it was only Britain and Austria that left in the anti-French coalition. Even though the British naval forces could gain the upper hand over France and its allies on the high seas, Austria alone could not resist the French armies on the land and necessarily had to conclude a peace agreement with Paris.

Atıf Efendi argued that the declarations of the French stating that they did not have any aggressive intentions towards their neighbours were simply a blatant lie. The Ottoman statesman recounted the territorial acquisitions made by the French Republic, which included the Netherlands (where the political regime was changed on the French model¹⁴⁶), the region of Savoy taken from Sardinia, the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo in the New World, Northern Italy (where again the French satellite Cisalpine Republic had been created¹⁴⁷), the left bank of the Rhine. The Venetian Republic, despite its neutrality, had been split by General Bonaparte between France and Austria. In such a way, the first part of Atıf Efendi's memo explicitly indicated that the Porte was quiet well aware of the inherent dangerous character of the ideas of the French revolution along with the ever growing aggressiveness of the French Republic in Europe.

¹⁴⁶ *Tavır-i hükümetini tebdil ve Fransa'nın usul-i hükümetine tatbik itirdiler...* Ahmed Cevdet, *Târihi Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1294), Vol. 6, p. 313.

¹⁴⁷ *Fransa'nın nizamına mümasil kavanin ve ahkâm vaz' iderek Çizalpin namile suret-i istiklâlde cumhuriyet kıyafetine koydular...* Ibidem.

Having outlined the process of the recent French expansion all over the European continent, *Reis-ül-Küttab* approached the central for the Porte question whether or not the Ottoman Empire was exposed to the same threat like other European countries. Atif Efendi pointed out that even though the Sultan's government remained all the time neutral, this neutral stance amidst the flames of the general European war became in fact a moral support (*manevî ianet*) to France. Moreover, apart from moral support the French Republic, which had remained isolated from the rest of the continent and experienced the food shortages during the years of revolution and war, received supplies from the Ottoman Empire that helped the revolutionary France to cope with the problem of famine.¹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, after the partition of the Venetian Republic, France occupied the Ionian Islands along with the small coastal strip of the former Venetian possessions on the Balkan Peninsula including the towns of Butrinto (currently Butrint, in Southern Albania), Parga, Preveza and Vonitsa (the latter three are located today in the Northern Greece). Such a neighbourhood opened the way to the malicious French revolutionary propaganda among the Ottoman Christian subjects, in the first place among the Greeks. Atif Efendi also mentioned the French preparations that were going on in Toulon, on the Mediterranean coast. In opinion of the Ottoman minister, the Ottoman Empire had to continue with its own military preparations in order to defend itself should it appear necessary.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ *Fransanın ziyade müzayakası ve kemal-i kaht ve cu'a ibtilâsı hengâmında Memalik-i mahrusa'dan zahair-i vefire ihracına ve Fransa iskelelerine nakl ve isala ruhsat birle dağdağa-i cu'dan tahlis itdi...* Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1294), Vol. 6, p. 317.

¹⁴⁹ *Elhaletü hazîhi İngiltere aleyhine olan tedarikâtdan başka iç denizde Toulon tersanesinde tedarikât-i kuvviye dahi ma'lumdur. Bu güne tedarikâtın tahtında bir fesad-i azîm olması ihtimalden baid değildir. Binaen berin şöyle vakitte Devlet-i Aliye bunların mahuf olan şerlerinden masun olmak için kuvve-i tedarikde bulunub aleldevam esbab-i hıfz ve hiraseti boşlamıyarak her hal ve hareketlerini taharri ve tecessüsten hali olmamak vacibat umurdandır...* Ibidem.

Considering these circumstances of the growing French threat the *Reis-ül-Küttab* went so far as to accept the theoretical possibility of the alliance between the Porte and its traditional enemies Russia and Austria. Ahmed Atıf Efendi argued that any state should have two modes of foreign politics. While one of these is constant and founded on tradition, the other is dictated by the current conjuncture and the current state interests. In this respect both Russia and Austria were traditional enemies of the Porte which normally should be fought against, but depending on the situation and the given specific circumstances, another and more suitable mode of foreign policy could be adopted. When the dangerous situation would change, one could again return to the traditional political mode of behaviour.¹⁵⁰

In this way by the spring of 1798, the prospects for further Ottoman-Russian rapprochement grew more visible. At the time when one of the key figures in the Ottoman government accepted the theoretical possibility of the joint action with the traditional enemies of the Porte, the Russian Emperor instructed his ambassador in Istanbul to make a proposition for the Ottoman side to send an authorized representative to Sevastopol¹⁵¹ so that the latter could inspect everything what was going on there and thus to assure the Porte that Russia had no aggressive intentions whatsoever against the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ *Lazıme-i vakt ve haldendir zira her devletin iki nev' mesleki olmak lazımdır. Biri kâffe-i ifal ve harekâtda esas ittihaz olunan meslek daimidir. Ve biri mukteza-i vakt ve hale nazaran bir müddet için ittihaz olunan meslek halidir. Devlet-i Aliye'nin daimi mesleki mevki' hasebiyle tabii düşmanları olan Rusya ve Nemçe devletlerinin tezayüd kuvvetini men' itmek ve anların kuvvetine iras-i kesir idebilecek tabii dostu olan devletlerle mürettebat olmakdır lâkin vakt ve hale nazaran maslahatına evfak olan meslek şimdilik bu ateş-i fitne ve fesadın ifasına var kuvvetini bezl idüb husul-i meram müyesser oldukda yine meslek-i daimî muktezası üzere hareket etmektedir...* (The underlining is mine; V. M.). Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1294), Vol. 6, p. 318.

¹⁵¹ In 1797 Paul I renamed the city, and throughout 1797-1826 it was also known as Akhtiar. The Crimean Tatar name for the city is Aqyar.

¹⁵² 'Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 18 / 7 May, 1798' *Arkhiv grafov Mordvinovykh*, Vol. 1, p. 271; See also: 'Paul I to N. S. Mordvinov, 18 / 7 May, 1798' *Ibidem*, pp. 270-71.

In fact, everyone in Europe during the spring 1798 was greatly alarmed by General Bonaparte in view of his military successes in Italy, the occupation of the Ionian archipelago and, above all, the ongoing warlike preparations in and around the French Mediterranean port city of Toulon. Equally, neither the Ottomans nor the Russians knew for sure the final destination of the huge naval squadron that had been prepared there. One had to expect anything and the Russian Emperor Paul I already in March and April proposed the Ottoman side his help against the potential French attack with the object to preserve the integrity and security of the Ottoman Empire. These propositions, however, were declined by the Porte at that time.¹⁵³ In the meantime on 12 June (1 June Old style) the Russian Black Sea fleet got the orders to start patrolling the sea and to return to the ports by mid-August.¹⁵⁴

Tomara, in line with the instructions of Paul I, in May once again notified the Ottoman government about the decision of his Emperor to offer help. In order not to raise suspicions of other diplomatic representatives in Istanbul by frequent meetings with the *Reis-ül-Küttab*, Tomara preferred to make his notification through Fonton, the First dragoman of the Russian mission. The Porte was to be informed that upon the news of the French intentions to send a strong squadron to the Aegean Sea,¹⁵⁵ the Russian naval forces received the order to patrol the basin of the Black Sea and Paul I would gladly help the Ottoman state with his Black Sea fleet in the event of a French aggression. Fonton on 24 May 1798 talked to the First dragoman of the Porte Ypsilanti and the latter promised to communicate with the *Reis-ül-Küttab* about the

¹⁵³ Kleinman, *Rusko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 17; Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, pp. 205-6.

¹⁵⁴ 'The Edict of Paul I to the Admiralty College on the appointment of F. F. Ushakov the Commander of the Black Sea Squadron for the 1798 campaign. 11 April (31 March) 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 19.

¹⁵⁵ Usually both the Aegean and Mediterranean seas were called in the contemporary sources the White Sea (*Bahr-i Sefid* in the Ottoman; or *Белое море* in Russian)

proposal of the Russian side.¹⁵⁶ In less than two weeks the Porte made known its answer to the Russian Emperor.

At the conference with Tomara that took place on 9 June (29 May) 1798, the *Reis-ül-Küttab* told the Russian ambassador that the Porte would accept the offered help and in case of necessity would ask for it.¹⁵⁷ Ahmed Atıf Efendi closed the meeting with the statement that both the Russians and the Ottomans were the enemies of the French, and that in Russia he saw a protection for the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁸ Selim III after having read the proceedings of the given conference expressed his readiness to start consultations with the Russian side concerning the Ottoman participation in the anti-French alliance.¹⁵⁹ The capture of Malta by Napoleon (12 June 1798) and, above all things, the landing of the French troops at Alexandria (1 July 1798) largely accelerated the pace of the Ottoman-Russian negotiations. The news that Bonaparte attacked Egypt first came to Constantinople on 17 July, though at that point there still remained some hope that it was only yet another rumour.¹⁶⁰ However, as the same information reached the Ottoman capital again a week later¹⁶¹, the Porte became this time seriously worried. Finally, on 24 July Ahmed Atıf Efendi made an official request to Tomara, asking the Russian side in accordance with earlier propositions of Paul I to send the promised naval squadron to Istanbul. Besides, the Sultan wished to conclude with the Tsar an alliance, and

¹⁵⁶ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 26 / 15 May, 1798' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 61; A note to the First dragoman Fonton. Ibidem, f. 63; Report of the First dragoman Fonton, 24 / 13 May 1798. Ibidem, f.f. 65- 65 ob.

¹⁵⁷ A. M. Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova v Gretsii, 1798-1800 g. g.* (Moscow, 1983), p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁰ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 234.

¹⁶¹ Ibidem.

ordered the *Reis-ül-Küttab* to begin the negotiations on that matter with Russia,¹⁶² which started on 28 July.¹⁶³

The Russian Emperor expected the Sultan to accept his offer and was also going to lend his help for the Porte not only with the naval forces, but also with the regular army, should the circumstances require that. It is very notable that Paul I on 17 August (and yet not knowing that the Porte officially requested the Russian help), issued the instructions to the Governor General of Kiev, General I. V. Gudovich, to wait for the news from the ambassador in Istanbul Tomara and be ready to enter the Ottoman territories and to proceed where it would be deemed necessary, in case of a special invitation in that respect from the Porte.¹⁶⁴ Ironically, already on the next day Paul I was to send his orders to Gudovich and other military and naval commanders again, as the news reached St. Petersburg that the French took Alexanderia and that the Ottoman Sultan had agreed to accept the Russian aid.

On 18 August, already knowing that the Porte officially requested the Russian aid, Paul I issued a number of orders concerning the possible expedition of the Russian troops abroad to lend a helping hand to the Ottoman Empire. General Gudovich was to inform the Russian ambassador in Istanbul and through him the Sultan's government about his readiness to come to the help of the Porte.¹⁶⁵ The Quartermaster General of the Russian army Lieutenant General Ivan Ivanovich Hermann, to whom the commander of the Ottoman forces in Kuban Battal Pasha had

¹⁶² Stanislavskaja, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, p. 73.

¹⁶³ Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 259.

¹⁶⁴ 'Paul I to General I. V. Gudovich, 17 / 6 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 2. Internal College Affairs. Op. 2/2. Delo 205, f. f. 30-31; 'Paul I to Lieutenant General Dashkov, 17 / 6 August 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 31 ob. - 32.

¹⁶⁵ 'Paul I to General I. V. Gudovich, 18 / 7 August 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 41-45.

surrendered in 1790, and later the commander of the unfortunate Russian expedition against the Batavian Republic in 1799, received the orders to follow Gudovich.¹⁶⁶ Count Mikhail Vasilievich Kakhovskii, the commander of the Taurida division, was to communicate with Gudovich and stay responsible for the security of the Russian borders.¹⁶⁷ It was very important in this situation that the Russian frontier territories newly acquired from Poland remained under the watchful eye of the government and that the troops leaving abroad were to be replaced. Accordingly, the Governor General of Moscow, Field Marshal Ivan Petrovich Saltykov the Second, was to be prepared to move on Kiev in order to assume the duties of Gudovich in case of need.¹⁶⁸

An almost unthinkable event in the European politics, that is the alliance between the Ottoman and the Russian empires, was thus in the making. There certainly were the fresh memory of the recent wars and mutual distrust. However, both sides still were unwilling to stir up new hostilities under the new international conjuncture. Throughout the 1790s Constantinople and St. Petersburg simply preferred to maintain the existing status quo that satisfied them both. Even despite the certain thaw in relations a full-fledged alliance would sound as something rather chimerical and surely not applicable in real life. Real life, however, appeared more unpredictable than expected.

¹⁶⁶ 'Paul I to Lieutenant General Hermann. 18 / 7 August 1798' Ibidem, f. 47.

¹⁶⁷ 'Paul I to General Count Kakhovskii. 18 / 7 August 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 48-49 ob.

¹⁶⁸ 'Paul I to Field Marshal Count Saltykov the Second. 18 / 7 August 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 49 ob- 51 ob.

4.6. Conclusions

Throughout the years between 1794 and 1798 the two empires were balancing on the verge between peace and war, and were very much interested in preventing a new conflict. In mid-1790s one of the central issues defining the agenda of the European diplomatic representatives in Constantinople was the Polish question. While being busy with the affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and preparing its last partition, St. Petersburg sought to secure the neutrality of the Porte. On the other hand, the French diplomacy, supported by the Polish emigrant circles, tried by all means to involve the Ottomans into an offensive alliance against Russia.

At this point the interests of Russia and the Ottoman Empire to avoid war coincided. All attempts of the French ambassadors Descorches, Verninac and Aubert-Dubayet to drag the Ottomans into an anti-Russian alliance ended in failure. The Porte in view of the deepest internal crisis and the ongoing reforms of *Nizâm-i Cedid* simply could not risk breaking its peace with Russia for the sake of the restoration of Poland. The Ottoman government at the time was more preoccupied with the danger of the Russian aggression rather than planning its own attack. Following the death of Catherine II and the ascension of Paul I to the Russian throne the threat of the Ottoman-Russian war decreased even more.

Unlike his mother, the new Russian Emperor was not going to wage any wars with the Ottomans, having embarked on extensive domestic reforms. Paradoxically enough, while the relations between the Porte and its inveterate enemy Russia towards the end of 1790-s were slowly improving, the Ottomans were increasingly concerned with the growing aggressiveness of their traditional friend and ally, France. According to the Peace of Campo Formio (1797) the French gained control

over the Ionian Islands along with the small coastal strip of the former Venetian possessions on the Balkan Peninsula. This meant that France now had a common border with the Ottoman Empire and became a potential threat to Balkan possessions of the Sultan. Moreover, the French revolutionary propaganda could be more easily spread among the Ottoman Christian subjects, raising the serious concerns of the Porte.

Thus, in spring 1798 there appeared a memo of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atıf Efendi, allowing the theoretical possibility of an alliance of the Ottoman Empire with Russia and Austria. The opinion of the Ottoman minister was that even though both these monarchies historically were the biggest enemies of the Porte, under extraordinary circumstances they could become allies. As the preparations of a huge French naval squadron were going on in Toulon, everyone in Europe was anxious about its final destination. Among the possible targets of General Bonaparte, according to many speculations, could be the British Isles, Egypt or the Balkans. Even before the actual French descent in Egypt took place, the Russian Emperor proposed (in March and April 1798) his military aid to the Ottomans. Following the occupation of Egypt the Porte agreed to accept the Russian proposition and in late August 1798 the Black Sea squadron of Vice Admiral Ushakov sailed off from the Crimea to Constantinople. In this way, the French aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean brought about a heretofore unthinkable thing such as the Ottoman-Russian military cooperation and paved the way to conclusion of a defensive alliance between the Sultan and the Tsar.

CHAPTER V

BIRTH OF THE ALLIANCE

Nichts Bessers weiß ich mir an Sonn- und Feiertagen
Als ein Gespräch von Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei,
wenn hinten, weit, in der Türkei,
Die Völker aufeinander schlagen.
(J.W. von Goethe, "Faust", I)

5.1. Russian fleet visits the Ottoman capital

On 18 August 1798 the Russian government received the news about the French landing in Egypt, along with information about further plans of General Bonaparte to spread his conquests over the holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem and even to restore in the latter the Jewish Republic.¹ Apart from this, Paul I learned about the final decision of the Sultan to ask the Russian aid against the French, or, in terms of Pavel, "the enemies of all kingdoms and the destroyers of the general order".² While the military commanders of the Russian armed forces quartered in the close vicinity of the Ottoman border were ordered to stay prepared for a possible campaign abroad at the request of the Porte, the naval squadron under the command of Vice Admiral Ushakov was to proceed directly to the Bosphorus in

¹ 'Paul I to General I. V. Gudovich, 18 / 7 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 2. Internal College Affairs. Op. 2/2. Delo 205, f. 41.

² Ibidem, f. 41 ob.

order to act jointly with the Ottoman and the British fleets.³ Besides, Paul I ordered to form one more reserve squadron, which in the absence of Ushakov until further notice was to patrol the Russian Black Sea coastline. Rear Admiral Ivan Tikhonovich Ovtsyn had been appointed the commander of this reserve squadron.⁴

It can be clearly seen, that even having the official request of the Ottoman side for aid, St. Petersburg did not forget to take the necessary precautions regarding the security of the Russian borders, as well as the safety of Ushakov's squadron. When sending the promised naval force to Istanbul the Russian government was still unsure about how the Porte would behave in respect to its new ally. Together with the Tsar's order Ushakov was provided with a detailed instruction of the Vice-President of the Admiralty Board (*Admiralteistv-Kollegiia*) Grigorii Grigorievich Kushelev,⁵ which demanded from him the utmost care and attention. Kushelev once again reminded Ushakov a number of reasons for being extremely cautious in communicating with the Ottomans. First, the alliance between the Porte and the Russian Empire was quite a novel matter. Second, there should be remembered long previous rivalry of the two nations. Third, one could not be sure to what extent would the Ottomans keep their loyalty to a Christian state.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned circumstances Ushakov was given certain practical instructions. So, the Russian Admiral before entering the Bosphorus was to make sure that the Porte would guarantee his free return back to the

³ 'Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 18 / 7 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1289, f. f. 25-26; the same document can also be found at: AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396, f. f. 25-25 ob.

⁴ 'Paul I to N. S. Mordvinov, 18 / 7 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1289, f. 24.

⁵ 'G. G. Kushelev to F. F. Ushakov, 18 / 7 August 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 23-23 ob.; this document has been published at: Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 91-92.

Black Sea. Among other things recommended to Ushakov was to merge the Russian and the Ottoman ships, so that the experienced Russian crews would set an example to the Ottomans, restraining them from escape. Also, the Russian side was concerned with the fact that many French specialists were then serving the Porte. Should it appear necessary to defend the Dardanelles from a French attack, Ushakov was to recommend the Ottomans to take care that there should be no French engineers in the coastal fortresses, for they might betray the Porte in favour of their fellow countrymen. As the latter directive implies, St. Petersburg at this point still pondered the possibility of the French invasion of other parts of the Ottoman Empire, including the Black Sea Straits. Further lines in the instructions explain that while preparing them one of the highest officials of the Russian Admiralty was yet unaware of the battle of Aboukir Bay (1-2 August 1798), that the French fleet had been destroyed there and that the threat of Bonaparte's landing at another point of the Ottoman coastline ceased to exist.⁶

Meanwhile on 23 August 1798 Vice Admiral Ushakov in accordance with the received orders before his own departure sent to Istanbul a light dispatch boat "Panagia Apotomengana" under the command of Lieutenant Tiesenhausen. Her task was to deliver to the Russian ambassador Tomara the letter informing that the Black Sea squadron set out towards the Bosphorus in order to carry out the duties assigned to it by the Emperor.⁷ Ushakov together with his whole squadron departed from Akhtiar (Sevastopol) on the next day.⁸ In his letter to Tomara the Russian naval commander asked the ambassador to notify the Porte of his impending arrival. Ushakov wrote,

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 23 / 12 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 6-7.

⁸ D. Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799 g. mezhdru Rossiyei I Frantsiyei* (3 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1857), Vol.1, p. 68.

that he will stay in the close vicinity of the Straits waiting for the return of Lieutenant Tiesenhausen with the permission of the Ottoman government to enter the Bosphorus and the instructions defining the exact place where the Russian squadron should drop anchor in Istanbul. In his secret letter Ushakov specified the reasons for which he would not enter the Straits until the return of the dispatch boat, asking Tomara to confirm at the Porte the right of free passage back to the Black Sea and to send Ushakov detailed written instructions in that respect.⁹ On 3 September 1798 the Black Sea squadron of Vice Admiral Ushakov, including six battleships, seven frigates and three dispatch vessels that were carrying altogether 7476 men,¹⁰ approached the Bosphorus. Having received the explanatory letter from the ambassador Tomara¹¹ on the same day, Ushakov still asked for yet another assurance that he could freely return to the Black Sea.¹² Finally, on 5 September the Porte issued a declaration about the free passage of the Russian war and commercial ships through the Straits.¹³ On the same day (5 September 1798) the Russian squadron entered the Straits and dropped anchor at Büyükdere, on the European coast of the Bosphorus.¹⁴

⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 23 / 12 August 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 9-10.

¹⁰ For full roster of Ushakov's squadron see: The Table of the Black Sea Fleet squadron including the general officers, staff-officers and company-officers serving on the battleships, frigates and other vessels [*Табель Эскадры Черноморского корабельного флота о состоящих на кораблях, фрегатах и других судах господах генералитете, штаб и обер офицерах служителях*] Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 60-62; With some minor differences it has been published at: Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 87-90.

¹¹ . 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 3 September (23 August) 1798' Ibidem, f. 11.

¹² 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 4 September (24 August) 1798' Ibidem, f.f. 12-13.

¹³ Declaration of the Turkish government about the free passage of the Russian war and commercial ships through the Straits, the reciprocal extradition of the deserters, and the assistance on the sanitary measures to avoid the spread of the infectious diseases. 5 September (25 August) 1798. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 78-79.

¹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1288), Vol. 4, p. 58.

The Russian squadron had hardly hauled down the sails when the ambassador Tomara appeared on the flagship of Ushakov “Sviatoi Pavel”. There, the ambassador and admiral had a long conversation, after which there also came an Ottoman official (*kâhya*) sent by the Grand Vizier. He congratulated Ushakov on the happy arrival of the Russian Black Sea fleet to Istanbul and as a token of high esteem presented the Russian admiral lots of flowers and fruits. On the same evening the Sultan himself came incognito on the six-oared boat to examine the ships of the Russian squadron. Selim III especially liked the design of the flagship “Sviatoi Pavel”, and the sketches of it were immediately sent to the Sultan through the agency of Tomara.¹⁵

Next day, on 6 September, at 8 p. m. the First Dragoman of the Porte Ypsilanti also paid a visit to Ushakov. In the name of the Sultan Ypsilanti presented Ushakov a snuffbox encrusted with diamonds. The First Dragoman in addition handed over to Admiral the declaration granting the Russian vessels the free passage through the Straits, issued by the Porte one day ago.¹⁶ Besides, when standing at Büyükdere, the Russian fleet was provided by the Ottoman side the technical assistance. The unreliable rudders of the ship of the line “Sviatoi Pavel” and the frigate “Sviatoi Nikolai” were taken to the shore, and the *Liman Reisi* (the Head of the Port) was asked to take care that the new ones would be made. Upon this request the workmen from *tersane* (naval docks) were immediately sent to make the new rudders for the Russian ships.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ie. Metaxa, *Zapiski flota kapitan-leitananta Iegara Metaksy, zakliuchayushchiie v sebe povestvovaniie o voennykh podvigakh Rossiiskoi eskadry, pokorivshei pod nachal'stvom admiral Fiodora Fiodorovicha Ushakova Ionicheskiye ostrova pri sodeistvii Porty Ottomanskoi v 1798 i 1799 godakh* (Petrograd, 1915), p. 12.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

A few days before the arrival of the Russian fleet to the Ottoman capital, on 2 September, there had been issued a fetva authorizing the declaration of war against France.¹⁸ Apart from this, the French charge d'affaires Pierre Ruffin had been called to the Porte. He was arrested and closed together with other members of the French mission in the Seven Towers fortress, a traditional Ottoman move meaning the declaration of war. Interestingly enough, the British ambassador Lord Elgin chose to settle down in the former building of the French mission¹⁹. Other French officials who were residing in the Ottoman Empire (like the consuls in Smyrna, Bucharest, Jassy and the personnel of their consulates) and merchants were also arrested and transferred to the fortresses in the Black Sea coast area such as Amasya, Samsun, Sinop and Giresun.²⁰ Moreover, the Porte had created a special commission headed by Moralı Osman Efendi, appointed to search for the property of the French citizens in the Ottoman Empire.²¹

It was at this point that the report of Moralı Esseyid Ali Efendi came to Istanbul. As it turned out, the Ottoman ambassador in Paris was still deceived by the French diplomacy and personally by Talleyrand in regard to the Egypt expedition of General Bonaparte and remained unaware of the real state of affairs between France and the Ottoman Empire. The report of Esseyid Ali, which reached Istanbul on 4 September, got the famous note of Selim III about its author: “What a foolish jackass!” (*Ne eşek herifmiş*).²² Not long after that (12 September 1798)²³ the

¹⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1288), Vol. 4, p. 58.

¹⁹ For more details see: Henri Dehérain, ‘La rupture du gouvernement ottoman avec la France en l’an VI’, *Revue d’histoire diplomatique*, 39 (1925): 9-43; Also see: Maurice Herbette, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le directoire*. (Paris, 1902), p. 238.

²⁰ P. Pisani, ‘L’expédition Russo-Turque aux îles ioniennes en 1789-1799’ *Revue d’Histoire diplomatique*, 2 (1888), p. 207.

²¹ ‘V. S. Tomara to A. A. Bezborodko, 27 / 16 October 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 881, f. 45.

²² Soysal, *Fransız ihtilâli*, p. 242.

Ottoman government announced a manifest declaring war on France to all diplomatic missions in Istanbul.²⁴

Now when the Russian war ships were waiting at Büyükdere, the highest Ottoman officials, the Russian and the British ambassadors, along with Admiral Ushakov gathered to discuss how to use the newly arrived Russian naval squadron. After the two conferences on 8 and 10 September²⁵ it was decided that the Russian fleet of Ushakov would join forces with the Ottoman fleet commanded by Kadir Bey and then under Ushakov's general command would proceed to the Ionian Archipelago in order to take it from the French. The joint Russo-Ottoman squadron was also to protect the Balkan coastline of the Ottoman Empire against the possible French descents, which could be any time expected from the French-controlled Italian town of Ancona. Apart from that, two Russian and two Ottoman frigates were separated from the main forces to escort ten Ottoman gunboats to the Rhodes and then, should these gunboats appear to be necessary for the British navy operating along the coast of Egypt, to move there.

As good hosts the Ottomans invited Ushakov to examine their fleet anchored at Beşiktaş, not far from the Sultan's palace, and visit the naval docks (*tersane*) of Istanbul. Having inspected these on 12 September Ushakov wrote in his report to

²³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1288), Vol. 4, p. 58.

²⁴ Herbette gives the text of the Manifest in French: "Manifeste de la Sublime Porte Ottomane relative à la guerre contre la République Française". Herbette, *Une Ambassade Turque*, p. 313-24. Following the text in Herbette's book there are two dates for document, 1 Rebiülakhir 1213 and 9 September 1798. However, a Hijri date does not correspond to that one of the Gregorian calendar, which should be 12 September.

²⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I. 29 August (9 September) 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 81-83; 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I. 31 August (11 September) 1798' Ibidem, pp. 85-86.

Paul I²⁶ that everywhere he was received with the utmost kindness and trust. The Russian Admiral found the Ottoman fleet “even though not flawless on comparing to the European fleets, but by far better than earlier, and partly in perfect order”.²⁷ The only criticism was about the cannon balls, which Ushakov judged to be unsatisfactory and advised the Ottoman side to change them. At the naval docks Ushakov was shown in all details the newly built 120-cannon ship as well as the ships which were still under construction.²⁸ Made on the French pattern, the Ottoman vessels in a technical sense, according to the observation of the Russian guest, little differed from the French ships.²⁹ Thus the same person who less than ten years ago was successfully fighting in the open sea with the Ottoman fleet, was now inspecting it and even giving advices how to improve its fighting efficiency.

Upon spending two weeks in Istanbul the Russian squadron on 19 September 1798 at noon³⁰ departed from Büyükdere and moved to the Dardanelles.³¹ Having arrived to the Dardanelles Ushakov joined forces with the Ottoman squadron of Vice Admiral³² Kadir Bey. Here the Russian and the Ottoman commanders made one another’s acquaintance³³, and Ushakov expressed a very favourable opinion of his

²⁶ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I. 17 / 6 September 1798’ Ibidem, pp. 98-100. Also, the fact of Ushakov’s inspection of the Ottoman fleet and naval installations had been published by the Russian newspaper of that time: *Moskovskii Vedomosti*, Saturday, 16 October, 1798 (the date is given here as it stands in original, i.e. according to the Julian style, this corresponds to 27 October of the Gregorian calendar)

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 99.

²⁸ Ibidem, p.98.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 21; The date for the departure of the Russian fleet from Büyükdere provided by the Ottoman historian Ahmed Cevdet is 8 Rebiülahir 1213, which also corresponds to 19 September 1798: Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1288), Vol. 4, p. 59.

³¹ ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 26 / 15 September 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 69-69 ob.; ‘F. F. Ushakov to Admiralty College, 26 / 15 September 1798’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 106.

³² The title, Ushakov uses while reporting to Tomara on his meeting with the Ottoman commander

³³ On 22 September Kadir Bey together with the Dragoman of Kapudan Pasha (The Chief Commander of the Ottoman Navy) and some other officials paid his first visit to Ushakov. Next day,

Ottoman colleague.³⁴ At the request of Kadir Bey, in order to maintain better communication between the Russian and the Ottoman squadrons four Russian mariners had been appointed by Ushakov to serve on the flagship of the Ottoman Admiral.³⁵ Lieutenant Yegor Metaxa, a Greek by origin who also knew Ottoman Turkish, was to be an aide-de-camp of Kadir Bey. Two former midshipmen degraded to seamen, Alexander Oleshev and Karl Uexküll, as well as one sub-steersman (*podshurman*) from frigate “Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha” were assigned to help Metaxa in his mission.³⁶ In this way, by the end of September 1798 the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron was ready to leave the Dardanelles and embark on its further journey. The following are the full lists of both the Russian and Ottoman squadrons gathered at the Dardanelles by 25 September 1798 under command of Vice Admiral Ushakov:

Table 1. The Russian Squadron. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, 2, p. 112.

RUSSIAN SQUADRON

Ships of the line

74-cannons, “Sviatoi Pavel”, Vice Admiral Ushakov and Captain Sarandinaki

74-cannons, “Sviatoi Piotr”, Captain Seniavin

74-cannons, “Zakharii i Yelizaveta”, Captain Selivachov

72-cannons, “Bogoiavleniie Gospodnie”, Captain Aleksiano

72-cannons, “Sviataia Troitsa”, Rear Admiral Ovtsyn, Commander Poskochin

68-cannons, “Maria Magdalena”, Commander Timchenko

Frigates

50-cannons, “Grigorii Velikiia Armenii”, Lieutenant-Commander Shostak

48-cannons, “Sviatoi Mikhail”, Commander Sorokin

46-cannons, “Sviatoi Nikolai”, Lieutenant-Commander Marin

44-cannons, “Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha”, Lieutenant-Commander Konstantinov

44-cannons, “Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa”, Lieutenant-Commander Messer

the Russian Admiral, made a reciprocal visit to the flagship of his Ottoman colleague. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 28.

³⁴ “The Commander of the Turkish squadron... seems to be a very gentle and polite person, and we decided everything in a friendly manner. As regards his courtesy and our mutual consent in taking decisions I express to Your Excellency my gratitude and commendation...I hope that, as it can be seen at the beginning, should this continue in the same way we would be contented with each other and one may expect the good results owing to this...” ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 26 / 15 September 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 69-69 ob.

³⁵ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 28.

³⁶ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Ye. P. Metaxa, 26 / 15 September 1798’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 107.

40-cannons, “Navarkhiia Vozneseniie Gospodnie”, Lieutenant-Commander Count Voinovich

Repeating frigate

32-cannons, “Shchastlivyi”, Lieutenant-Commander Baillie

Dispatch boats

18-cannons, Akat “Sviataia Irina”, Lieutenant Vlito

14-cannons, Transport ship “Krasnoselie”, Lieutenant Riabinin

14-cannons, Transport ship “Panagia Apotumengana”, Captain of the sea battalions Skandrakov

Total: Ships	6
Frigates	7
Small vessels	3
Grand Total:	16

Table 2. The Ottoman Squadron. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 113.

OTTOMAN SQUADRON

Ships of the line

86-cannons, under the flag of Kapitan Bey, Kadir Bey

80-cannons, under the flag of Patron Bey (Vice-Admiral)

76-cannons, under the flag of Real Bey (Rear Admiral) Ahmet Bey

74-cannons, Captain İbrahim

Frigates

1- Captain Hüseyin

2- Captain Abbas

3- Captain Zeynel [Zeyner]

4- Captain Süleyman

5- Captain Kerim [Kherim]

6- Captain Ahmet

Corvettes

1- Captain Mustafa

2- Captain Hüseyin

3- Captain Ali Bey

4- Captain Mehmet

14 gunboats

Total: Ships	4
Frigates	6
Corvettes	4
Gunboats	14
Grand Total:	28

The first vessels that left the Dardanelles (on 25 September 1798) were two Russian (“Sviatoi Mikhail” and “Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa”) and two Ottoman frigates, under Commander Alexander Andreievich Sorokin.³⁷ These were to escort

³⁷ ‘F. F. Ushakov to A. A. Sorokin, 24 / 13 September 1798’. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 103- 104.

ten Ottoman gunboats to the island of Rhodes, and, should the mentioned gunboats prove to be necessary for the British navy of Vice Admiral Nelson operating in the vicinity of the Egyptian coasts, to proceed further to Egypt.

In a few days the rest of the Russo-Ottoman joint fleet would also set the sails and take off in the direction of the Ionian islands. In the meantime, its Commander-in-Chief Ushakov was preoccupied with writing and sending numerous reports, dealing with the supplies issues³⁸, and making consultations with his Ottoman colleagues regarding the plan of the future combat operations.³⁹ The final departure, which had been initially fixed for 27 September, due to the unfavourable weather conditions was postponed until 1 October. On that day, the Russo-Ottoman squadron left the Dardanelles⁴⁰ and entered the Aegean archipelago.

5.2. Start of the Mediterranean Campaign

In light of the current situation the actual military cooperation between Istanbul and St. Petersburg started in the absence of a formal treaty of alliance. The passage of the Russian battleships through the Black Sea Straits was only regulated by a special declaration of the Porte issued on 5 September 1798.⁴¹ As the diplomatic

³⁸ In view of the changed climate and water some of the Russian crew began to fall sick. To prevent the spread of sickness among the crew a certain amount of the grape wine and vinegar were mixed with the drinking water. In this respect Ushakov informed Tomara that he would need a lot of both the wine and vinegar, and requested an additional sum of at least 60 thousand roubles. Besides, the money was also needed for salary of the officer personnel. 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 26 / 15 September 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 71-71 ob.

³⁹ At the consultations with Kadir Bey and another Ottoman naval commander about the prospected operations it was decided that the Russo-Ottoman squadron would additionally require the help of up to twelve gunboats. The Ottoman Admiral promised to inform of this issue the High Porte, whereas Ushakov asked Tomara to submit to the Porte the same request. 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 26 / 15 September 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 70-70 ob.

⁴⁰ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 1 October (20 September) 1798' Ibidem, f. 74.

⁴¹ Declaration of the Turkish government about the free passage of the Russian war and commercial ships through the Straits, etc. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. p. 78-79.

preparations of the treaty were still underway both the Russian and the Ottoman fleets already began to carry out their duties.

Tellingly, Paul I even at this point did not entirely confide in his new allies, though the Russian Emperor equally did not wish to worry the Porte in any way. In his instruction to Tomara, dated 22 September 1798, Paul I specified that when after the end of the military operations against the French the squadron of Ushakov would have to return, and should the Porte at that time refuse to give the Russian navy a free passage back to the Black Sea, the duty of the Russian ambassador would be to convey to Ushakov the order to return back home together with the British navy, through the Gibraltar Straits.⁴² A fortnight later the Emperor wrote also to Ushakov in regard of recruiting the Greeks, mostly Ionians, to the Russian service:

I order that you should try to avoid making any excessive demands on the Porte, and not forget that, while helping it, we should not become a burden for it. I believe... being sure that you would care... to preserve the best impression about us both in the Sultan and his Ministry, as well as among the common people.⁴³

The instructions of Paul I given at the end of September to his ambassador in Istanbul and the commander of his fleet clearly showed a very characteristic feature typical for the Ottoman-Russian relations of the period. The inability to overcome the still present distrust to the opposite side was combined with the practical necessity to cooperate and the unwillingness for that reason to jeopardize the existing level of bilateral relations.

Be that as it may, the Russian and the Ottoman fleets, having left the Straits of Dardanelles on 1 October 1798 took the course towards the Ionian Islands. It was en

⁴² 'Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 22 / 11 September 1798' AVPRI. Fond 2. Internal College Affairs. Op. 2/2. Delo 205, f. f. 107-107 ob.

⁴³ 'Paul I to F. F. Ushakov, 6 October (25 September) 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 133-133 ob.

route when the Russian Admiral finally learned from his Ottoman colleague about the battle of Abukir Bay and the complete destruction of Bonaparte's fleet.⁴⁴ Quite soon Ushakov's squadron would also engage in its first combat encounter with the enemy.

A former Venetian island of Cerigo (Kythira), lying to the south-east off the coast of the Peloponnese peninsula, became the starting point of the Ionian campaign of the Russo-Ottoman fleet.⁴⁵ On approaching the island, Ushakov sent ahead two frigates ("Grigorii Velikiia Armenii" and "Shchastlivyi", reinforced with some of the landing troops⁴⁶) under the leadership of Lieutenant-Commander Shostak. On 9 October 1798 the frigates of Shostak reached Cerigo and after a short bombardment took the small fortress at the Bay of St. Nicholas. The French garrison of the fortress, consisting of 36 privates and one corporal, in view of the outnumbering enemy (the total crew of only the two Russian frigates brought by Shostak consisted of 710 men) lowered the flag and fled to the main fortress on the island, called Kapsali. Of these the two French soldiers were killed and fifteen were taken prisoners, of whom seven were captured by the Ottoman landing force.⁴⁷ Whatever small this first encounter of the campaign may be, this was probably as well the first precedent of the joint military operation of the Russian and the Ottoman troops in history.

As the bulk strength of the Russo-Ottoman squadron came to Cerigo, Ushakov and Kadir Bey sent the landing party to start preparations for attack on the Kapsali

⁴⁴ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 1 October (20 September) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 74.

⁴⁵ See the report of F. F. Ushakov regarding the taking of the island of Cerigo: 'F.F. Ushakov to Paul I, 21 / 10 October 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 76-78 ob.

⁴⁶ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 34.

⁴⁷ 'F.F. Ushakov to Paul I, 21 / 10 October 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 76.

fortress. Because of the mountainous terrain of the island the Russian and the Ottoman soldiers had to carry all munitions and several cannons on their shoulders. To lead the operation Ushakov again appointed Lieutenant-Commander Shostak, while the Ottoman landing force of 250 men was commanded by Fettah Bey. As the French garrison (the total number of defenders of Kapsali fortress, as it appeared later, was 75 men) refused to capitulate, the siege started at dawn on 12 October 1798. By 12 p.m. the fortress waved the white flag in two places and the assault was over. According to the official report of Ushakov, during the siege seven French were killed, on the Russo-Ottoman side there were no casualties. In order to avoid the unnecessary bloodshed the Russian Admiral agreed to accept the capitulation and transport the French prisoners to Ancona or Marseille on condition that they would swear an oath not to take up arms again for one year and a day.⁴⁸ In this way, the Russo-Ottoman fleet gained the first victory of the campaign. Of the two flags of the captured fortresses, one was sent to the Russian Emperor and the other to the Sultan.⁴⁹

Following the occupation of Cerigo Ushakov and Kadir Bey issued in three languages (Russian, Ottoman Turkish and Greek) the proclamation to the inhabitants of the island, inviting them to choose the temporary local administration until the time when all Ionian Islands would be cleaned from the French. Then the two powers, the Russian and the Ottoman Empires would jointly decide upon the future status of the islands.⁵⁰ Before moving further, Ushakov left on Cerigo eleven Russian soldiers with Lieutenant (*poruchik*) Diamanti at the head. Also, there had been left

⁴⁸ Ibidem, f. 77; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 36.

⁴⁹ 'F.F. Ushakov to Paul I, 21 / 10 October 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 77-77 ob.

⁵⁰ Proclamation to the inhabitants of the island of Cerigo, 14 / 3 October 1798. Ibidem, f. f. 79-79 ob.

the equal number of the soldiers and one officer from the Ottoman squadron.⁵¹ On 17 October 1798 Ushakov departed from Cerigo and took the course to the western tip of the Peloponnese peninsula.⁵²

In a week, on 24 October 1798, the Russo-Ottoman fleet of Ushakov approached the Island of Zante (Zakynthos). Again, as during the assault at Cerigo, Lieutenant-Commander Shostak was ordered to control the whole operation. There were prepared two landing parties, from the Russian and the Ottoman squadrons respectively. The former was to be commanded by Major Ivanov, and the latter had been put under command of Lieutenant Metaxa⁵³, a Russian naval officer appointed at the very beginning of the campaign to serve on the Ottoman flagship. Due to the fact that the local inhabitants were informed about the arrival of Ushakov's squadron in advance, many of them came to the shore to meet it. Both Ushakov and Metaxa tell that because of the shallow waters and the hidden reefs the boats carrying the landing troops could not approach the island. On seeing that the enthusiastic Zantiotes were going into the sea and, not allowing the Russo-Ottoman landing troops to walk through water, carried the Russian and the Ottoman soldiers on their shoulders as far as the shore.⁵⁴

In the meantime the frigates "Grigorii Velikiia Armenii" and "Shastlivyi" destroyed by the fire of their artillery the coastal batteries of the enemy. The French garrison locked themselves up in the fortress, situated on a high mountain range. The

⁵¹ 'F.F. Ushakov to Paul I, 21 / 10 October 1798' Ibidem, f. 77 ob.

⁵² Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 100.

⁵³ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I (Report about the taking of Zante), 1 November (21 October) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 81; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 43.

⁵⁴ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I (Report about the taking of Zante), 1 November (21 October) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 81 ob; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 43-44.

attackers, assisted by the local population, besieged the fortress and prepared to assault it. Having no hope for successful defence, the French asked for capitulation on the same day at eleven in the evening. On 25 October 1798, the garrison (numbering 441 men, including 47 officers) left the fortress and surrendered. Some of the officers who had wives and children (18 families) were allowed to leave for Ancona, on condition that they would not fight against Russia and the Porte neither against their allies.⁵⁵ The rest of the prisoners three days later were sent to Patras in Morea.⁵⁶

Without losing any time Ushakov, while staying with the main forces on Zante, sent smaller detachments from his squadron to occupy other two islands of the Ionian archipelago, lying in the north next to Zante and along the western coast of the continental Greece. On the same day when the French garrison on Zante capitulated, Commander Ivan Stepanovich Poskochin, given one ship of the line (“Sviataia Troitsa”) and three frigates (“Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha”, “Shchastlivyi” and one Ottoman frigate), sailed off to Cefalonia (Kefalonia). Four days later, on 29 October Captain Dmitrii Nikolaievich Seniavin, at the head of two ships of the line (“Sviatoi Piotr” and one Ottoman ship) and two frigates (“Navarkhiia” and one Ottoman frigate), also left Zante and moved towards the island of Santa Maura (Lefkada). Furthermore, on 31 October Captain Ivan Andreievich Selivachev, at the head of three ships of the line (“Zakharii i Yelisavet”, “Bogoiavlieniiie Gospodnie” and one Ottoman ship) and three frigates (“Grigorii Velikiia Armenii” and two Ottoman

⁵⁵ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I (Report about the taking of Zante), 1 November (21 October) 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 82-82 ob.; Metaxa in his memoirs states that the garrison of Zante was 491 men, including 47 officers. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 46-49.

⁵⁶ On 28 October the frigate “Sviatoi Nikolai” and the Ottoman Vice Admiral ship took off to Patras, carrying there the French prisoners. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 53.

frigates), was ordered to go to Corfu to start blockading the biggest and the most important island of the Ionian archipelago.⁵⁷

The Russo-Ottoman squadron, which jointly launched an attack on Zante, thus appeared to be divided into four parts. Apart from the bulk force of Ushakov and Kadir Bey, three detachments of Poskochin, Seniavin and Selivachev had been sent to Cefalonia, Santa Maura and Corfu respectively, each with its own mission. As to Ushakov, during his one-week stay on Zante he was given a warm welcome on the part of the local population. The Zantiotes were very enthusiastic about the arrival of their Orthodox coreligionists and even asked Ushakov to take them under Russian protection. According to Metaxa, the Russian Admiral had to explain the islanders that this was impossible in view of the Emperor's obligations to his allies, which in no way could be broken.⁵⁸ Having addressed the population of Zante with the proclamation⁵⁹ similar to that one issued earlier on Cerigo, Ushakov together with his whole squadron (except for the small number of soldiers left as a garrison on Zante)⁶⁰ departed for Cefalonia on 1 November.⁶¹

When the Russo-Ottoman squadron of Ushakov arrived at Cefalonia on 3 November, Ushakov already knew from the report of Commander Poskochin that the

⁵⁷ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 November (21 October) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 86-87.

⁵⁸ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 51.

⁵⁹ 'Proclamation to the inhabitants of the island of Zante, 31 / 20 October 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 85-85 ob.

⁶⁰ Midshipman Vasiliev had been appointed the commandant of the Zante fortress, and among those who had been left in the garrison were one petty officer (*unter-offitser*), ten grenadiers and fusiliers, one drummer, one seaman, two cannoniers and the equal amount of soldiers and an officer from the Ottoman squadron. 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 November (21 October) 1798' Ibidem, f. 82 ob.; 'F. F. Ushakov to Midshipman M. N. Vasiliev, 30 / 19 October 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 134-35.

⁶¹ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 November (21 October) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 87.

island of Cefalonia was taken.⁶² At this point on 8 November came the news from Captain Seniavin. He reported Ushakov that the fortress on Santa Maura was still under siege and due to a lack of troops the capture of the island might be delayed.⁶³ Now when only two significant targets remained, which were the islands of Santa Maura and Corfu, before his departure to help Seniavin Ushakov did also sent reinforcements to the detachment of Selivachev (sent earlier to blockade Corfu).⁶⁴ Then, on 9 November the Russian Admiral left on Cefalonia a small Russo-Ottoman garrison,⁶⁵ along with a dispatch boat “Krasnoselie”, commanded by Lieutenant Riabinin⁶⁶, and moved further to Santa Maura and Corfu.⁶⁷

At the moment when Ushakov’s squadron came to Santa Maura (11 November) Seniavin was holding negotiations with the commandant of the fortress. The arrival of Ushakov quite obviously did make a difference and in three days, on 14 November, the French capitulated. On the next day the garrison marched out of the fortress. According to the conditions of capitulation the officers of the fortress garrison kept their weapons and were set free on parole. Other French prisoners,

⁶² Metaxa informs that while Ushakov was still on Zante, he received the report of Poskochin sent with midshipman Tsybmal, saying that Cefalonia was occupied by the Russo-Ottoman forces. Besides, midshipman Tsybmal brought the keys and the flag from the French fortress on Cefalonia. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 68. Also see: ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 November (21 October) 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 86-87; ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 9 November (29 October) 1798’. Ibidem, f. f. 89-90 ob.

⁶³ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 1, p. 101.

⁶⁴ On 8 November 1798 the ship of the line “Sviataia Troitsa”, two Ottoman frigates and one Ottoman corvette had been sent from Cefalonia with orders to join Selivachev in his blockading of Corfu. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 286; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 102.

⁶⁵ The garrison left by Ushakov consisted of one officer, ten grenadiers and fusiliers, one drummer, two cannoniers and the equal number of soldiers together with one officer from the Ottoman squadron. ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 9 November (29 October) 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 89 ob.

⁶⁶ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Lieutenant Riabinin, 6 November (26 October) 1798’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 151-52.

⁶⁷ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 9 November (29 October) 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 90.

numbering 512 men, were transported to Patras.⁶⁸ The casualties of Ushakov's side during the siege of Santa Maura were two men killed and six wounded among the Russians, and four killed Ottomans.⁶⁹ While Ushakov stayed on the island of Santa Maura, he was visited by the inhabitants of two smaller islands of the Ionian archipelago, Ithaca and Paxos. They declared that, because there were no French troops on their islands, they simply raised the flags of the allied powers and now were asking to accept them with the same rights which would be given to other Ionian islands.⁷⁰ In this way, by mid-November 1798 out of seven islands of the Ionian archipelago six (Cerigo, Zante, Cefalonia, Santa Maura, Ithaca and Paxos) were under control of the allies. It was the only one island remaining, though the biggest and the most important.

On 18 November 1798 Ushakov sailed off from Santa Maura to Corfu.⁷¹ By this time the island had been already besieged for two weeks. The squadron of Captain Selivachev (3 ships of the line and 3 frigates) arrived at Corfu on 4 November, and immediately began patrolling the approaches to the island. Then, in a week, on 11 November the squadron of Commander Poskochin (one ship of the line, 2 frigates and one corvette) came to the aid of Selivachev. Finally, Ushakov himself (4 ships of the line and 2 frigates) dropped anchor in the waters of Corfu on 19 November

⁶⁸ 'F. F. Ushakov to Lieutenant-Commander K. Konstantinov, 17 / 6 November 1798' *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 173.

⁶⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 18 / 7 November 1798' *Ibidem*, f. f. 100-103; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 102; Z. Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota c 1798 po 1806 god. Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei (ZOOID)*, 1863 (5), p. 854. N. D. Kallistov, *Flot v tsarstvovaniie imperatora Pavla I*. In: *Istoriia Rossiiskogo Flota* (Moscow, 2007), p. 218; As for casualties during the siege of Santa Maura, Metaxa gives slightly different figure: two killed and eleven wounded. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 95.

⁷⁰ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 854.

⁷¹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 855.

1798.⁷² Thus towards the end of November the total number of the ships taking part of the siege of Corfu reached 8 ships of the line, 7 frigates and a few smaller vessels.

The fortress of Corfu was defended by a garrison of 3 thousand men and 630 cannons, under command of General Louis Chabot. Moreover, under the shelter of the fortress artillery there were 2 battleships (84-cannon “Le Généreux”, 60-cannon “Léander”), 40-cannon corvette “La Brune”, 24-cannon bomb vessel “La Frimaire” and 6-cannon brigantine “L’Expédition”.⁷³ Having not enough landing troops neither the siege artillery, Ushakov for the time being continued blockading the island and waiting for reinforcements. According to the promises of the Porte, these were to be provided to him from the mainland by the local Ottoman pashas. Two days after his arrival, Ushakov wrote to Russian ambassador in Istanbul that the fortress was very strong and it was not sure yet whether it could be taken or not, since the French had ample amount of ammunition and provisions.⁷⁴

First smaller encounter between the defenders of the fortress and the forces of the Russo-Ottoman squadron took place on 23 November 1798, when the French ship “Le Généreux” (Captain Le Joysle) tried from the safe distance to attack some of the Ushakov’s ships. Without much success, “Le Généreux” retreated to the cover of the fortress cannons again.⁷⁵ Then on 25 November Ushakov in his turn sent to the island a landing command of 128 men under Captain Kikin⁷⁶ in order to organize a

⁷² Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 106.

⁷³ Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.1, p.105.

⁷⁴ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Tomara, 21 / 10 November, 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 124 ob.

⁷⁵ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 161-62; J.P. Bellaire, *Précis des opérations generals de la Division Française du Levant* (Paris, 1805), pp. 296-97.

⁷⁶ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Captain Kikin, 24 / 13 November 1798’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 197.

9-cannon coastal battery on the northern side of the fortress.⁷⁷ The similar orders were given to Lieutenant Ratmanov, who together with 13 soldiers and 6 artillerymen landed on the southern side of the fortress on 29 November and also built a coastal battery equipped with 3 cannons.⁷⁸ These batteries were to cut off the communication between the French ships and the fortress as well as to prevent the French from plundering the surrounding countryside in search of forage.

Following the installment of two Russian batteries in the vicinity of the fortress the French launched an attack at the smaller southern fortification. At the morning on 1 December 1798 a detachment of 600 men with 2 cannons, lead by the commandant of the fortress General Chabot himself, rushed at the battery. In view of the advancing regular French force, 1500 men of the unorganized local militia who were defending the battery, turned back, leaving to the enemy 17 Russian soldiers and 3 cannons. Elated with their first success, the French made a second attack in the afternoon, now against the northern battery. This time the number of attackers was more than 1000, including 40 cavalrymen, and the fight continued until the evening. The defenders of the northern battery consisted of 310 Russian soldiers, up to 200 Ottomans, and 30 Albanian levies. As a result of the battle the French attack on the battery had been repulsed, with the French casualties reaching about 100 killed and many wounded. The defenders lost 31 men killed (26 privates, 2 sub-officers and three cannoniers) and 72 wounded, including 3 officers (Captain Kikin, Sub-Lieutenant (*podporuchik*) Chernyshev and Artillery Lieutenant Ganfeld). In report to

⁷⁷ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 107; Excerpts from the historical journal of F. F. Ushakov held during the Ionian campaign of 1798-1799. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 233.

⁷⁸ 'F. F. Ushakov to Lieutenant M. I. Ratmanov, 28 / 11 November 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, pp. 211-12.

the tsar Ushakov mentioned also the courage of the Ottoman forces, which were taking part in the battle.⁷⁹

Metaxa recounts in his notes an interesting story, which happened right after the abovementioned French attack of 1 December 1798 on the allied battery. As it became known through the whole Russo-Ottoman squadron about the wounds of Captain Kikin, some four days later the Ottoman chief staff doctor named Mehmed addressed Metaxa (who served then on the Ottoman flagship) with a request to take him to the wounded Captain. Since the Ottoman staff doctor had never visited him before, Metaxa was surprised, but he was surprised even more when Mehmed spoke to him in the purest Russian. It emerged that the chief staff doctor of the Ottoman squadron once was a serf of Kikin's family, Kondrashka⁸⁰, conscripted into the Russian army and taken prisoner during the last Ottoman-Russian war. Being a horse-doctor in his own village, he managed to earn good money by healing the Ottoman sailors, adopted Islam, married in Istanbul, and fathered in this marriage five children. As Metaxa remarks, Captain Kikin despite great pain could not help laughing on seeing his former serf Kondrashka as a richly dressed Ottoman official, wearing huge turban, and named now Mehmed.⁸¹

Quite soon, on 5 December took place the exchange of prisoners. One French Captain and fifteen privates were returned to the fortress garrison in exchange for those Russian soldiers who fell into the hands of the French during the attack on the

⁷⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 137ob-138 ob.; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 169-71; Excerpts from the historical journal of F. F. Ushakov held during the Ionian campaign of 1798-1799. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 234.

⁸⁰ Diminutive from the name Kondratiy

⁸¹ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 172-73.

smaller allied battery. Of then captured seventeen Russian soldiers, fifteen were returned, and two wounded men remained with the French. These were to be exchanged at the time when they would get better for two French, kept in imprisonment on Ushakov's flagship "Sviatoi Pavel".⁸²

Never again did the French garrison of the Corfu fortress ventured to embark on a wide-scale attack at the allied positions, having only small occasional clashes with the besiegers during their attempts to collect provision from the surrounding villages. One such raid, for instance, occurred on 14 December and cost the French side from five to ten killed.⁸³ The fortress was blockaded both on land and sea, and the garrison of General Chabot had little if any hopes for the help from outside.

The ring around the fortress of Corfu continued to grow ever tighter, as the new ships of Ushakov's squadron were arriving throughout the month of December. Two ships of the line ("Sviatoi Piotr" and one Ottoman ship) and two frigates ("Navarkhiia" and "Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha") under Captain Seniavin, which were earlier left at Santa Maura, came on 3 December.⁸⁴ Those two Russian frigates ("Sviatoi Mikhail" and "Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa") that had been sent to Egypt at the very beginning of the campaign also returned on 20 December and joined Ushakov's squadron.⁸⁵ Apart from this, as early as on 6 November two new ships of the line ("Mikhail" and "Simeon i Anna") commanded by Rear Admiral Pavel Vasilievich

⁸² 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 138ob-139.

⁸³ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 147.

⁸⁴ Excerpts from the historical journal of F. F. Ushakov held during the Ionian campaign of 1798-1799. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 235.

⁸⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 40; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 177.

Pustoshkin departed from Akhtiar (Sevastopol), carrying 1000 men, and sailed off to the assistance of the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron at Corfu.⁸⁶ However, because of severe weather conditions of winter Pustoshkin managed to arrive in Corfu only on 10 January 1799.⁸⁷ In this way, by mid-January 1799 all forces of Ushakov's squadron were gathered at Corfu, consisting of twelve ships of the line, eleven frigates and a few smaller vessels.

Not everything was that smooth in the camp of the besiegers. The additional troops that were to be sent in pursuance of the promises of the Porte by the local pashas from the mainland Balkan Ottoman possessions by the end of the year had not arrive yet. The unreliable behaviour of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Yanina (Ioannina) and an independent in all but name ruler of significant parts of Albania and continental Greece, combined with chronic interruptions in supplies deliveries, made the blockading of the Corfu fortress not an easy enterprise that continued throughout the whole winter of 1798-1799.

Tepedelenli Ali Pasha's ambitions knew no bounds and extended everywhere he could enlarge his possessions. Since after the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797) the French gained the Ionian Islands, as well as the mainland outposts of the Republic of Saint Mark on the Adriatic coast in Greece and Southern Albania (the cities of Preveza, Parga, Vonitsa and Butrinto), they came into contact with their new neighbour Ali Pasha Tepedelenli. Secretly positioning himself as a potential ally of the French, Ali Pasha changed his political commitments, though, soon upon learning of the defeat of Napoléon's fleet at Abukir Bay and Russia's aid to the

⁸⁶ Izvlecheniie iz shkhanechnykh zhurnalov o plavanii sudov v kampaniiu 1798 goda. *Materialy dlia istorii russkogo flota (MIRF)*, (17 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1865-1904), Vol. 16, p. 299.

⁸⁷ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 183-85.

Porte. Under the pretext of fighting with the enemies of the Sultan, and in fact using a good opportunity to expand his territories, Ali opened hostilities against the four former Venetian coastal cities, which passed into the hands of the French the previous year. By the end of October 1798 Butrinto, Preveza and Vonitsa, the three out of four, fell into the hands of the most powerful Ottoman notable in the Western Balkans. A particularly horrible fate befell the Christian population of Preveza, almost thoroughly massacred without distinction of age or sex by the soldiers of Ali Pasha. The last remaining target of the governor of Yanina was Parga, located on the Greek coast of the Ionian Sea about 60 km northwest of Preveza and less than 30 km across the sea from the island of Corfu.

It was at this moment, as the inhabitants of Parga were preparing for a mortal fight with the outnumbering forces of Ali Pasha, that the news about the presence of Ushakov's fleet in the Ionian archipelago reached their ears. Immediately the Pargiotes sent their delegates to the Russian Admiral, who met with Ushakov on 5 November 1798 when the latter was staying in Argostoli, the capital city of Cefalonia. The representatives of Parga desperately asked to take the city under the protection of the Russian tsar, or, otherwise, they would kill their wives and children, shut themselves in the fortress, and would fight with Ali's troops until the last man.⁸⁸

Bound with the allied obligations towards the Ottoman government, Ushakov apparently was in no position to decide in his sole discretion whether or not to take Parga under the Russian protection. To refuse the request of the Pargiotes, though, would mean their imminent and the most terrible death at the hands of Ali's cut-

⁸⁸ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 17 / 6 November 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 91-94.

throats. Ushakov thus opted to agree that the inhabitants of Parga would raise the Russian flag over the walls of the city fortress, but on condition that it would be raised side by side with that one of the Ottoman Empire. Besides, the Russian Admiral sent Ali Pasha a letter, composed in a friendly manner and laying emphasis on the alliance between the Russian Empire and the Porte.⁸⁹

The aim of Ushakov was, on the one hand, to save the Pargiotes from the atrocities of Ali Pasha, and on the other hand, to stay on peaceful terms with the despotic governor of Ioannina. So the Russian Admiral pretended as if Ali were a loyal vassal of the Sultan, stating that the Russians and the Ottomans were fighting together against the common enemy. As for the inhabitants of Parga, they communicated both with the Russian and the Ottoman Admiral, and showed their willingness to obey the orders of the allies. Accordingly, Ushakov recommended the Pargiots to subordinate themselves to the authority of Ali Pasha, as the friends and allies of the Ottoman Sultan and the Russian tsar. The letter was ending in a statement that the common task at the moment was to take the fortress of Corfu, and if the assistance of Ali Pasha be needed the commander of the Russo-Ottoman joint forces will address him again.

Ali Pasha still disregarded the mentioned letter of Ushakov and continued to threaten Parga already after it raised both the Russian and the Ottoman standards. On seeing that, Ushakov four days later wrote another letter⁹⁰, this time in a form resembling an ultimatum. Ali Pasha was informed that, since the inhabitants of the

⁸⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to Ali Pasha of Ioannina, 5 November (25 October) 1798' Ibidem, f. f. 95-96 ob; This letter has also been published in: Ie. V. Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more (1798-1800 g. g.)* In: *Rossiiskii flot v Sredizemnomor'e* (Moscow, 2009), pp. 144-45.

⁹⁰ F. F. Ushakov to Ali Pasha of Ioannina, 9 November (29 October) 1798. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 161; Also published in: Merakca E., op. cit., p. 131-132.

city of Parga proclaimed themselves to be under protection of the two powers by raising the flags of Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Ushakov and the Ottoman Admiral Kadir Bey had sent there a certain number of mariners together with a part of the Ottoman troops, a few cannons and a combat vessel. Ushakov also learned that during the assault on Preveza Ali's men took captive the former Russian consul at Malta Collegiate assessor (*kollezhskii asessor*)⁹¹ Dmitrii Lambros, who happened to be at that time in the city. Ushakov demanded to return Lambros, allegedly kept in fetters on a galley, to his special representative Lieutenant Metaxa whom he sent to deliver Ali this letter. Should Ali not carry out Ushakov's demands, both the Russian and the Ottoman government would be informed about this behaviour of the Pasha of Ioannina. The unequivocal tone of the message and the visit of Lieutenant Metaxa to the residence of Ali Pasha⁹² finally produced the effect desired by the Russian Admiral. The Lion of Ioannina reluctantly complied with the demands of Ushakov, left the Pargiotes in peace and subsequently returned the consul Lambros.⁹³ However, following the above mentioned dissensions with Ushakov Ali Pasha was in no haste to help the allied fleet in its siege of the fortress of Corfu.

The double-faced behaviour of Ali had been fully confirmed as the joint Russo-Ottoman forces took hold of Santa Maura (15 November 1798). As a result of this, all secret correspondence between Tepedelenli Ali Pasha and the French garrison of the Santa Maura fortress fell into the hands of Ushakov. It appeared that for a long time Ali Pasha not only coveted the island so closely adjoining to his possessions, but also proposed the French side to pay 30 thousand ducats and to transport the

⁹¹ The rank in the Russian civil service corresponding to that one of Major in the army

⁹² For description of this mission see: Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 132-46.

⁹³ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 147.

garrison of Santa Maura to Corfu in exchange for the island, before the arrival of the Russo-Ottoman fleet. The French declined Ali's offer.⁹⁴

As one may see, the semi-independent ruler of Ioannina quite apparently could not welcome the arrival of Ushakov and his squadron at the Mediterranean. The Russian Admiral became a real thorn in Ali Pasha's side when he denied the latter the possibility to snatch the island of Santa Maura or, even more evidently, the so coveted Parga. Ushakov, in his turn, had every reason not to trust Ali. That being said, both of them still had to face reality and tolerate the neighbourhood of each other. Ushakov badly needed the auxiliary troops in order to launch a successful assault on the fortress of Corfu, and these troops could be assuredly provided only by the governor of Ioannina. Ali Pasha, plain and simple, had to reckon with the force of Ushakov's squadron as well as to consider all possible political implications of an open conflict with the Russian Admiral.

Without sufficient number of the siege troops the allied squadron could not start the active siege operations, confining only with the sea and land blockade. Ushakov was desperately reminding Ali Pasha, as well as his own companion the Ottoman Admiral Kadir Bey, of the necessity of auxiliary troops promised by the Ottoman government.⁹⁵ By the end of the year nothing changed much and Ushakov wrote to the Tsar that "our operations and successes against the enemy, due to the

⁹⁴ James Lawrence Mcknight, *Admiral Ushakov and the Ionian Republic. The Genesis of Russia's First Balkan Satellite*. PhD Dissertation. The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1965, p. 101; 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. 145 ob.

⁹⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to Ali Pasha of Ioannina, 7 December (26 November) 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 221; 'F. F. Ushakov to Kadir Bey, 13 / 2 December 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 229.

lack of forces, had stopped”.⁹⁶ Ali was not hurrying to meet the requests of Ushakov, though the total number of troops from time to time sent by him under the walls of the Corfu fortress, by the end of December reached 1500 Albanians.⁹⁷ Considering that Ushakov and Kadir Bey demanded and expected from the Balkan pashas up to 12 thousand men⁹⁸, the amount of the auxiliary troops remained insufficient to embark on active operations.

Ushakov had enough time to learn of hypocrisy and unreliability of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, yet despite everything he needed Ali's troops. In report to the ambassador Tomara, written on 29 December 1798, Ushakov noted that “Ali Pasha is quite unreliable as regards his loyalty to the Ottoman Porte, and ... is only afraid of my presence here with the Russian squadron as well as our joint forces” and “under the guise of politeness he tries to flatter and lie to me”.⁹⁹ Ushakov also emphasised the hatred of the Greeks towards Ali, saying that on condition that the Russian fleet leaves Corfu without taking it, the local population would rather join the French in order to defend themselves from the encroachments of Ali. The Admiral added that he too was afraid of taking a significant number of troops from him (Ali), and it was only the mere necessity which made Ushakov to accept a small amount of Ali's troops against the strong will of the locals.¹⁰⁰

For the allied squadron the end of the year, accordingly, passed in waiting for the arrival of the promised reinforcements and continuation of the blockade. What is

⁹⁶ ‘F. F. Ushakov to Paul I. 29 / 18 December 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 145-145 ob.

⁹⁷ Ibidem, f. 146 ob.

⁹⁸ Ibidem, f. 144 ob.

⁹⁹ Ibidem, f. 149 ob.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, f. f. 149 ob- 150 ob.

more, cold and rainy winter weather was significantly hindering the siege.¹⁰¹ Besides, the issue of poor supplies deliveries remained equally problematic. The Ottoman government made a commitment to provide the necessary provisions, by sending respective orders to Morea and having appointed a special official, Şükrü Efendi. The latter would go to Patras and control the process of storage and delivery of supplies for Ushakov's forces. At the same time the Porte did not have effective means to influence the situation and the supplies were delayed for months.

Throughout the whole campaign Ushakov constantly bombarded everyone he could, including the Ottoman Admiral Kadir Bey¹⁰², Şükrü Efendi¹⁰³, Ali Pasha¹⁰⁴, the Russian ambassador in Istanbul Tomara¹⁰⁵, and even the Emperor¹⁰⁶ with letters concerning the lack of provisions in the squadron. Both the Russian and the Ottoman crews suffered from the same problem, whereas Ushakov and Kadir Bey were collectively trying to find a solution. The Ottoman Admiral started to buy wheat for the squadron with the last remaining money, send it to the mills and to look together with Ushakov for the ways of baking bread. Even so, Kadir Bey did not have enough money left, the supplies on the island were limited, and what could be found was on high prices. Moreover, the communication with the mainland was hindered because of heavy winter conditions.¹⁰⁷ In his memoirs Metaxa mentions that in such a

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, f. 146 ob.

¹⁰² 'F. F. Ushakov to Kadir Bey, 26 / 15 November 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 206; 'F. F. Ushakov to Kadir Bey, 13 / 2 December 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol.2, p. 230.

¹⁰³ 'F. F. Ushakov to Şükrü Efendi, 2 January 1799 (22 December 1798)' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴ 'F. F. Ushakov to Ali Pasha of Ioannina, 19 / 8 December 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 240.

¹⁰⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 152-153 ob., the same latter has been published at: Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 256-58.

¹⁰⁶ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 29 / 18 December 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 142-143 ob.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

difficult situation the Ottoman soldiers were sharing with the Russians their last provisions: “The Turks, seeing our shortages and themselves having bread remained only for a few days, shared with us magnanimously their very last rations”.¹⁰⁸ Only by the end of December and throughout January the supplies, consisting mainly of biscuits and bulgur¹⁰⁹, started to arrive gradually from Morea.¹¹⁰

By the beginning of the new 1799 year the allied Russo-Ottoman forces under the leadership of Ushakov managed to get possession of the six islands of the Ionian archipelago while the last and the most important was yet to be taken. Having not enough the siege troops and supplies, Ushakov besieged Corfu and was waiting for the arrival of reinforcements in order to start the closing phase of the Ionian campaign, that is the storming of the Corfu fortress. At this point there came the letter from ambassador Tomara, informing Ushakov that the Russian Empire and the Porte finally concluded on 3 January 1799 (23 December 1798) a defensive alliance,¹¹¹ and that a copy of the treaty was sent to the commander of the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron.

5.3. The Alliance Treaty: background, contents and implications

Politics is the art of the possible. This famous maxim was yet to be spoken by one of the most outstanding European statesmen of the 19th century, when in 1798 Europe witnessed a rather surprising and seemingly impossible alliance concluded

¹⁰⁸ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 154.

¹⁰⁹ Boiled and pounded wheat

¹¹⁰ ‘V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 11 January 1799 (31 December 1798)’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 283-84; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 154.

¹¹¹ ‘V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 11 January 1799 (31 December 1798)’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 285. The exchange of ratifications took place on 7 January 1799 (27 December 1798).

between the two states least expected to do that. Less than seven years ago the Ottoman and the Russian empires were at war with each other, for the fifth time throughout the last century. History has rare examples when in such a short period the two states turned from enemies into allies.¹¹²

Hardly anyone, and even the statesmen of both countries, could expect to find St. Petersburg and the Porte fighting on the same side. It is notable that their military alliance would not be something formal and symbolical. The Ottoman and the Russian soldiers in the true sense of the word would go shoulder to shoulder into the battlefields, sharing the hardships of the war time. In this context the words of the Grand Chancellor Bezborodko, time and again quoted by historians, give an idea to what extent the alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Russia was unbelievable even for one of the highest Russian officials and that it was only the direct French aggression against the Ottomans that brought the Sultan and the Tsar together. Bezborodko wrote to the Russian ambassador in London, Count Semyon Romanovich Vorontsov:

Now such monsters like the French were to appear to bring forth a thing, which I would not expect to see not only during my service in the ministry, but for my whole life, that is our alliance with the Porte and the passage of our fleet through the Channel.¹¹³

That is, if it were not for the French Egyptian expedition of General Bonaparte the Ottoman-Russian alliance most probably would have never occurred. On the other hand, in order to conclude such an alliance the sides had to have the necessary

¹¹² However, for the Russian Emperor Paul I this sufficiently unexpected step in politics was kind of a family tradition. The father of Paul I, Piotr III, during the Seven Years' War upon his ascension to the throne in 1762 not only notoriously returned to Prussia all previously conquered territories including the Prussian capital Berlin, but also concluded with Friedrich II an alliance. Russia turned against its yesterday's allies on the side of its yesterday's enemy.

¹¹³ “Надобно же вырасть таким уродам как французы, чтоб произвести вещь, какой я не только на своем министерстве, но и на веку своем видеть не чаял, то есть: союз наш с Портою и переход флота нашего через канал”. ‘A. A. Bezborodko to S. R. Vorontsov, 26 / 15 August, 1798’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 13, p. 405.

preconditions for rapprochement. Despite all external factors, should the relations between the two states remain extremely bad their supposed alliance would also be out of the question.

Starting from the second part of 1790s, the Ottoman-Russian relations began to improve gradually. While still not much trusting each other and even being mutually afraid of a possible aggression of the opposite side, Istanbul and St. Petersburg sought to avoid unnecessary confrontation. Neither country, each for its own specific reasons, could afford at the moment the luxury of a new war. The Porte had too many grave internal problems to deal with, and certainly was in no position to entertain at that point some expansionist projects. Even though the notorious *grande entreprise* of Catherine II remained an expression of her preferred policy towards the Ottoman Empire, the current political situation was far from being that favourable in order to allow the Russian Empress to embark on realization of her cherished over-ambitious plans of dismantling the Ottoman state. The Russian government, for that matter, also needed peace in view of the dire financial situation caused by incessant wars waged during Catherine's reign, Russia's involvement in the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the urgent necessity to suppress the uprising of Kościuszko in Poland.

An improvement in the relations of the two empires appeared more visible since the end of 1796. When the news about the death of the Russian Empress, so odious and so obnoxious for the Ottomans, reached Istanbul it was received there with great joy.¹¹⁴ The new Emperor of Russia Paul I commenced his reign with clear

¹¹⁴ 'V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 26 / 15 February, 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 74.

indications that he was not going to follow the habitual ways of his mother, including the bellicose foreign policy. Full of enthusiasm for internal reforming, Paul I preferred to maintain peaceful relations with all his neighbours. In this respect the fact that the Emperor at the beginning of 1797 called off the expeditionary corps of Count Valerian Zubov sent by Catherine against Persia¹¹⁵ could serve a good example of intentions of Paul I to revise the politics of his imperial predecessor. The ascending to the Russian throne of the new Emperor also gave way to the hopes for further normalisation of the Ottoman-Russian relations, as Paul I made it plain that he would like to keep peace with the Porte¹¹⁶.

Contrary to the gradual reconciliation between St. Petersburg and Istanbul, the French advances in the Eastern Mediterranean grew ever more disturbing for the Ottoman government. The victories of General Bonaparte in Italy and the acquisition by the French Republic according to the Treaty of Campo Formio of the former Venetian territories adjoining the Ottoman Balkan possessions aroused the natural anxiety of the Porte. By the end of 1797 – early 1798 such official persons as the Russian ambassador in Istanbul V. P. Kochubei and the Ottoman Reis-ül-küttab Atif Efendi in theory entertained a possibility of an Ottoman – Russian alliance, no matter how incredibly it sounded for both.¹¹⁷ What is notable is that, even though in view of the growing aggressiveness of France in Europe, the abstract idea of alliance had been expressed somewhat earlier than the Egyptian expedition of Bonaparte actually took place.

¹¹⁵ I. I. Radozhitskii, 'Istoricheskoe izvestiie o pokhodie Rossiiskikh voisk v 1796 godu v Dagestane i persii pod komandoyu Grafa Valeriana Aleksandrovicha Zubova' *Otechestvenniie zapiski*, 31 (1827), p. 301.

¹¹⁶ 'V. P. Kochubei to S. R. Vorontsov, 10 February, n.s., 1797' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1880), Vol. 18, p. 128.

¹¹⁷ V. P. Kochubei to A. R. Vorontsov, 26 (15) September, 1797. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1879), Vol. 14, p. 90; The memo of Atif Efendi: Muvâzene-i politikaya dâir Reis-ül-Küttab Atif Efendi'nin lâyihası. Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1294), Vol. 6, pp. 311-17.

The practical advantages for both sides from their hypothetical cooperation were indisputable. Generally speaking, it is always better to have a bad peace than a good war, and a neighbour state in the role of an ally is more preferable than that one having unambiguously hostile intentions. For Russia it was important to counteract the further spread of the French influences in Europe, and in particular St. Petersburg was disturbed at the real possibility of the French penetration to the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. In such a case Russia's own influence in the Balkans would be greatly diminished and, moreover, the Russian southern borders would also be endangered. Even though the Ottomans opted at the moment to remain neutral, the serious French successes could finally lure them into entering anti-Russian alliance, which had been long since brooded in Paris. Alternatively, should the French choose simply to dismantle the Ottoman Empire and take hold of its European possessions, the French-controlled Balkans or the Black Sea Straits would be a much undesirable spectacle, if not a nightmare for St. Petersburg. Thus the neighbourhood of the weak and overwhelmed by many internal problems Ottoman state was more preferable for Russia than the neighbourhood of some strong European power. From this point of view the strong Russian wish to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire¹¹⁸, despite the contemporary French propaganda and the latter numerous Western European authors looked quite logical and consistent.

¹¹⁸ The Russian politics to preserve and support the Ottoman rule in Europe generally applied in the first half of the 19th century, for example, has been severely criticized from extreme nationalistic and even Turkophobic positions by Zhygarev, who called such a politics "mistaken" and any allies between Russia and the Ottoman Empire "absolutely useless". See: S. A. Zhigarev *Russkaia politika v Vostochnom voprosie (yeyo istoriia v XVI-XIX vekakh, kriticheskaia otsenka i budushchiie zadachi)* (2 vols.; Moscow, 1896).

In so far as the Ottoman Empire was concerned, for it the potential French descent in the Balkans objectively was even more dangerous. While for Russia this would mean only an increased threat to its southern borders, for the Ottoman Empire such an attack on its Balkan possessions would put into question no more and no less than its very existence. Moreover, for the Porte to have Russia in the capacity of an ally meant that it would not act as an enemy. According to a witty remark of Saul, the presence of the Russian Black Sea fleet in the Mediterranean itself would be a sufficient guarantee against the Russian hostility.¹¹⁹ With that, the Ottomans would not risk to accept the Russian aid with munitions, let alone the regular army, against the rebellious Governor of Vidin Osman Pazvantoglu. The respective propositions of the Russian side had been politely declined.¹²⁰ Thus, the French threat to the Balkans equally affected the interests of both Russian and the Ottoman states, constituting the point of departure for their hypothetical alliance.

By force of circumstances the actual military cooperation between the two empires started five months before the official alliance was signed. Already in spring 1798 the propositions of Paul I concerning the Russian aid were passed to the Porte several times.¹²¹ The Russian side made it clear that it would wait for an official request of the Porte for military aid, and would be ready to lend the necessary support with both the fleet and the regular army. Finally, on 24 July 1798, that is after the French attack on Egypt, the Ottoman government officially asked Russia to send a naval squadron for the protection of the Sultan's domains against the

¹¹⁹ N.E.Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean 1797-1807* (Chicago, 1970), p. 55.

¹²⁰ 'V. P. Kochubei to Paul I. 12/1 January 1798' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 862, f. 4 ob.

¹²¹ Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 17; 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 26 / 15 May, 1798' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 871, f. 61.

French.¹²² Thus, on 5 September 1798, the Russian fleet arrived at Büyükdere, the suburb of Istanbul.¹²³ After joining forces with the Ottoman fleet, as it has been mentioned previously, the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron departed to the Mediterranean. At this point, the already started actual cooperation was to be regulated by the formal treaty of alliance, which, however, was not yet concluded.

Former Russian ambassador in Istanbul V. P. Kochubei, who upon his return to St. Petersburg took up the post of the Vice Chancellor of the College of Foreign Affairs (*Kollegiia Inostrannykh Del*), composed a special memo where he formulated the recommendations regarding the position of the Russian side at the negotiations of the allied treaty.¹²⁴ In the preamble of his memo Kochubei characterized the general situation in the Ottoman Empire, emphasizing the great chaos prevailing in the Ottoman state apparatus. Among other things he pointed out that one might hardly expect the effective Ottoman aid with the army or money, and on the whole any Ottoman aid would be of little use. Apart from this the Russian statesman wrote that one should also keep in mind the ignorance and numerous prejudices of the Ottomans, the frequent changes among the Ottoman ministers and, the changes of the propositions made by the Porte. As regards the supplies deliveries for the Russian fleet, in Kochubei's view, one should not place much reliance on that, as "the Turks do not have any orderliness in this field"¹²⁵.

¹²² A. M. Stanislavskaja, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova v Gretsii, 1798-1799* (Moscow, 1983), p. 73.

¹²³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Târih-i Cevdet* (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1288), Vol. 4, p. 58.

¹²⁴ Opinion of His Excellency Vice Chancellor Count Kochubei about conclusion of the Alliance with the Porte. AVPRI. Fond 5. Secret opinions of the College of Foreign Affairs. Op. 5/1. Delo 593, f. f. 286-90. The date which has been put on this document (1799) in the archive of the Russian Foreign ministry is obviously wrong, since it is clear from its contents that Kochubei's memo was composed before the arrival of the Russian fleet to Istanbul, which took place early in September 1798.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 288.

Then the memo of Kochubei continues with eleven points he proposes to be considered by the Russian side during the negotiations. So, the initial position was to assure the Ottoman government that the Russian fleet would not make any harm to the Porte, and that Russia wished nothing in exchange for its aid. At the end of the war, when the compensation of the war expenditures would be discussed, Russia will try to get some compensation also for the Porte. Second, the Porte was to be persuaded immediately to declare war on France, and, consequently, to arrest the French vessels, goods and merchants. Third, it was necessary to agree on the point of financing the supplies for the Russian fleet, and the Porte was expected to provide the necessary resources at least for three months.

Other technical issues to be discussed were the assistance to the Russian ships in the Ottoman ports and the appointment of the Russian admiral to command the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron. Kochubei especially specified the point that it was much desirable that the *Kapudan Pasha* (The Chief Commander of the Ottoman Navy) would not be present in the Ottoman squadron, or otherwise he “would wish to issues all the orders in his own way, and this would badly influence the whole enterprise”.¹²⁶ As for the passage through the Black Sea Straits, the ambassador Tomara was to assure the Porte that the Russian fleet would pass through the narrows not otherwise than by agreement with the Ottoman side. Currently, though, the Russian vessels were needed to be granted a free passage everywhere. Furthermore, Tomara was to make sure that having entered the Bosphorus the Russian squadron would be able to return back to the Black Sea.

¹²⁶ Ibidem, f. 289.

The diplomatic issues of the memo included the necessity to inform the Porte that Russia would propose the British and the Austrian courts to join the alliance with the Porte. The Russian ambassador was recommended to take up an attitude of a “sincere adviser of the Porte”, who would “know everything, and interfere in everything”. All the most important issues discussed with the Porte were to be formalized in written documents. The last point advised by Kochubei concerned the person of the Swedish ambassador Mouradgea d’Ohsson¹²⁷, well known by his anti-Russian dispositions, and whom the Russian side would like to see recalled from his post. Such was, in short, the platform for the treaty negotiations proposed by the Russian Vice Chancellor.

By the end of October 1798 the preliminary articles of the treaty were agreed upon. On 31 October Tomara sent the text of the treaty¹²⁸, consisting of 13 articles to which were appended 13 separate and secret articles to St. Petersburg’s confirmation.¹²⁹ The final ratification of the alliance treaty took place two months later, on 3 January 1799.

Having concluded the treaty of alliance, the Ottoman and the Russian side apart from declarations regarding the general allied obligations reciprocally confirmed the Jassy peace treaty (Article 2), guaranteed the inviolability of each other’s borders and

¹²⁷ Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson, or Muradcan Tosunyan, was of Armenian Catholic origin, serving throughout 1760-s- 1790-s as a dragoman and adviser at the Swedish embassy. In 1795-1799 d’Ohsson performed the duties of the Swedish ambassador in Istanbul.

¹²⁸ ‘V. S. Tomara to A. A. Bezborodko, 31 / 20 October 1798’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 881, f. f. 50-64; the text of the articles is submitted in three languages, Russian, French and Ottoman. The Russian copy: f. f. 50-54, the French copy: f. f. 55-60, Ottoman copy: f. f. 61-64. These correspond to the official text of the treaty published at: *PSZRI*, Vol. XXV. № 18797, columns 500-502. The thirteen separate and secret articles, however, were not published. A short summary of these articles has been given at: Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, pp. 79-80.

¹²⁹ The separate and secret articles. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 881, f. f. 65-77; The sixth secret article of the treaty has been kept in the archival portfolio as a separate leaf: *Ibidem*, f. f. 86-86 ob.

took upon the responsibility of rendering mutual military assistance and sharing the strategic plans of military operations (Article 3). The military and transport ships of both states gained the right during the time of war to enter any allied ports, for repair or other necessities (Article 10). In accordance with the last two main clauses of the treaty, the Ottoman-Russian alliance was defined as such that had been aimed not for foreign conquests, but “for the protection of the integrity of both empires” (Article 12), and was signed for the term of eight years (Article 13).

Additional separate and secret articles clarified the main part of the treaty with more specific details concerning the practical cooperation of St. Petersburg and Istanbul. The Russian help to the Porte would consist of 12 ships, which, upon joining the forces with the Ottoman squadron, were to enter the Mediterranean and to start hostilities against the French, acting together with the British fleet (Secret Article 1; in fact, this clause was included post factum, as the Russo-Ottoman fleet of Ushakov was already operating in the Ionian archipelago). The Article 10 of the main treaty had been specified by the Secret Articles 2 and 3, which stipulated the free passage for the Russian ships through the Straits, and its conditions. In this respect the Secret Article 3 is very important, as it states that

His Imperial Majesty promises that the passage of His fleet from the Black Sea to the White Sea [the Mediterranean; V. M.] through the Channel of Constantinople, free communication for the war ships... and return of that fleet to the Russian Black Sea ports, *by no means should serve a right or an excuse to acquire for the future time the right of the free passage through the channel for the war ships, all this being granted exclusively in view of the common war* (italics are mine; V. M.)...¹³⁰

As it is seen, the right of the Russian ships to pass through the Black Sea Straits was plainly defined by the necessities of the war time. Both signatories of the treaty agreed to consider the Black Sea closed for the ships of all other states (Secret

¹³⁰ Ibidem, f. 67 ob.

Article 4). The Secret Article 5 clarified the procedure of supplies deliveries to the Russian squadron, obliging the Porte to provide it with provisions for four months upon the arrival of the Russian fleet to Istanbul, and to continue sending the supplies later, so that the naval squadron of Ushakov would always have the supplies sufficient at least for two months. Rather technical character had the Secret Articles 7, 8 and 9. The signatories agreed not to accept the deserters from each other's armies, to conclude neither a separate peace nor an armistice, and during the future peace negotiations to serve each other's interests.

Quite special was the Secret Article 6, concerning the possibility of using the Russian land army against the hypothetical French attack on the Ottoman dominions. In such a case Russia would send an army of 75-80 thousand men supported by artillery. Should this happen, the delivering of supplies to the Russian army would be determined by a Separate and Special Act regarding the subsistence of the land army.¹³¹ According to this document the Ottoman government instead of supplying provisions was to allot 16 thousand purses, or 8 million gushes per year, making payments to the Russian ambassador each three months. Then the commander of the Russian forces himself was to care about purchasing and storing of supplies. The Ottoman government was to appoint one or two special officials whose responsibility would be to deal with the local Ottoman authorities and to facilitate the commander of the Russian force the whole process of the supplies preparation.

The seemingly impossible Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance came to be concluded. It remains much understudied in the historical literature, and the existing

¹³¹ Ibidem, f. 87.

works dealing with this topic are almost always written not without a smack of Russophobic views prevalent among some Western European and the Turkish historians during the last two centuries. In general, the comments of the treaty usually boil down to the statements that it was a conjunctural rapprochement and thus it did have neither a sound foundation nor any future.

Typically in such works¹³² Russia has been described as a pure aggressor, covetously seeking to use any opportunity to annex Constantinople and the Black Sea Straits. The similar statements are primarily based on the abstract speculations of their authors, made within the traditional Western European discourse of “Russia as the universal evil”, and normally stay without much of a documentary proof. In opinion of some French authors, for example, even while concluding the alliance with the Porte Russia did not abandon its aggressive schemes and together with the British under the pretence of helping intended to make a partition of the Ottoman territories. Furthermore, the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, in view of Marcère, was undesired by France and much wished by Russia and Britain.¹³³ Thus, France was being presented as the only savior of the Ottomans,¹³⁴ notwithstanding Bonaparte’s quite real and not hypothetical aggression in Egypt. Though Pisani never calls the French attack on Egypt an aggression, but rather “*les progrès des Français*”.¹³⁵ In this way, the triumphant meeting of the Russian fleet at Büyükdere

¹³² For example, see: Edouard de Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople: la politique orientale de la Révolution française*, (2 vols.; Paris, 1927); P. Pisani, ‘L’expédition Russo-Turque aux îles ioniennes en 1789-1799’ *Revue d’Histoire diplomatique*, 2 (1888), pp. 190-222; Edouard Driault, *La question d’Orient depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris, 1905); Enver Ziya Karal, *Fransa-Mısır ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1797-1802*. (İstanbul, 1938).

¹³³ Marcère, *Une ambassade à Constantinople*, pp. 331-332.

¹³⁴ Ibidem, p. 363; Pisani, *L’expédition Russo-Turque*, p. 205.

¹³⁵ Pisani, *L’expédition Russo-Turque*, p. 204.

harbour is said to be nothing more than a show. The Ottomans in fact did not trust Russia, were afraid of it, and very well perceived its “true intentions”.¹³⁶

To sum up, the existing scanty comments of the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance of the late 18th century usually agree on the following: this was a situational rapprochement without any future, Russia always maintained the aggressive dreams of capturing Constantinople and the Straits, and even having concluded the alliance with the Porte St. Petersburg kept dreaming to partition the Ottoman state and as a result to swallow as much as possible of the Sultan’s possessions.

The works of Kleinman, Saul and especially Stanislavskaja present a somewhat different opinion as regards the nature of the alliance under discussion. Kleinman thinks the alliance to be important in that it proved that the allied relations between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires were possible in principle.¹³⁷ Norman Saul, an American historian, pointed out the strong bond of common interests connecting the two empires, and that the Ottoman-Russian alliance lasted, in fact, longer than the second anti-French coalition.¹³⁸ Stanislavskaja went even further, arguing that for all practical purposes the alliance with Russia saved the Ottoman Empire from partition and even, most probably, from destruction.¹³⁹

It is pointless to deny here the traditional and mutual distrust and even hatred, the long time obvious characteristics of the relations between the Ottoman and the Russian empires. This does not automatically mean, though, that one should a priori

¹³⁶ Pisani, *L’expédition Russo-Turque*, p. 205.

¹³⁷ Kleinman, *Russko-Turetskii soyuz*, p. 15.

¹³⁸ Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean*, p. 69.

¹³⁹ Stanislavskaja, *Politicheskaja deyatel’nost’ F. F. Ushakova*, pp. 87-89.

to ascribe to one or both signatories of the discussed alliance treaty any hostile intentions, especially when there is not a vestige of documentary evidence to justify such an assumption and, vice versa, the remaining documents contain many proofs to the contrary.

Sure enough, the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance had its own specific task stemming from the common interests of the signatories, i.e. the defence of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and this task eventually had been accomplished. The accusations of Russia at this point look and sound quite logical except for one thing. All of them, as a rule, are based on hypotheses and not on documents. Meanwhile the vast volume of correspondence between the Russian diplomatic representatives in Istanbul and the College of Foreign affairs in St. Petersburg proves the strong wish of Paul I at that particular time to preserve the Ottoman Empire, in view of Russia's own strategic interests, from possible encroachments of the French Republic. Taking into consideration a very grave situation the Ottoman Empire found itself by the end of the 18th century and the opinion of many contemporaries that the days of the House of Osman were numbered the alliance with Russia of 1799, paradoxically enough, indeed might have prolonged the existence of the Ottoman state during those stormy years of the European history.

5.4. The exchange of ratifications of the Alliance Treaty

Four days after the conclusion of the Ottoman-Russian alliance treaty, which had been signed on 3 January 1799 (23 December 1798), the exchange of

ratifications of the treaty took place.¹⁴⁰ Early in the morning on 7 January 1799 (27 December 1798) the Russian ambassador Tomara and his entourage set off to the Porte. The ceremony of the visit repeated the typical procedures characteristic for the reception of the foreign diplomatic representatives.¹⁴¹

Upon crossing the Golden Horn on the boat sent by *Çavuş Başı* the ambassador along with Councillor of the embassy Iakovlev, who carried the imperial ratifications, and the First Dragoman of the embassy Fonton were conveyed to the chamber of *Kireççi Başı*. There the leading figures of the Russian embassy were met and served round by *Çavuş Başı*, while the rest of the members of the Russian delegation were lining up. As everything was ready the ambassador Tomara, followed by his attendants, left the chamber and, having mounted on horse, proceeded at the head of his whole delegation and other Ottoman officials to the Porte.

During the ceremony an extreme attention was to be paid to the smallest formalities. Thus when *Çavuş Başı* made a few mistakes concerning the procedure this incurred the great displeasure of Tomara. The first mistake was that the Ottoman official did not rise from his seat at the same time with the Russian ambassador when leaving the chamber of *Kireççi Başı*, and on the way to the Porte instead of following Tomara on his right most of the time remained behind him. At the entrance to the first gate of the Palace Tomara called *Çavuş Başı* and showed the Ottoman official

¹⁴⁰ ‘Zapiska torzhestvennoi pri Porte razmeny mezhdou verkhovnym viziriem Yusuf Ziya Pasheyu i Gospodinom Chrezvychainym Poslannikom Tomaroyu na soyuzniy oboronitel’niy traktat imperatorskikh ratifikatsiy, byvshei v 27 den’ dekabria 1798 goda’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 887, f. f. 16-19.

¹⁴¹ The typical description of this kind of ceremonies can be found at: İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı* (Ankara, 1988), pp. 284-86.

the place where the latter was to be. As the Russian ambassador and *Çavuş Başı* entered the second yard of the Grand Vizier, they were met by the First Dragoman of the Porte. Here Tomara complained to the First Dragoman about the behaviour of *Çavuş Başı*. On the same day the written apologies regarding the inexperienced Ottoman official were sent in the name of *Reis-ül-Küttab* to the Russian embassy.¹⁴²

When Tomara was accepted into the Audience Room he stopped at the stool prepared for him in advance. In a few minutes the Grand Vizier entered and sat on his place, whereupon the Russian ambassador also took his place on the stool and addressed the Grand Vizier with a speech. It is possible to quote here in extenso the text of that speech by Tomara:

Resulting from the same rules of humanity, the mutual friendship and harmony between His Imperial Majesty Emperor, the Most August Sovereign of mine and His Majesty Sultan are confirmed today by the Alliance wished on both sides. The love of peace, the welfare of the subjects of both states and preserving of the internal quietude of this Empire, by fending off jointly the already opened against them malicious intents, constitute the foundation and the subject of this great cause, which is being realized now according to the general international practice by this last solemn custom of the exchange of the Imperial Ratifications. His Majesty Emperor and Sovereign of mine imposed upon me both the task to negotiate the Alliance and to carry out its Ratification. My zeal and assiduity in dealing with this matter assure Your Excellency in my vigilant and constant care about everything which could serve to the fulfilment of the mutual obligations and thus to the confirmation of the utmost friendship. These, I have no doubts, would give me the gratifying friendship and benevolence of Your Excellency.¹⁴³

Then, after the speech of the Russian ambassador had been translated by the First Dragoman of the Porte, the Grand Vizier delivered the answering speech, preserved

¹⁴² The Ottoman text of apology of *Reis-ül-Küttab* sent to the Russian embassy. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 887, L. 20. *Reis-ül-Küttab* found excuses in that the aforementioned *Çavuş Başı* was newly appointed and inexperienced.

¹⁴³ The original Russian text is available at: AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 887, f. f. 17-17 ob.

in the Archive of the Russian Foreign Ministry and given here in its French translation:

L'alliance qui vient d'être conclue entre cet Empire et celui de Russie, d'après le désir témoigné de part et d'autre, pour s'opposer aux projets pernicieux de l'ennemi commun ayant établi la meilleure intelligence et la plus parfaite amitié entre les deux Empires. Sa Majesté le très Auguste et très Puissant Empereur mon très gracieux Souverain et Maître a appris avec une véritable satisfaction l'arrivé des ratifications de la part de Sa Majesté L'Empereur de Russie son Auguste Allié. En conséquence Elle, s'est empressée à délivrer aussi les ratifications nécessaires pour en effectuer l'échange.

Votre conduit tranche et loyale, le zèle dont Vous avez donné, Monsieur L'Envoyé, des preuves non equivoques pendant tout le cours de Votre Mission et surtout dans les circonstances présents sont les gages de la bienveillance Impériale envers Votre Personne.¹⁴⁴

Upon completion of the speech of Grand Vizier the Sultan's ratifications were brought to the Audience Room by *Reis-ül-Küttab*. The latter handed them over to the Grand Vizier, who, in his turn, kissed the ratifications that were bearing the seal of the Sultan and exchanged them with Tomara to the similar Russian ratifications signed by Paul I. The Grand Vizier gave the Russian ratifications to *Reis-ül-Küttab* and Tomara handed the Ottoman ratifications over to the councillor of the embassy Iakovlev.

Following the exchange of the ratifications the Russian ambassador and the Grand Vizier took their places, and those present were offered the sweets, coffee, sherbet and fragrances. Then the *Kaftan Kâhyası* put on the ambassador a sable coat. The same sable fur coat was presented to the First Dragoman of the Porte too. The Councillor of the Russian embassy Iakovlev, the First Dragoman of the embassy Fonton and the titular councillor (*tituliarnyi sovetnik*) Prince Dolgorukov (the latter mainly because of his noble origin) were all presented the sable paw fur coats. The

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem, f. f. 17 ob- 18.

rest of the members of the Russian delegation were given 10 ermine fur coats, 12 sheepskin fur coats and 25 kaftans. While the distribution of the fur coats continued, the Grand Vizier kept talking with the ambassador, and expressed his great satisfaction about the friendly relations prevailing between Vice Admiral Ushakov and the head of the Ottoman naval squadron Kadir Bey.

When the audience ended, Tomara was seen off from the Audience Room by the *Teşrifatçı* and the First Dragoman of the Porte. At the place where the Russian ambassador was to mount on horse he was awaited by horse in rich harness, sent to Tomara as a present from the Grand Vizier. By 1 p. m. the Russian ambassador had already returned to his residence.

Table 3. The List of the presents given to the Russian Imperial Mission on behalf of His Majesty Sultan on the occasion of conclusion of the Defensive Alliance Treaty [*Реестр подаркам учиненным Российской Императорской Миссии от имени Его Величества Султана по случаю заключения Союзного оборонительного Трактата*] AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. 30.

	Piastrs (gurushes)
To Ambassador, A snuffbox encrusted with diamonds	15.000
Various Indian and Constantinople textiles	5.000
In cash	30.000
<hr/>	
To Councillor of the embassy, Councillor of State (<i>Statskii Sovetnik</i>) Iakovlev	
In cash	5.000
<hr/>	
To the First Dragoman, Councillor of the Chancellery Fonton	
In cash	5.000
<hr/>	
To the Secretary of the embassy, Court Councillor (<i>Nadvornyi Sovetnik</i>) Bobrov	
In cash	2.500
<hr/>	
To Collegiate Assessor (Kollezhskii Asector) Prince Dolgorukov	
A snuffbox decorated with roses	2.500
<hr/>	
To Collegiate Assessor (Kollezhskii Asector) Kozlov	
In cash	1.500
<hr/>	
In total gifts and money	66.500

Table 4. A Note of the Presents and Money distributed on the occasion of the Solemn Exchange of Imperial Ratifications of the Allied Defensive Treaty, made at the Porte between the Grand Vizier Yusuf Pasha and the Envoy Tomara on 7 January 1799 (27 December 1798) [*Записка подаркам и деньгам розданным по случаю торжественной размены при Порте, между верховным визирем Юсуф Пашею и Господином Посланником Томарою, Императорских Ратификаций на Союзный Оборонительный Трактат Декабря 27-го дня 1798 года*] AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 887, f. f. 22-24.

7 January 1799 (27 December 1798)	1st To the Department of <i>Çavuş Başı</i> and his retinue	Piastres (gurushes)	Aspres (akches)
	<i>Duacı Çavuş</i>	11	
	<i>Çavuşlar Emîni</i>	50	
	<i>Çavuşlar Kâtibi</i>	50	
	and his <i>Çuhadars</i>	12	
	<i>Kılavuz Çavuşu</i>	11	
	and his <i>Yamak</i>	7	
	<i>Haberci Çavuş</i>	6	
	<i>Çavuşlar Mehter</i>	11	
	25 <i>Çavuşes</i> of Divan	25	
	<i>Alay Çavuşes</i> and <i>Baş Çavuş</i>	15	
	<i>Nöbetçi Çavuşes</i>	5	
	Inner <i>Çavuşes</i>	15	
	4 <i>Çavuşes</i> sent to the residence of the ambassador	20	
	<i>Çavuş Başı</i> Sable fur from Tobolsk № 9, valued at 325 piastres; 20 sables from Tobolsk № 13, valued at 90 piastres; 20 sables from Tobolsk № 15, valued at 90 piastres; snuffbox, round blue № 34, valued at 270 piastres		
	Total	238	"
	<hr/>		
	To the retinue of <i>Çavuş Başı</i>		
	<i>İç Ağas</i>	20	
	<i>Çuhadars</i>	20	
	<i>Şatır</i>	10	
	and his <i>Odacı</i>	4	
	Oarsmen of the boat	21	
	<hr/>		
	2nd To the Department of <i>Teşrifatçı</i>		

<i>Teşrifatçı Efendi</i>		
Snuffbox, octagonal № 30, valued at 300 piastres; 20 sables from Tobolsk № 17, valued at 90 piastres; 20 sables from Tobolsk № 18, valued at 90 piastres;		
In cash	500	
<hr/>		
<i>Teşrifat Kalfa, Kisedar</i>	250	
and their <i>Çuhadars</i>	7	60
<i>Çuhadars of Teşrifatçı Efendi</i>	15	
<hr/>		
3rd To people of Reis Efendi and his Department		
Kalem Mehter Başı	11	
Nöbetçi <i>Çuhadars</i>	10	
Mehters	6	
İç Ağas	20	
<i>Çuhadars of Beylikçi, Divan Kisedarı, and Kisedar of Reis Efendi</i>	15	
<hr/>		
4th To people of the Grand Vizier		
<i>İç Ağas</i>	15	
<i>Eynam Ağas</i>	15	
<i>Kapıcıs</i> at the first and the second gate	3	
<i>Seyil</i>	2	
<i>Şatırs</i>	6	
<i>Perdeci</i>	3	
<i>Divan Haneci</i>	2	
<i>Nöbetçi Çuhadars</i>	5	
<i>Nöbetçi Mehters</i>	4	
<i>İskemleci Mehters</i>	3	
Mutes	3	
<i>Tüfenkçi and Mataracı</i>	6	
<i>Kaftancı</i> of the Porte and his <i>Yamak</i>	15	
<i>Kapı Kethüdas</i>	6	
<i>Başkapı Kethüdası</i>	3	
<i>Arabacıs</i>	4	
<i>Falakacıs</i>	3	
<i>Sakas</i> of <i>Arabacıs</i>	2	
Musicians of the Sultan, Grand Vizier, Admiralty, from Demirkapı and Galata, who came to congratulate	80	
<hr/>		
5th To the Dragoman of the Porte		
Watch and chain with diamonds № 45, valued at 1750 piastres		
To his people	25	
<hr/>		
6th To the Sultan's Stable		
<hr/>		

<i>Çuhadar</i> at the horse of the ambassador	5	
40 men at the horses of the ambassadorial retinue	40	
<i>Bölük Başı</i>	6	
Guardian of caparisons	5	60
[<i>Eski</i>] of the Sultan's stable and his <i>Eski Oğlan</i>	10	
	8	
7th To Janissaries and their commanders		
<i>Hassabaşı</i>	11	
<i>Subaşı</i>	11	
Their Janissaries	10	
<i>Usta</i>	4	
<i>Odabaşı</i>	10	
<i>Kâhya</i> of <i>Subaşı</i>	3	
<i>Çorbacı</i> , who was sent with orta to the ambassador, so that to escort him to the Porte and his people	100	
	4	
<i>Yazıcı</i> , commanding orta on this day	20	
Janissaries of the 6 th <i>bölük</i>	50	
8th To various ranks		
<i>Kâhya</i> at the quay of Tophane	3	
<i>Çavuş</i> at the quay of Tophane	3	
<i>Kâhya</i> at Vezir İskelessi	2	
Gateman at the Bahçe Kapısı	2	
<i>Bostancı</i> at Vezir İskelessi	1	
<i>Kireççibaşı</i> , in whose kiosk <i>Çavuşbaşı</i> accepts foreign ministers	16	
<i>Mihmandar</i> , appointed on this day to the ambassador and <i>Mihmandar</i> 's people	100	
	10	
9th Other expenditures		
25 3-pared boats, 3 gurushes per each, ----- ""		
----- 75		
75 2-pared boats, 2 gurushes per each, ----- ""		
----- 150	225	
6 horses with rich Turkish caparisons	511	
Smaller expenditures for rent of horses and horse harnesses	20	
34 <i>Çuhadars</i> , 60 paras per each	51	
13 valets, 60 paras per each	19	60
250 sticks for the Janissaries, participating in the procession	10	
The person, who delivered the horse, presented by the Grand Vizier to the ambassador	110	
Total	2743	60

= Vasiliy Tomara

Table 5. The Presents of the Russian side, assigned by the Decree of the Russian Emperor of 10 April (30 March) 1799 to the members of the Ottoman Ministry on the occasion of the Allied Treaty, concluded between Russia and the Ottoman Porte. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 May 1799. f. f. 67-70.

	Roubles
To Grand Vizier, Ziya Yusuf Pasha	
A snuffbox № 1	17.000
Two ermine furs, to be used in summer climate of Syria and Egypt	800
<hr/>	
To <i>Kadiasker</i> İsmet Bey	
A snuffbox № 3	10.000
Forty sable furs from Yakutia	2.000
<hr/>	
To <i>Rikâb Reisi</i>	
A snuffbox № 2	10.000
Sable fur	4.000
<hr/>	
To <i>Rikâb Kethüdası</i>	
A snuffbox № 17	6.000
A watch № 41 with a chain	2.500
<hr/>	
To former First Dragoman of the Porte, who took part in negotiations and the exchange of ratifications, and currently is the Hospodar of Moldavia, Ypsilanti	
A snuffbox № 1	4.200
A ring № 8	1.000
<hr/>	
To <i>Âmedci Efendi</i>	
A snuffbox № 4	3.000
20 sable furs	800
<hr/>	
To Commander of the Ottoman naval squadron, Kadir Bey	
A ring with one diamond № 2	4.000
In cash	3.000
To <i>Kaymakam</i> Bekir Pasha	
A snuffbox № 5, initially assigned for Kadir Bey	Not indicated

5.6. Conclusions

The arrival of the Russian Black Sea fleet to Constantinople in early September 1798 marked the beginning of the practical Ottoman-Russian cooperation. In a situation, when the war with France became for the Porte not only unavoidable but, in fact, was already under way, both parties were to act quickly. Under the

circumstances, one might reasonably expect that, except Egypt, the French could attack the Ottoman Empire also in other places. Among the most probable targets of the French aggression were, in the first place, the Balkan possessions of the Porte. Considering that the French controlled the Central Italy and the Ionian archipelago, no one could be sure that they would not decide to launch an assault in the Balkans. At this point the interests of the Ottoman Empire and Russia coincided. While the Ottomans sought preserve the integrity of their territorial possessions, for St. Petersburg it was important not to allow any other European power to invade the Balkans, which were looked upon by Russia as a sphere of its own exclusive influence.

Thus, the Russian fleet under Vice Admiral Ushakov visited the Ottoman capital even before the official treaty of alliance between the two empires was concluded. It should be noted, that the Russians were still not quite sure about the possible reaction of the Porte to the arrival of their fleet. Ushakov was instructed not to enter the Straits without getting the special guarantees of the Ottoman side that the Russian fleet would be allowed to return freely to the Black Sea. Moreover, the Emperor Paul contemplated the possibility that after the end of the Mediterranean campaign the Porte might close for the Ushakov's squadron the passage through the Straits back to the Black Sea. All these concerns of the Russian side indicated that the idea of an alliance with the Ottoman Empire was considered a rather risky enterprise, and, surely enough, in view of the previous long confrontation between the two empires it simply could not be otherwise.

When the Russian Black Sea squadron stayed in Constantinople, Ushakov was admitted to the Ottoman naval docks (*tersane*) and also was invited to inspect the Ottoman fleet. On the one hand, this gesture of courtesy by the Porte might be an expression of respect to Ushakov, known by his successes against the Ottoman fleet in the previous war. On the other hand, the Ottomans had a good opportunity to impress the Russian guests with their latest successes in the shipbuilding. Ushakov himself admitted that the Ottoman war vessels in a technical sense little differed from the best European patterns. The only criticism of the Russian Vice Admiral was about the naval artillery, which he advised the Ottoman side to improve.

A very important strategic location of the Ionian Islands vis-à-vis the coastline of the Ottoman Balkan possessions determined the decision to send the joint squadron, composed of the Russian and the Ottoman ships under the general command of Ushakov, to the Ionian Islands in order to oust the French from there. Considering that the the smaller islands had been defended by only modest French garrisons it became not that difficult for a large Russo-Ottoman squadron in a very short time to occupy almost all of the archipelago. Starting the Ionian campaign in October, by mid-November the allied forces of Ushakov one by one had captured six out of seven islands, except for Corfu, the biggest and the most important among the Ionian Islands. The military operations of this time, even though were not so extensive, had a very symbolical meaning. Most probably for the first time in history the Ottoman and the Russian soldiers were fighting shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy.

Taking of the island of Corfu constituted the latest and the hardest part of the Ionian campaign. As the fortress of Corfu was well fortified and defended by a strong French garrison, it could not be captured at one blow. The attack on Corfu was delayed because of a number of difficulties, such as severe winter weather conditions, poor supplies deliveries and the arbitrary attitudes of Ali Pasha Tepedelenli, the Ottoman governor of Yanina. Thus, by the end of 1798 the allied squadron of Ushakov started the siege of Corfu, waiting for an opportune moment to launch an assault.

Compelled by the force of circumstances to cooperate before their allied relations were officially established, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires finally signed an alliance treaty on 3 January 1799. This alliance became in itself an extraordinary event, very much surprising even for its participants. It is safe to say that without the French aggression in Egypt the alliance between the Porte and St. Petersburg most probably would have never occurred. However, General Bonaparte was not the only father of the Ottoman-Russian alliance. A very important in this respect was the death of such an odious person for the Ottomans as was Catherine II and the ascending to the throne of the new Russian Emperor Paul I. The change of the monarch in Russia paved the way for further rapprochement between the two states and eventually created the necessary preconditions for practical cooperation. Should the relations between the Ottoman and Russian Empires remain as they used to be under Catherine II the supposed alliance could hardly, if at all, be realised.

It should also be noted that the abstract idea of an Ottoman-Russian alliance had been expressed independently by the officials of both states somewhat earlier

than the actual French attack on Egypt occurred. V. P. Kochubei, then the Russian ambassador at the Porte, spoke of the theoretical possibility of an alliance between the Sultan's and the Tsar's courts as early as September 1797. *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atıf Efendi considered the same idea in spring 1798. Apparently, the scheme of such an alliance seemed to be only a mere speculation, which was to happen just under very extraordinary circumstances. Nonetheless, in mid-1798, when General Bonaparte embarked on his Egyptian campaign, it was an extraordinary situation that arose. In a remarkable manner the common interests of the Ottoman Porte and the Russian Empire to counteract the French aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean concurred and led to the first alliance between the Sultan and the Tsar.

CHAPTER VI

MEDITERRANEAN KNOT

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich, all thy banners wave!
And charge with all thy chivalry!
(Thomas Campbell, "Hohenlinden")

6.1. The Capture of Corfu

Declared at the beginning of the campaign aim to oust the French from the Ionian Archipelago could not be completed while the biggest island and its main stronghold remained under the French control. Blockade of Corfu started early in November 1798 as six ships under the general command of Captain Ivan Andreievich Selivachev¹, separated by Ushakov from the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron, dropped anchor in the waters of Corfu. By 19 November 1798 all the main forces of the allied squadron under the command of Ushakov joined the siege of the island. Moreover, on 10 January 1799 Rear Admiral Pavel Vasilievich Pustoshkin brought from the Black Sea two additional ships of the line² with 1 thousand men on the board.³ By mid-January 1799 a significant naval force, comprising of twelve ships of the line, eleven frigates and a few smaller vessels gathered at Corfu.

¹ Three ships of the line ("Zakharii i Yelisavet", "Bogoiavlieniie Gospodnie" and one Ottoman ship) and three frigates ("Grigorii Velikiia Armenii" and two Ottoman frigates). 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I, 1 November (21 October) 1798' AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1396 (Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with Admiral Ushakov), f. f. 86-87.

² "Mikhail" and "Simeon i Anna"

³ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 183-85.

Insufficient number of auxiliary troops, needed to launch a land attack against the enemy, prevented Ushakov from the immediate active operations against the Corfu fortress. Catastrophic lack of provisions and heavy weather conditions of winter added to the hardships of the Russo-Ottoman naval squadron. Despite the respective orders from the Porte, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha was in no hurry to follow the will of the central government and send the auxiliary troops to Ushakov's squadron. The governor of Ioannina preferred to bargain both with Ushakov and the Porte, in order to exploit the situation to the utmost. Furthermore, behind the back of the allies, Ali Pasha also got in touch with General Chabot, the commander of the French garrison defending Corfu. At the time when the Sultan's government was ordering him in vain to send the troops necessary for the capture of the Corfu fortress, Ali Pasha proposed General Chabot to transport all the French garrison of Corfu to Ancona in exchange for the control of the island.⁴

Now when the Russo-Ottoman fleet blockaded Corfu Ali, hoping that his assistance was indispensable, continued to bargain with Ushakov and even refused to help. In reply to Ushakov's request to send the auxiliary Albanian troops Ali Pasha wrote to the Ottoman Admiral Kadir Bey that one cannot capture the fortress without Ali's forces and demanded that the task of taking Corfu would be delegated to him, along with the money to pay his troops, the artillery, and other munitions. Ali Pasha was not going to move on Corfu other than on condition that the orders to take it would be given to him.⁵ Finally, on seeing that sooner or later Corfu might fall into the hands of the allied squadron and wishing to take his part of the war spoils, the governor of Ioannina agreed to help. Even then, discussing with Ushakov's delegate

⁴ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 306-7.

⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 414-16.

(this was Lieutenant Metaxa, on 8 February 1799 sent to Ali for the second time) his participation in the siege, Ali Pasha tried without much success to stipulate for a reward of half of the enemy artillery and all smaller ships.⁶ Meanwhile, by the end of January- early February 1799 the total number of Ali Pasha's Albanian troops that arrived at Corfu reached 4.250 men and Ushakov could resume the siege works.⁷

Taking into consideration the dramatic lack of supplies for the besieging Russo-Ottoman troops, remaining throughout the winter on the verge of starving, one may guess the situation of the besieged French garrison. A Captain of the French army J. P. Bellaire, who happened to be among the defenders of Corfu, later was mentioning the hunger inside the fortress. Of all the supplies only the grain was stored for about six months, but the besieged had no possibility to properly mill it into flour. Other foodstuffs, like meat, vegetables, rice, as well as the medications, were very limited and soon after the beginning of the siege the garrison ran low on them. There was not a single one horse, mule, donkey or cat left in the city. The rats were being sold at the price of 3 francs per head. During the last month of the siege the people could not buy even the badly milled bread. It was especially difficult in these conditions for more than 400 sick and wounded, who had neither medications nor the proper nutrition.⁸

In early February 1799 a desperate attempt to slip through the allied blockade and to reach the French controlled Ancona had been made by the only ships still able to put out to sea. On the very moonless night of the 5th/ 6th February 1799 (it was the first day of new Moon) the ship of the line "Le Généreux" together with brig "Le

⁶ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 190-91.

⁷ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 111.

⁸ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 363-64.

Rivoli” and one galley, at about ten in the evening set out to sea and, with the sails painted in black and driven by a favourable southern wind, in a few minutes managed to slip through the lines of the allied ships. Metaxa explains this by the lack of coordination between the Russian and the Ottoman commanders, and blames the Ottoman Rear Admiral Fetih Bey, who guarded the northern passage, for reluctance to chase the French. In words of Metaxa, the ship of Fetih Bey was the only one able to compete with “Le Généreux” in terms of speed, and Ushakov sent Metaxa to the Ottoman commander with orders immediately set sails for pursuit of the enemy. Fetih Bey happened to be securely sleeping in his cabin. Woken up by Metaxa, the Ottoman commander said that he may not persuade his aggressively disposed crew, which stays for a long time away from home without provisions and salaries, to follow the orders of the Russian Admiral. Fetih Bey added upon that that “the French are running away and instead of chasing them one should better blow into their sails”.⁹ This breakthrough of the French ships put the Russian Emperor out of temper, and consequently nobody from the squadron, except for Ushakov, was awarded for capture of Corfu.

It was decided to start the assault on the French fortifications on 1 March 1799 (18 February 1799 Old style). The island of Corfu is stretched for about 60 km along the western coast of the Balkan Peninsula, separated from the shore by a channel with width varying from 2 to 23 km. The main city and fortress of Corfu is situated in the middle of the eastern side of the island. On the land it was defended by two forts (Abraham and Saint Saviour) and a redoubt of Saint Roch. From the seaside the fortress was covered by two fortified islets lying at the mouth of the Corfu city port,

⁹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 859; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p.111; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 186-88.

Vido and Lazaretto¹⁰, which were guarding the harbour and approaches from the sea. Ironically, the island of Vido, chosen as the first target of the allied assault¹¹, had been also called *Île de la Paix* by the French. This small islet was about 1 km in diameter, defended by 450 men with General Piveron at command, and its only fortifications were 5 artillery batteries, consisting overall of about 40 guns.¹²

On 1 March (11 Ventôse an VII) at eight in the morning, two cannon shots were made from Ushakov's flagship "Sviatoi Pavel", signalling the beginning of the operation. Bellaire observes that the very moment of the assault happened to be very convenient for the attackers, since some part of the defenders of Vido were away on the bigger island in search of provisions.¹³ All the allied squadron of 25 ships moved on the small islet, and more than 800 guns started bombardment. The Russian ships formed the first line, while the most of the Ottoman ships were kept outside, with the exception of the frigate commanded by Kerim Bey that remained in the first line.¹⁴ Ushakov explained in his letter to Tomara that he intentionally ordered the Ottoman ships to be in the outer line in order to save them, as the Ottoman sailors acting slower than the Russians would dangerously expose their ships to the enemy's bombardment.¹⁵ There was not a place on Vido left unploughed by the allied shells. Not a single tree left unharmed by the metal shower coming from the ships of Ushakov's squadron. The shells were tearing up the trees by the roots and the splinters were bringing death to the French soldiers. After three hours of incessant

¹⁰ It was abandoned by the French soon after the arrival of the allied squadron arrived, on 12 November 1798 (22 brumaire an VII). On 21 November 1798 (1 frimaire an VII) Lazaretto was occupied by the allied squadron that established there a hospital. Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, p. 296.

¹¹ Upon his arrival Ushakov called Vido the "key to Corfu", since from here one could easily perform the bombardment at the most vulnerable point of the Corfu fortress. Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 151.

¹² Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 325-26.

¹³ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, p. 327.

¹⁴ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 210; Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 111.

¹⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 403.

bombardment the guns on all five French batteries were silenced, and at about eleven started the landing of the allied troops.¹⁶

The Russo-Ottoman troops totally numbering 2159 men landed on the island in three places, thus encircling the deafened by the three-hour-long bombardment French soldiers.¹⁷ The French, seeing hopelessness of further resistance began to yield themselves prisoners, though the Ottomans showed no mercy and were killing them immediately. Both Metaxa and Bellaire independently confirm each other's accounts regarding the behaviour of the Ottoman troops. So, Metaxa mentions, that "the Turks having not yet reached the shore were jumping into the sea and, waist deep in water, holding daggers in their mouths and sabres in their hands, rushed at the enemy's battery. The anger of the Turks had no limits; they were capturing the French alive and despite the lamenting cries "pardon"... were dragging them to the shore and severing their heads"¹⁸. Metaxa's account of the events corresponds with that one of Bellaire. The French Captain also speaks about the instant slaughter of the prisoners, who fell into the hands of the Ottoman-Albanian landing party. The severed heads of the French were then brought to the Ottoman Admiral Kadir Bey. Some part of the defenders of the island, seeing the fate of their unfortunate comrades and wishing to avoid it, were throwing themselves into the sea trying desperately to reach the main island. Many of them drowned in the sea.¹⁹

¹⁶ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, p. 328; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 212.

¹⁷ Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, p. 165; Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 212; Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 111.

¹⁸ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 213.

¹⁹ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 328-29; also see: Benedetto Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux nella Reazione Napolitana del 1799* (Napoli, 1895), p.29.

As a result, the Russians had to defend their French enemies from their Ottoman allies. According to Metaxa, the imprisoned French garrison of Vido was placed inside the hollow square formed by the Russian soldiers and sailors. Major Alexei Yurievich Gamen²⁰, one of the commanders of the landing assault, ordered to shoot at those Ottomans who would try to take any French prisoner. Moreover, the lives of many French were saved by the Russian officers, who would give the Ottomans their last money in order to retrieve the prisoners from certain death.²¹ Again, the memoirs of the French infantry Captain correspond with those of the Russian naval Lieutenant. Bellaire speaks of one Russian Major, who gave not only all his money, but also his watch, so that to save life of two more French officers.²² Otherwise, most probably, the Ottoman soldiers looking for reward for the killed enemies would not leave alive a single person who happened to fall into their hands.

By two o'clock in the afternoon the gunfire subsided and the island was under the allied control. About half of the French, defending the island²³ were killed, whereas 422 men were taken prisoners. Of 21 French officers, 15 fell into captivity, including the commander of Vido's defence, General Piveron.²⁴ The assault on the outworks of the main fortress of Corfu, the forts Abraham and Saint Saviour, and the redoubt of Saint Roch took place simultaneously. As Vido was taken, all the might of the fleet artillery, as well as the landing troops, were turned against these fortifications, and by the evening the French lost all of their outworks. During the attacks on Vido and on Corfu the allied casualties were 45 killed and 80 wounded

²⁰ About the personality of Gamen see: Gamen Aleksei Iuryevich, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; Moscow, 1914), Volume 4 "Gaag-Gerbel", pp. 199-200.

²¹ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 213.

²² Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 329-30.

²³ The garrison of Vido, together with reinforcements later sent from Corfu, amounted to 800 men. 'F. Ushakov to Paul I. 4 March (21 February) 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 385.

²⁴ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, p. 216.

among the Russians, 28 killed and 50 wounded among the Ottomans, 33 killed and 82 wounded among the Albanians.²⁵ Now, as the island of Vido and the outer fortifications of Corfu were taken, the allied artillery could easily keep the main fortress under fire.

On the next morning, on 2 March 1799, the commandant of the fortress General Chabot sent his aid-de-camp Grouvel to ask for a 48-hour ceasefire, which was accepted by the allied side. Then, on 3 March 1799 (13 Ventôse an VII), a council of war was held and the defenders of Corfu arrived at the conclusion that to continue the defence of the fortress would be anyway hopeless.²⁶ The garrison suffered from exhaustion, there was no news from the runaway ship “Le Généreux”, the island of Vido was lost, and the outer fortifications fell. It was decided to capitulate.

On 3 March 1799 (20 February 1799 in Russian style and 13 Ventôse an VII according to the French Republican calendar) the belligerents agreed to sign the Act of capitulation of the fortress of Corfu, consisting of 12 articles. On the side of the allies the capitulation was signed by F. F. Ushakov and Kadir Bey, and the citizens Dufour, Varèse, J. Briche and Grouvel put their signatures on the side of the French. The capitulation was then ratified by Commissar General Dubois and General Chabot.²⁷

²⁵ Ibidem

²⁶ Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 337-38.

²⁷ The French text of the Act of Capitulation of Corfu can be found at: Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, pp. 338-44; For the Russian text see: Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 382-85.

In conformity with the terms of surrender, the French would deliver up the fortress together with all its artillery, provisions and other materials to the allies. On the day of capitulation the garrison would march out of the fortress with full honours of war, lay down the arms and the flags, though the officers were permitted to leave their individual weapons. The Corfu garrison would be freed on parole and transported to Toulon at the expense of the allies. All of the French soldiers were to take a pledge not to be at war with the Russian and the Ottoman empires, as well as with their other allies, for the next eighteen months. The French could keep their private property, while the property of the garrison, including the naval vessels, would be taken by the Russians and the Ottomans. General Chabot and his Staff Secretary had the option to be transported whether to Toulon or Ancona. Those inhabitants of Corfu, who would like to leave the island, were given two months to do that. The wounded French could stay on Corfu until their full recovery, whereupon they would also be transported to Toulon.

On 5 March (22 February) 1799 the French garrison of Corfu surrendered. The joint Russo-Ottoman forces occupied Corfu and over the fortress there were lifted the flags of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. On the same day Ushakov and his officers attended the solemn prayer service in the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Spiridon. The Russians were enthusiastically greeted by thousands of local inhabitants, waving the white flags with blue St. Andrew's cross, which was the Russian naval ensign. Metaxa states that all the streets and houses were covered by the Russian flags. Should this fact be mentioned only by the Russian officer of the Greek origin there still would be some chance that the event was somewhat exaggerated, but Bellaire completely confirms Metaxa's words, speaking about the

houses, decorated by the “Muscovite flags”.²⁸ As for the surrendered Corfu garrison, in three weeks, on 28 March (17 March, Old Style) 1799 the French prisoners were sent to Toulon on the cruiser ship (*akat*) “Sviataia Irina”, brigantines “Fenix” and “Alexander”, and seven merchant ships, all under command of Captain Lieutenant Vlito.²⁹

Now when the enemy was defeated there started some misunderstandings between the Russian and the Ottoman commanders concerning the trophies of war. Ushakov explained the situation in his letter to Tomara, dated 16 March 1799 (5 March 1799, Old style).³⁰ Russian Admiral accused his Ottoman colleagues of being too selfish and avaricious about all the resources found in the fortress. Ushakov complained to the ambassador that he often needed a great patience in communication with the Ottoman naval commanders, which at times was becoming a sort of punishment for the Russian Admiral, making him sick.

Throughout the whole campaign, wrote Ushakov, he was trying to protect the Ottoman ships and kept them as far as possible from real danger, all the more so that the Ottomans were themselves not much eager to take risks (“я их берегу, как красненькое яичко, и в опасность, где бы потеряли, не впускаю, да и сами они к тому не охотники...”).³¹ The further argument of Ushakov was that during the attack on Vido and Corfu the active part belonged to the Russian ships and their crews, while the Ottomans in general remained in the outer line, the majority of the Ottoman ships not being engaged in the direct combat. It was the Russian ships that

²⁸ Metaxa, *Zapiski*, pp. 219-20; Bellaire, *Précis des opérations*, p. 346.

²⁹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 859, p. 861.

³⁰ ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 405-407.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 405.

received the most damage and spent more munitions (gunpowder, cannon balls and bombs). For example, the Russian squadron more than the Ottoman one required the ship timber, in order to repair the broken masts and yards. In the same way, the Russian squadron needed more munitions to replenish, since in combat it had spent more. The Ottomans, however, would not like to listen to any arguments and wished simply to share all resources and munitions found on Corfu equally. So, concluded Ushakov, when the Russian crews were taking only the necessary materials and munitions, the Ottomans began to complain that the Russians unjustly take everything. For any trifle issue one had to engage in long arguments with the Ottomans, which could last for five hours. In the end of his letter Ushakov asked Tomara to explain all this to the Porte, so that the Ottoman side would stop making such miserly calculations.³²

Similar arguments had been expressed by Ushakov in his letter to Kadir Bey, the commander of the Ottoman squadron.³³ Asking Kadir Bey to organize with the Ottoman ships the patrolling of the Northern and the Southern sides of the island, Ushakov again emphasized the fact that the Ottoman squadron in general did not participate in the active operations, except for the frigate of Captain Kerim. For that reason the Russian ships, being damaged in the battle, required a repair and at the moment there were no ships in the Russian squadron able for service. Meanwhile, many vessels of all sorts were passing uninspected through the Corfu channel, and the undamaged Ottoman ships could help with patrolling of the sea. Then Ushakov, coming directly to the point, touched upon the subject of using and sharing the captured resources. Like in his letter to Tomara, Ushakov wrote to Kadir Bey that the

³² Ibidem, p. 406.

³³ 'F. F. Ushakov to Kadir Bey, 27 / 16 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 436-438.

Russian squadron needed more materials to repair the ships damaged in the battle, as well as more cannon balls and gun powder. In this situation, the claims of the Ottoman side to share everything equally ignored the real needs of both squadrons. Moreover, added Ushakov, it was also in the interests of his Ottoman allies that the Russian ships would be repaired.

Even more serious disagreements occurred between Ushakov and the Governor of Ioannina Tepedelenli Ali Pasha.³⁴ Nurturing the hope for some territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the Ionian Islands, Ali Pasha at the beginning of the campaign was not only too reluctant to help the allied squadron, but also entered into negotiations with the French. Moreover, Ali Pasha made the task of Ushakov's forces more difficult by deliberately delaying the sending of the necessary reinforcements and provisions throughout the end of 1798 and beginning of 1799. After the capture of Corfu, however, Ali tried his best to participate in sharing the pie gained without his direct and active involvement.

Ushakov pointed out that instead of the promised 6 - 7 thousand men Ali Pasha sent by early February the total of 2 – 2.5 thousand, lacking artillery and not supported financially. These troops eventually were used only to fend off the periodical raids made by the garrison of Corfu during the siege and for guard duties. On seeing that Ali Pasha was not going to send any additional auxiliary forces, the Russian Admiral decided to take the fortress from the seaside using the ships of the Russo-Ottoman squadron. When the assault on Vido and the outworks of Corfu started, the bulk of the Albanian forces of Ali Pasha refused to join the attack. On the

³⁴ See: 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799' *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 403-405; 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799' *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 414-16; 'F. F. Ushakov to Kadir Bey, 23 / 12 March 1799' *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 423-24.

other hand, the Albanians of Ali Pasha lend some assistance at the storming of the outwork of Saint Saviour³⁵. In view of Ali Pasha's previous and present tricky behaviour Ushakov did not wish by any means to accept Ali inside the fortress or to share with him the war trophies. The Russian Admiral proposed Kadir Bey to pay Ali's troops, thank them for their service and to send them away, since after the capitulation of Corfu there was no need in their help any more.

The indignation of Ushakov at Ali Pasha's intentions was too obvious: "Why and by what right can Ali Pasha participate in the sharing and in the occupation of the fortresses",³⁶ "... as for Ali Pasha, I do not accept him to share and occupy the fortresses together with us [meaning the Russo-Ottoman squadron; V. M.], and he has no right to claim that".³⁷ Since the fortress was taken mainly due to the efforts of his own soldiers, and the Act of Corfu's capitulation had been signed by the Russian and the Ottoman commanders, argued Ushakov, the participation of Ali Pasha in sharing the captured resources was out of question. It is interesting that the Ottomans themselves advised the Russian side to keep Ali Pasha away from Corfu. *Kapudan Pasha* (High Admiral and the Minister of the Ottoman Marine) Küçük Hüseyin Pasha, in his conversation with the Russian ambassador Tomara, said that Ali Pasha had always been one of the most unfaithful pashas, always was a friend of the French and that Ali Pasha's troops should by no means be accepted inside the fortress of Corfu. Küçük Hüseyin Pasha was quite familiar with the behaviour of Ali Pasha, as during the siege of Vidin (against another rebellious Ottoman warlord Osman

³⁵ According to Ushakov, the redoubt of Saint Saviour was attacked by not more than 200 Albanians and about 700 Ushakov's men. 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 10 April / 30 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 446.

³⁶ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799'. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 404.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 405.

Pazvantoğlu) it was impossible to make the troops of Ali Pasha to approach the fortress at a cannon-shot distance.³⁸

Ali Pasha's impudence indeed knew no bounds. Already after the capture of Corfu had been completed Ali Pasha continued to "help", sending the detachments of the Albanian troops in order to increase his own military presence on the island, and to show post factum the larger number of his forces taking part in the siege than it was actually at the time of assault.³⁹ This was not, though, the biggest trick of Ioannina's governor. As the fortress was taken, Ali Pasha detained for some time the messenger of Ushakov that would inform the Porte about this long-awaited event and sent instead his own messenger. The latter presented at the Sultan's court Ali Pasha's own version of the events, as if it was Ali Pasha's forces that took both Vido and the redoubt of Saint Saviour, having also captured one French bombard-vessel. There was also the rumour that Ali Pasha was opening the messages sent to Constantinople from the allied squadron, thus leaving the Russian commander only guessing whether the original messages remained untouched after such censorship. As a result, the Porte learned about the fall of Corfu first from Ali Pasha's courier whereupon the fur-coats were sent to Ali Pasha's war commanders and the order was issued to grant Ali Pasha the French bombard-vessel, "captured" by him.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, all the French vessels and the island of Vido were obviously taken by the Russo-Ottoman squadron and Ali had no relation to this victory. Ushakov was outraged.

³⁸ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 12 / 1 April 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. 6 ob.

³⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 16 / 5 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 415.

⁴⁰ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 10 April / 30 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 446-47.

Consequently the issue became clear and the Porte changed its decision, refusing Ali Pasha's right to have any of the captured French vessels. Nevertheless, even then Ali Pasha continued to claim from Ushakov both the vessels and some trophy materials, considering and calling all these as belonging to him, Ali Pasha. He also tried to interfere into the affairs of the island of Santa Maura, demanding from its inhabitants, called by him the subjects of the Porte, a tribute of seven hundred piastres. In reply to Ali Pasha's claims Ushakov agreed to transfer to Ali one smaller ship taken at Vido, for it was reported to belong earlier to the Ioannina Governor. All other claims of Ali Pasha had been turned down.⁴¹

As the enemy was in the end ousted from the Ionian Islands and the archipelago passed under control of the allies, there came the time for awards. For the capture of Corfu the Sultan sent Ushakov a diamond *çelenk*⁴², a valuable decoration for headdress used in the Ottoman Empire as a sign of special distinction, along with a sable fur-coat and 1 thousand piastres. Apart from that, 3.5 thousand piastres were sent for distribution among other members of Ushakov's squadron.⁴³ The commander of the Ottoman squadron Kadir Bey was presented in the name of Paul I a diamond snuff-box.⁴⁴ Finally, for successful completion of the Ionian campaign Vice Admiral Ushakov was given a rank of Admiral.⁴⁵

⁴¹ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 29 / 18 May 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 517.

⁴² The similar *chelengk* had earlier been awarded to a British Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson for his victory over the French fleet in the battle of the Nile (1-2 August 1798).

⁴³ Moskovskie Vedomosti, 25 / 14 May 1799; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p.113.

⁴⁴ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p.113.

⁴⁵ 'G. G. Kushelev to F. F. Ushakov, 5 April / 25 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 444.

6.2. Italian Campaign

At the same time when the joint Russo-Ottoman forces of Ushakov were busy in the Ionian Archipelago, some 300 kilometres across the Adriatic Sea to the West from Corfu another member of the Second anti-French coalition was experiencing hard times. The royal family of the Kingdom of Naples belonged to the House of Bourbon, and, what is more, the Neapolitan Queen Maria Carolina was a daughter of the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa and a sister of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette of France. Quite naturally, since early 1790-s Naples found itself among the enemies of the French Republic. In October 1796, though, the Kingdom of Naples concluded a peace treaty with France.⁴⁶ Along with that, on 19 May 1798 Naples signed a defensive treaty with Austria,⁴⁷ and by the end of 1798 opted to join the Second coalition.⁴⁸

Elated by the news of Nelson's victory at Aboukir and that of the entrance of the Russo-Ottoman naval squadron into the Mediterranean, the Kingdom of Naples hastened to break its peace with the French Republic and to use France's difficult situation for its own advantage. Neapolitan army of 15 thousand men under the command of Austrian General Mack in November 1798 invaded the territory of the French-controlled Roman Republic, and on 29 November, with the King of Naples Ferdinand IV at the head, entered Rome. By middle of December, though, the

⁴⁶ Georg Friedrich Martens, *Recueil des principaux traités d'alliance, de paix, de trêve, de neutralité, de commerce, de limites, d'échange etc.* (Göttingen, 1800), Vol. 6, pp. 636-39.

⁴⁷ Guillaume de Garden, comte. *Histoire générale des traités de paix et autres transactions principales entre toutes les puissances de l'Europe depuis la paix de Westphalie* (Paris, 1848-1887). Vol. 6, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁸ The Kingdom of Naples concluded the alliance treaties, in chronological order, with Russia (in St. Petersburg, 29 November 1798), Garden, *Histoire générale*, pp. 80-81; Britain (in Naples, 1 December 1798), *Garden*, op. cit, p. 81; and the Ottoman Empire (in Constantinople, 21 January 1799), Gabriel Noradounghian, (ed.) *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (4 vols.; Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. 2, pp. 32-34.

Neapolitans just as hastily started to retreat.⁴⁹ On 13 December the French forces of General Championnet retook Rome again. Eventually, the King of Naples and his family abandoned even their own capital and on the night of 31 December 1798 secretly left for Sicily, seeking a refuge in the insular part of their possessions. In this way at the beginning of 1799 the royal court of the Neapolitan kingdom settled in Palermo, and in Naples at the point of the French bayonets was established Parthenopean Republic (23 January 1799), de facto yet another Italian client state of the revolutionary France.

Newly created republic never enjoyed the support of the wider Neapolitan population. On the contrary, the mainland provinces of the Neapolitan Kingdom revolted against the government of the Parthenopean Republic. In addition, the Naples was being blockaded by the British fleet and the rather weak French forces in Naples could not be reinforced by Paris in view of the hostilities going on in the Northern Italy. In this situation Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo, an authorised representative of the King, was sent to Calabria to incite the religious Calabrian peasantry to rise against the French in favour of the monarchy. On 8 February 1799 he landed on the other side of the Strait of Messina, and started to gather the local peasantry into his “army of the Holy Faith” (*Armata della Santa Fede*).⁵⁰ In a few months this peasant

⁴⁹ Garden, *Histoire générale*, pp. 83-84; Constance H. D. Giglioli, *Naples in 1799* (London, 1903), pp. 83-87. Giglioli also quotes an indeed witty and satirical verse concerning the speedy flight of Ferdinand IV from Rome:

Con soldati infiniti	From his native coast
Si mosse da' suoi liti	With an infinite host
Verso Roma bravando	On Rome marched swaggering
Il re don Ferdinando	Don Ferdinand the King :
E in pochissimi di	And ere many days were sped
Venne, vide e fuggi	He came, he saw, he fled

⁵⁰ Gutteridge, H.C. (ed.) *Nelson and the Neapolitan Jacobins – Documents Relating to the Suppression of the Jacobin Revolution at Naples, June 1799*. (London, 1903), p. XXXI.

army turned into a serious force to be reckoned with, although it was irregular and much unruly.

Referring to his alliance treaty with Russia, Ferdinand IV asked Paul I to send some force to the Southern Italy to help free it from the French and to restore monarchy in Naples. The similar assistance by virtue of the alliance treaty was also expected to be received from the Porte. Trying to gain time Ferdinand sent his special messenger Chevalier Antonio Micheroux⁵¹ directly to Corfu to meet with the allied admirals, asking them to send a part of the allied fleet to the Italian shores as soon as possible. Micheroux visited Corfu twice, at the end of February – early March and in mid-April 1799, holding negotiations with Ushakov and Kadir Bey.⁵²

According to the report of Tomara to Paul I, the Russian Emperor as early as 15 March issued a special instruction to his ambassador in Istanbul to persuade the Ottoman Ministry to send certain amount of the Ottoman troops to Italy.⁵³ In other words, the initial request of the Neapolitan court concerned not specifically the squadron of Ushakov, but the Ottoman and Russian military help in general. In practice, however, it was only Ushakov's squadron which could be immediately used for that purpose. Tomara pointed out this fact in his report to the Tsar, saying that there were certain difficulties in terms of sending a strong corps of Albanian troops to Italy. Such an enterprise could not be realised, not because it would be hard to convince the Porte, but in view of the impossibility of making sure that this measure

⁵¹ Antonio Micheroux was a Neapolitan ambassador in Venice until the fall of the Republic in 1797.

⁵² First time Micheroux arrived at Corfu on 19 February, the second time Micheroux came on 9 April. Benedetto Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux nella Reazione Napolitana del 1799* (Napoli, 1895), pp. 9-12, 32; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 479.

⁵³ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 April, 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. 44.

would be carried out quickly. Besides, the transport ships were not enough. Tomara concluded that the King of the Two Sicilies, in fact, needs help to be prompt rather than strong. For that reason, when the Neapolitan ambassador Count Ludolf addressed the Porte with a request of sending an auxiliary Ottoman corps to Italy. Tomara supported his colleague by asking not an auxiliary corps, but suggesting that it would be most advisable to send to the Southern Italy the Ottoman naval squadron jointly with the Black Sea squadron of Ushakov, strengthened by sufficient number of Albanians suitable for landing operations.⁵⁴

It appeared not an easy task to convince the Porte into sending its naval forces to the Italian shores. Moreover, since the alliance treaty bound the Russian Black Sea squadron to protect the Ottoman state, to send Ushakov's forces away from the Ottoman coastline as far as Sicily and Sardinia could spark the protests of the Ottoman side. Nevertheless, the Porte with the utmost reluctance agreed to send its squadron together with that one of Admiral Ushakov to Italy.⁵⁵ As for the Russian side, as early as 17 March 1799 Paul I had authorised Ushakov to sail towards the shores of Sicily and Sardinia. In addition, in order to compensate for the absence in the Ottoman territorial waters of those Ushakov's ships, which were assigned to move to Italy, Paul I ordered to transfer three best ships and one frigate from the Baltic squadron of Vice Admiral Makarov, based at the time in Portsmouth, to the Mediterranean.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibidem, f. f. 44- 45 ob.

⁵⁵ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 April, 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. 85.

⁵⁶ 'Paul I to P. K. Kartsov, 6 April (26 March) 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 444. The squadron of Kartsov (the ships of the line "Isidor", "Asia", "Pobeda" and frigate "Pospeshniy") departed from Portsmouth on 2 June 1799 and arrived at Palermo on 14 August 1799. Kartsov had scarcely put to the sea as there came another order of Pavel not to send Kartsov to the Mediterranean. Vice Admiral Makarov reported, though, that the squadron of Kartsov sailed away. Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.3, p. 267.

Tomara chose not to inform the Porte about all the details concerning the decision of the Emperor to strengthen his naval forces in the Mediterranean with four ships of the Baltic fleet. The thread of Tomara's thoughts was obvious. First, the Ottoman could get worried about the growing of the Russian maritime presence in the Mediterranean. Second, upon learning that some additional Russian ships were sent to help Ushakov, the Porte could reconsider its earlier decision and refuse to send its own fleet to the shores of Italy. The Russian ambassador slightly changed the key points of the issue, stating that should the absence of the ships sent to Italy for some unforeseen reason last rather long and in the meantime the situation require reinforcing the fleets remaining in the Ottoman territorial waters, in that case the absent ships would be changed temporarily with those from the squadron of Vice Admiral Makarov.⁵⁷

On 29 April 1799, the orders were sent from the Ottoman government to Kadir Bey, prescribing him to strengthen his serviceable ships' crews with Albanians and to follow Ushakov towards the shores of Italy.⁵⁸ Notably, the Ottoman squadron was sent to Italy not so much for the help to the Neapolitan kingdom as in view of the Ottoman state's own interests, which were not allow the French to occupy the part of Italy adjacent to the possessions of the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁹ The Neapolitan court, initially wishing to get reinforcements in form of the Albanian troops, soon rejected this plan, having learned from Chevalier Micheroux about the unruly conduct of the Albanians during the siege and attack of Corfu. Thus, in Naples (or rather in

⁵⁷ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 April, 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. f. 85-86.

⁵⁸ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 12 / 1 May, 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. 1.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, f. 1 ob.

Palermo, for the capital of the kingdom was occupied by the French) they were waiting for the arrival of the Russo-Ottoman squadron of Ushakov, carrying the landing forces.⁶⁰ In order to kindle the interest of the Ottoman side in participating in the expedition Tomara among other things advised Ushakov at the beginning of campaign to guard the Ottoman forces from any kind of failure. Then, as the first operations of the Ottomans in Italy appear successful, this might increase the number of the Ottoman soldiers wishing to be appointed by the Porte to fight there.⁶¹

Already in mid-April Ushakov, himself staying in Corfu, forwarded two naval detachments to Italy. On 13 April 1799 two Russian frigates (one of 50 and another of 36 cannons; Commander Sorokin), one Ottoman corvette, and one Tripolitan brig, along with the Neapolitan corvette “Fortuna” on which sailed Chevalier Micheroux, were to move towards Brindisi. The squadron of Sorokin carried 250 Russian soldiers, large number of armed marines, and 10 field guns on its board.⁶² Another detachment, consisting of one Russian schooner (Captain Maksheev) and four Ottoman gunboats sailed to Otranto.⁶³

The letter of the President of the Province of Lecce Don Tommaso Luperto, dated 19 April 1799 and also signed by the Sicilian Consul General in Corfu Don Leonardo Grattagliano, sent to the Russian embassy in Istanbul, explains some circumstances of the presence of the Russo-Ottoman naval forces in the Italian

⁶⁰ Ibidem, f. 2.

⁶¹ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 April, 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 890, f. f. 96-97. “... Пишу я к Вице-Адмиралу Ушакову, дабы он назначаемые ныне Портою турецкие войска при начальном оных употреблении сколько возможно предостерег от какой-либо неудачи. Когда же первые подвиги турков в Италии будут успешны то сие заохотит к следованию туда и других чрез то неминуемо умножится охотниками число войск Портою ныне назначаемое”.

⁶² Maresca, *Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux*, p. 63.

⁶³ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 862; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 480-81.

waters in mid-April 1799. So, according to Tommaso Luperto, Brindisi passed under the allied control on “last Wednesday”, which should be 17 April 1799. At the appearance of the allied fleet (obviously, this refers to the squadron of Sorokin) the French fled, even leaving their tables just prepared for dinner untouched. The escape was so fast that they had no time to take away any money gathered from the local inhabitants. The French garrison of Brindisi nailed the cannons, dumped the powder into the sea and ran away to Barletta.⁶⁴ Relying on information provided by Luperto, the fleet of Sorokin stayed a few days in Brindisi, for the President of the Lecce Province was about to leave from Otranto to Brindisi, where he had been waited by the Russian commander (*fra momenti parto per Brindisi ovemi attende il Comandante Russo*).⁶⁵ Then Sorokin returned to Corfu, to get there additional reinforcements for his squadron. He arrived at Corfu on 24 April 1799, and was sent by Ushakov again to Brindisi, this time joined by two more Russian frigates, a schooner, five Ottoman gunboats and a Neapolitan frigate.⁶⁶ By early May Sorokin was back in Brindisi.⁶⁷

Also, as it was mentioned before, one Russian schooner and four Ottoman gunboats were sent to Otranto.⁶⁸ Clearly it was these ships (*cinque legni, quattro turchi ed un russo*) seen by Tommaso Luperto in Otranto in mid-April. Luperto addressed the Ottoman commander Ahmet (*Acmet il Capitano*), asking him to stay in

⁶⁴ ‘Letter of Don Tommaso Luperto, the President of the Province of Lecce. 19 April 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. f. 9-10; The fact that the French fled having nailed their cannons, is mentioned also by Tomara in his report to the Tsar: ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 12 / 1 May, 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. 2 ob.

⁶⁵ ‘Letter of Don Tommaso Luperto, the President of the Province of Lecce. 19 April 1799’ Ibidem, f. 10.

⁶⁶ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 863.

⁶⁷ Miliutin gives the date of Sorokin’s arrival to Brindisi as 4 May 1799, Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, p. 265; The same event at Arkas is said to happen on 7 May 1799. Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 863.

⁶⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 481.

Otranto with his ship and 200 men. Captain Ahmet accepted the request of Luperto, though wanted the latter to write to Kadir Bey.⁶⁹ This explains, why Ushakov in his dispatch to Sorokin dated 18 April 1799 speaks of a schooner of Captain-Lieutenant Maksheev and only three Ottoman gunboats, instead of four, sent to reinforce the squadron of Sorokin.⁷⁰ The fourth Ottoman gunboat, that one of Captain Ahmet, apparently should have stayed in Otranto. Other ships proceeded from Otranto to Brindisi to join Sorokin.

To maintain order, Sorokin left Captain Lieutenant Maksheev with one schooner in Brindisi and on 10 May 1799 continued his way along the coast, moving to the North. On 14 May Sorokin came to Bari and landed there a force of 150 men with 4 field guns.⁷¹ After staying for three days in Bari, Sorokin continued his way, having left behind the frigate “Sviatoi Nikolai” (Commander Marin). In a few days “Sviatoi Nikolai” joined the squadron again.⁷² On 17 May, in the evening, Sorokin dropped the anchor near Barletta, left there frigate “Sviatoi Grigorii Velikiia Armenii” (Commander Shostak) and sailed to Manfredonia, to take it on 19 May.⁷³ Now the littoral being occupied, Sorokin at the suggestion of Micheroux decided to send a detachment of his marines further inland.⁷⁴

On 20 May there were landed 390 men with 4 fieldguns under the command of the Russian officer of Irish descent Captain Lieutenant Henry Baillie, or, as he was

⁶⁹ “*Ho pregato Acmet il Capitano per rimanere qui col suo legno e 200 uomini. Ha aderito gentilmente alle mie preghiere, ma ha voluto che io ne scrivessi, come fò di corrispondenza, a codesto Generale Kadir Bey...*” ‘Letter of Don Tommaso Luperto, the President of the Province of Lecce. 19 April 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. 9.

⁷⁰ ‘F. F. Ushakov to A. A. Sorokin, 18 / 7 April 1799’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 481.

⁷¹ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 482.

⁷² Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 863.

⁷³ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 483.

⁷⁴ ‘A. A. Sorokin to F. F. Ushakov, 29 / 18 May 1799’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 5.

called in Russia, Genrikh Genrikhovich Baillie. The Russo-Ottoman detachment was accompanied by Micheroux. Baillie marched without delay on Foggia, and on the next day entered it.⁷⁵ At this point Sorokin established communication with Cardinal Ruffo, the leader of the Neapolitan irregular peasant army, fanatically devoted to the Church and Monarchy, as much uncontrollable as it was numerous (about 30 thousand men)⁷⁶. It was decided to join forces of Baillie (strengthened up to 511 men and 6 fieldguns) with those of Cardinal Ruffo at the town of Ariano, halfway in between of the Adriatic coast and Naples. The group of 84 Ottoman soldiers commanded by Captain Ahmet, the same which stayed in Otranto at the request of Don Tommaso Luperto, also arrived to Ariano.⁷⁷ All the allies gathered in Ariano by 5 June, and in three days continued their march on Naples.⁷⁸

The territory held then by the Parthenopean republic was in practice reduced to the city of Naples and only a few other towns. The Neapolitan countryside had always been a mainstay of monarchism, while in Naples proper the Republican and French troops remained in the city fortresses of Castel Nuovo, Castel dell'Ovo and Sant' Elmo. In addition, the smaller French garrisons were in Capua (25 km north of Naples) and Gaeta (about 80 km northwest of Naples, along the Tyrrhenian coast). When still in Foggia, Micheroux received information that the number of the French remaining in Naples was very scarce. In the castle of Sant' Elmo there were from 300 to 800 men, and, aside from that, in the vicinity of the city operated the mobile column of 200 men. 400 French soldiers stayed in Capua and 200 in Gaeta.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 483; Excerpt from report of Admiral Ushakov to Paul I dated 31 / 18 May 1799. *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, 31 / 20 July 1799.

⁷⁶ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 473.

⁷⁷ Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux*, p. 171.

⁷⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 485; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 863.

⁷⁹ Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux*, p. 132.

Moving through Avellino (about 45 km northeast of Naples) and Nola (20 km northeast of Naples) and having taken Portici (8 km southeast of Naples) the joint Russo-Ottoman-Neapolitan forces on 13 June 1799 came up to the capital of the Neapolitan kingdom. In the vanguard of the allied army marched the detachment of Captain Baillie, consisting of 600 men and 6 field guns.⁸⁰ At this point other royal militias occupied Salerno (45 km southeast), Teano (40 km northwest) and Sessa (about 45 km northwest).⁸¹ The battle for the city and in the city continued throughout 13-15 June 1799. During these days Naples became a scene of anarchy, witnessing horror, lootings and endless bloodshed. Unruly peasant mobs of Cardinal Ruffo, as well as 80 Ottoman soldiers of Captain Ahmet could not be stopped from looting of the city.⁸²

The last remnants of the Republican forces of Naples took shelter in the three fortresses, which were situated within the limits of the city, namely Castel Sant'Elmo (the French garrison of General Méjan), Castel Nuovo and Castel dell'Ovo (both defended by the Neapolitan republicans). On 16 June 1799 the allies started to prepare for the siege of the last strongholds of the French republicanism in the Southern Italy. Quite soon, the garrisons of Castel Nuovo and Castel dell'Ovo capitulated, on condition that the defenders would come out with all military honours and then they would be transported to Toulon, the Italian republicans were guaranteed the personal safety. The treaty of capitulation was signed by the French

⁸⁰ There were initially 511 men in Baillie's detachment, and consequently Baillie received reinforcement of 95 men. Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.3, p. 324.

⁸¹ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 622; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 863.

⁸² Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux*, p. 195.

on 21 June, by Cardinal Ruffo, the Russian and the Ottoman representatives on 22 June, and by the representative of the British side, Captain Foote, on 23 June.⁸³

On the next day after the capitulation had been signed, the squadron of a British Rear Admiral Nelson (14 British and 4 Portugal ships) arrived to the Bay of Naples.⁸⁴ Nelson demanded unconditional capitulation and refused to recognise the concluded treaty. At the orders of Nelson all the republicans were arrested and the trials and executions lasted in Naples for weeks. Also, continued the siege of Sent' Elmo, the last fortress of Naples remaining in the hands of the French.⁸⁵ In July 1799 the Neapolitan kingdom was completely cleared of the French. To maintain order on the streets of the city, the troops of Captain Baillie remained all the summer of 1799 in Naples.⁸⁶

On the other side of the Apennine Peninsula, near Ancona and along the Adriatic coast, operated another part of the allied Russo-Ottoman forces of Ushakov. Upon the request of the Austrian government through the Russian ambassador in Vienna, communicated in early April 1799 to Ushakov, the allied fleet was to watch over the main French base in the Adriatics, the port of Ancona. Besides, Ushakov's forces were expected to guard the sea communications in the area in order to assure the supply lines of the Austrian armies in the Northern Italy.⁸⁷

⁸³ Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, p. 206.

⁸⁴ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, pp. 626-27.

⁸⁵ 'The report of Ushakov to Paul I, dated 6 July / 24 June 1799', about the operations near Naples has been published in: *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, 29 / 17 August 1799.

⁸⁶ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 868-69.

⁸⁷ 'A. K. Razumovskii to F. F. Ushakov, 3 April / 23 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 439-40; Also see: 'A. V. Suvorov to F. F. Ushakov, 3 April / 23 March 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, p. 441.

Ushakov ordered Rear Admiral Pavel Vasilievich Pustoshkin⁸⁸ to go patrol the Adriatic Sea and blockade Ancona.⁸⁹ For this mission Pustoshkin was given 6 Russian and 5 Ottoman ships: 3 ships of the line (two Russian: “Sviatoi Mikhail”, “Simeon i Anna”; and one Ottoman of Captain Ibrahim), 4 frigates (two Russian: “Navarkhiia Vozneseniie Gospodnie”, “Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa”; and two Ottoman, Captains Zeynel and Süleyman), one Ottoman corvette (Captain Hüseyin) and three dispatch vessels (two Russian and one Ottoman). Moreover, the squadron of Pustoshkin was joined by one Portuguese vessel on which some members of the House of Bourbon were to be transported to Trieste. While the whole squadron was to move towards Ancona, two Russian frigates (“Navarkhiia Vozneseniie Gospodnie” and “Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa”) received special orders to follow and protect the Portuguese ship until its mission would be completed. On 12 May 1799 Pustoshkin sailed off from Corfu.⁹⁰ In a few days the Russo-Ottoman naval forces appeared in the coastal waters of Ancona.⁹¹ After his arrival Pustoshkin attempted to send a parlementaire to demand the surrender of the fortress, but the French would not allow him to approach.⁹² At this point the only more or less significant event became the capture of a courier ship “La Constance” sailing under the Spanish flag by an Ottoman vessel from Pustoshkin’s squadron in the vicinity of Ancona on 17 May 1799.⁹³

⁸⁸ P. V. Pustoshkin was soon, on 20 May 1799, promoted to the rank of Vice Admiral. Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, p. 210; I. Sokolov, Pustoshkin Pavel Vasilievich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1910), Volume 15 “Pritvitz-Reis”, pp. 147-48.

⁸⁹ ‘F. F. Ushakov to P. V. Pustoshkin, 9 May / 28 April, 1799’ *Materialy dlia istorii russkogo flota (MIRF)* (17 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1865-1904), Vol. 16, pp. 360-61.

⁹⁰ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 1, pp. 485- 86; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 864.

⁹¹ Mangourit, a French official who happened to stay in Ancona during the siege, says that the Russo-Ottoman fleet appeared on 17 May 1799 (28 Floréal an VII). Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit, *Défense d’Ancone* (2 vols.; Paris, 1802), Vol. 1, p. 125; ‘P. V. Pustoshkin to A. V. Suvorov, 22 / 11 May 1799’ Report about the arrival of the squadron of Vice Admiral Pustoshkin to Ancona. Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 4-5.

⁹² Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 1, p. 486.

⁹³ Mangourit, *Défense d’Ancone*, Vol. 1, p. 137; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 864.

In order to make a reconnaissance of the enemy's positions and to replenish the fresh water supply the squadron of Pustoshkin on 23 May 1799 at ten in the morning raised the anchor and tried to make a probative landing about 9,5 kilometers (6 miles) to the north of Ancona. The 200 men of the landing party of Captain Chebyshev were driven back with the loss of a few men.⁹⁴ Then the attempt of landing of 600-men strong Russo-Ottoman detachment was made on 25 May at Fano (about 50 km along the coast to the north of Ancona), also brought no positive results for the allies.⁹⁵ Thereupon, Pustoshkin decided to restock his supplies in Porto Quieto in Istria and on 6 June 1799 returned to blockade Ancona again.⁹⁶

By this time Pustoshkin learned that the Austrian forces advancing from the north took hold of Ravenna, Cesenatico and Rimini (respectively, about 140 km, 115 km and 90 km north of Ancona), while Pesaro (a sea port, situated at about 60 km north of Ancona) was taken by the local Italian rebel forces of 33-year old General Lahoz. For that reason on 10 June 1799 Pustoshkin decided to disembark at Pesaro a landing party of 200 men (100 Russian grenadiers and 100 Ottomans) with three cannons, under command of Major Alexei Yurievich Gamen, one of the commanders of the allied assault on the Island of Vido during the Ionian campaign, who only three weeks ago celebrated his 26th birthday.⁹⁷ The landing was to be covered by the Ottoman corvette of Captain Hüseyin and Russian brig of Lieutenant Makar Ivanovich Ratmanov, then, like Major Gamen, also only 26 years old and

⁹⁴ Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 1, p. 146.

⁹⁵ Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 1, pp. 147-48.

⁹⁶ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 486; Excerpt from report of Admiral Ushakov to Paul I dated 5 July / 24 June 1799. *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, 28 / 17 August 1799.

⁹⁷ Gamen Aleksei Iuryevich, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; Moscow, 1914), Volume 4 "Gaag-Gerbel", p. 199; Gamen Aleksei Iuryevich, *Voennaia entsiklopediia* (18 Vols.; St. Petersburg, 1911-1915), Vol. 7, p.171.

consequently the person whose name would be immortalised on the world's geographical map at least four times in three different oceans, the Arctic, the Pacific and the Indian.⁹⁸

In Pesaro the Russo-Ottoman detachment joined forces with the rebels of General Lahoz and on 12 June at six in the morning marched on Fano, where arrived at noon. The attack was supported by the fire from the sea, made by the brig of Lieutenant Ratmanov, the Ottoman frigate of Captain Zeynel, and a few smaller vessels. By 3 p.m. the French abandoned the fortress of Fano. During the battle, according to the report of Major Gamen, the Russian troops had no casualties at all, while among the Ottomans there were 1 killed and 4 wounded.⁹⁹ Gamen in his another report to Pustoshkin also mentioned that at the entrance into the town the Ottomans together with the locals pillaged some houses, which belonged to the Jacobins. At that, it was the locals who were the driving force of the marauding, stopped at the orders of the Russian commander.¹⁰⁰

Then Pustoshkin sent to Major Gamen the new reinforcement of 130 Russians and 50 Ottomans with 1 cannon, commanded by Lieutenant (*poruchik*) Apollonov,

⁹⁸ Four years after the Ushakov's Italian campaign Ratmanov would take part in the first ever Russian around-the-world sailing expedition of Captain Lieutenant Adam Johann Ritter (Ivan Fedorovich) von Krusenstern (1803-1806), in capacity of a senior officer on the frigate "Nadezhda" (Hope). Nowadays the name of Ratmanov can be found on the world's geographical map at least four times. First, the Russian island of Big Diomedea, also known as Ratmanov Island, is situated in the very middle of the Bering Strait on the Russian-American border and is the easternmost point of Russia. Second, there is the Cape of Ratmanov on the Pacific coast of the Island of Sakhalin. Third, there is also the Cape of Ratmanov on the Yuzhny Island of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago in Arctic Ocean. Fourth, the easternmost point of the French island of Kerguelen in the Southern Indian Ocean also bears Ratmanov's name, Cap Ratmanoff. About the personality of Ratmanov see: Ratmanov Makar Ivanovich, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1910), Volume 15 "Pritvitz-Reis", pp. 496-97; Ratmanov Makar Ivanovich, *Voennii Entsiklopedicheskii Leksikon* (14 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1837-1850), Vol. 11, pp. 102-104.

⁹⁹ 'A. Iu. Gamen to P. V. Pustoshkin, 13 / 2 June 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁰ 'A. Iu. Gamen to P. V. Pustoshkin, 14 / 3 June 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 13.

and ordered to move from Fano further towards the town of Senigallia (about 30 km north of Ancona). On 18 June Senigallia was taken as well. The casualties of the Russo-Ottoman force were 3 killed (2 Russians and 1 Ottoman) and 18 wounded (14 Russians, including Captain Chebyshev and 4 Ottomans).¹⁰¹ Mangourit in his memoirs calls attention to the rampant violence on the part of the allied troops, and in particular the Ottomans, practised against the civilian population of Senigallia. Executions for cooperation with the French, lootings, rapes and torturing were especially intense in the Jewish quarter.¹⁰²

Pustoshkin was ready with the help of the Italian troops of Lahoz to tighten the blockade around Ancona, both from the sea and land. At this very point, however, he got the orders from Ushakov to return to Corfu. On 21 June 1799 to the astonishment of the besieged French the squadron of Pustoshkin took from the shore all of the landing force of Gamen (250 Russian grenadiers and 180 Ottomans), raised the anchor and sailed off.¹⁰³ Mangourit, when writing about this, says that for some unknown reason the Russo-Ottoman squadron on 22 June 1799 (4 Messidor an VII) evacuated Senigallia and moved towards the south.¹⁰⁴

Because of the news that the large French fleet of Admiral Bruix, consisting of 19 ships of the line, 7 frigates and 6 smaller ships departed in May 1799 from Brest to the Mediterranean, and considering the possibility that the French fleet would join forces with the Spanish one, Ushakov ordered all his squadrons to gather again in

¹⁰¹ Excerpt from report of Admiral Ushakov to Paul I dated 5 July / 24 June 1799. *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, 28 / 17 August 1799.

¹⁰² Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 1, pp. 206-207.

¹⁰³ 'P. V. Pustoshkin to the Vice President of the Admiralty Board (*Admiralteistv-Kollegiia*) G. G. Kushelev, 20 / 9 June 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 25; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 488.

¹⁰⁴ Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 1, p. 212.

Corfu. The squadron of Pustoshkin came to Corfu on 26 June and Sorokin, who operated at the shores of the Southern Italy, arrived two days later, on 28 June.

By July 1799 Ushakov's forces gathered completely (not counting the squadron of Count Voinovich, which on 7 July was sent to continue the blockade of Ancona), as the squadron of Captain Lieutenant Vlito, which was carrying the French prisoners taken in Corfu to Toulon, returned on 24 July.¹⁰⁵ Quite soon, though, the Russian and the Ottoman ships once again appeared at the shores of the Neapolitan kingdom. This time it was not just smaller squadrons, but the whole Russo-Ottoman allied fleet at the head with Ushakov and Kadir Bey which had departed from Corfu on 4 August 1799 and moved to the Sicily, except for 2 Russian ships ("Bogoiavleniie" and "Sviataia Troitsa"), 2 Ottoman frigates and 2 Ottoman corvettes, which remained on Corfu for repair.¹⁰⁶

On 14 August 1799 the whole Ushakov's squadron came to Messina. The Russian part of the allied fleet consisted of 6 ships of the line ("Sviatoi Pavel", "Mikhail", "Zakharii", "Simeon i Anna", "Maria Magdalena", "Sviatoi Piotr"), 3 frigates ("Grigorii", "Mikhail", "Nikolai") and 4 smaller dispatch ships (aviso). The Ottoman squadron included 4 ships of the line, 3 frigates, 1 corvette and 1 *kırlangıç*. Apart from this, the squadron of the Baltic ships under the command of Vice Admiral Kartsov (the ships of the line "Isidor", "Asia", "Pobeda" and frigate "Pospeshniy"), sent earlier from Portsmouth to the Mediterranean, arrived on 15 August at Palermo. Kartsov informed Ushakov that the alarm about the appearance in the Mediterranean of the squadron of Admiral Bruix proved to be exaggerated,

¹⁰⁵ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 866.

¹⁰⁶ 'F. F. Ushakov to N. D. Voinovich, 5 August / 25 July 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 80-81; Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 435.

and it became known that Bruix went back to Brest and thus that there were no actual threat of encounter with the united Franco-Spanish large naval force.¹⁰⁷

From Messina Ushakov sent a part of his ships to the Ligurian Sea, to patrol the shores of Genoa and Livorno, and another squadron of the allied ships was to be sent to Naples to help the detachment of Captain Lieutenant Baillie, which still remained there. At this time the Ottoman crews refused to be detached from the main fleet and sent on any distant missions. As a result, Ushakov had to dispatch only the Russian ships. Three Russian frigates (“Nikolai”, “Mikhail”, “Grigorii Velikiia Armenii”) of Captain Alexander Andreievich Sorokin went to Naples, and Vice Admiral Pavel Vasilievich Pustoshkin with two ships (“Mikhail”, “Simeon i Anna”) and two dispatch vessels (aviso) sailed to cruise near Genoa and Livorno.¹⁰⁸

The rest of the allied fleet, including the Ottoman squadron, late in August moved to Palermo, where it arrived in the first days of September.¹⁰⁹ Among the ships, which came to Palermo, there were 4 Russian ships of the line (“Sviatoi Pavel”, “Zakhariy i Yelizaveta”, “Sviatoi Piotr”, “Maria Magdalena”), one Russian dispatch ship (“Panagia Apotumengana”), while the Ottoman squadron of Kadir Bey

¹⁰⁷ ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 22 / 11 August, 1799’. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 895, f. f. 74-75.

¹⁰⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 435-36; Along with the mentioned Russian ships, Ushakov planned to send to Genoa also one Ottoman ship and two Ottoman frigates. See: ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 22 / 11 August, 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 895, f. 74 ob.; ‘P. V. Pustoshkin to A. V. Suvorov, 10 September / 30 August 1799’ (A report about the arrival of Pustoshkin’s squadron to Livorno). Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 118-19.

¹⁰⁹ According to the letter of F. F. Ushakov, written to Tomara on 22 August 1799, the allied fleet departed for Palermo on that very day, i. e. on 22 August: ‘F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 22 / 11 August, 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 895, f. 74 ob. Arkas says that the fleet left Messina on 31 August: Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 869. The day of arrival is more or less the same in different sources: 1 September (Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 436; Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean*, p. 118; Moskovskie Vedomosti, 14 / 2 November 1799) or 2 September (Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 869). In view of the fact that the distance by sea between Messina and Palermo is about 200 km it is most probably that the date provided in the letter of Ushakov is more reliable than that given by Arkas. So, the date of departure from Messina and arrival to Palermo should be 22 August 1799 and 1 September 1799.

consisted of 4 ships of the line, 3 frigates, one corvette and one *kırlangıç*. As the Ottoman crews refused to be sent to the Ligurian Sea or Naples, the bulk of the Kadir Bey's squadron by the early September 1799 was lying at anchor in Palermo, apart from those two Ottoman frigates and two corvettes that remained for repair on Corfu as well as one ship (Captain Zeynel) and one corvette (Captain Mustafa) that had sailed with Voinovich to Ancona.

Having arrived in Palermo, Ushakov was planning to go on 11 September to Malta, still not taken and besieged by the allies. However, upon the request of the Neapolitan government and personally King Ferdinand IV, who on 5 September visited Ushakov's flagship,¹¹⁰ Ushakov decided to sail towards Naples, in order to take the capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where the situation was still uneasy, under control.¹¹¹ Yet, at the very point of departure, the Ottoman crews refused to move any further and demanded from their commanders to return to Constantinople. The argument was that the expedition continues longer than usual and that during this time the families of the Ottoman sailors have to live in want and misery. The revolt had started already in Messina, but then the crews had been persuaded to continue expedition on condition that they would remain with the main fleet and would not be sent on any specific and distant missions.¹¹² Furthermore, as it is clear from the report of Tomara to the Tsar, the Ottoman sailors might have been promised that the crews would be changed within a month.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Miliutin, *Istoriia voyny 1799*, Vol.3, p. 598.

¹¹¹ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. V. Suvorov, 12 / 1 September, 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 120.

¹¹² 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 September 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 121.

¹¹³ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 September 1799'. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 895, f. 64 ob.

In Palermo the Ottoman crews mutinied once again, and this time it became impossible to make them to change their minds. The mutiny was triggered by a serious conflict, the reasons of which are still yet unclear, that took place on 8 September 1799¹¹⁴ between the Ottomans and the local inhabitants of Palermo. Ushakov reported, that in the fight there were 14 killed, 53 wounded and up to 40 missing Ottomans.¹¹⁵ At the same time Tomara in his report to Paul I spoke about up to 400 killed and wounded Ottomans.¹¹⁶ Following the clash with the Palermitans, one part of the Ottoman squadron, being supported by Vice Admiral Patrona Bey, decided to sail back home.¹¹⁷ The Commander of the Ottoman fleet had no other option as to write to Ushakov about the reasons of his departure, asking the Russian Admiral to give him some written document testifying that Kadir Bey left Palermo by force of circumstances and not upon his own wish.¹¹⁸ Ushakov visited the flagship of Kadir Bey and tried himself to persuade the Ottoman sailors to stay, though to no avail.¹¹⁹ On 12 September in the morning the Ottoman squadron raised anchor and sailed away from the harbour of Palermo. Ushakov with only Russian ships left, in two days set out to Naples.¹²⁰

Having sailed as far as about 60 miles (96,5 km) off from the Sicilian coast, Kadir Bey managed to persuade his squadron to return and the whole night the Ottoman ships were going back to Palermo. On the next morning, though, it

¹¹⁴ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 438.

¹¹⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 September 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 121.

¹¹⁶ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 October 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 896, f. 1ob.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹¹⁸ 'Kadir Bey to F. F. Ushakov, 11 September / 31 august 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 119-20.

¹¹⁹ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 439.

¹²⁰ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. V. Suvorov, 12 / 1 September, 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 120; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 439.

appeared that two ships were missing. It was decided to look for those ships, and finally they were found as the Ottoman fleet came on 19 September to Corfu. By then, the majority of the crew had already abandoned the ships and had run away to the Albanian shore.¹²¹ Thereupon the fleet of Kadir Bey received the orders to return to the Dardanelles and Constantinople.¹²² It is worth of attention that the crews of the Ottoman fleet upon their arrival to the capital not only stayed unpunished for mutiny, but were even rewarded by the Sultan who sent them one hundred “Venetian purses”, or 50 thousand piastres.¹²³

At the same time when the bulk of the Ottoman navy returned back home and the main body of the Russian ships of Ushakov sailed to Naples and the Ligurian Sea, it should be remembered that the smaller Russo-Ottoman squadron was still operating in the Adriatic Sea near Ancona. As already said earlier, the allied squadron of Pustoshkin sent in May to Ancona by the end of June was recalled back to Corfu. Soon after Pustoshkin having gathered all his ships and landing troops sailed on 22 June 1799 away, the French in a few weeks reoccupied the towns taken by the Russo-Ottoman forces in May-June. In early July the French were again in the surrounding towns of Senigallia, Fano, Fossombrone (about 60 km to the northwest of Ancona) and Macerata (35 km to the south of Ancona).¹²⁴

Quite soon, though, the Russian and the Ottoman ships appeared near Ancona again to continue the blockading of the city and patrolling of the Adriatic Sea. On 7

¹²¹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 869-70.

¹²² ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 October 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 896, f. 1ob; ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. R. Vorontsov, 11 November 1799’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 282-84.

¹²³ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 28 / 17 December 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 896, f. f. 42-42 ob.

¹²⁴ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 615.

July Ushakov sent to Ancona Commander Count Marko Ivanovich Voinovich, at the head of 4 frigates (3 Russian, “Kazanskaia Bogoroditsa”, “Navarkhiia”, “Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha” and 1 Ottoman (Captain Zeynel), 1 Russian brig and 1 Ottoman corvette (Captain Mustafa), with total crews of 1200 Russians and 300 Ottomans.¹²⁵ Voinovich arrived at Ancona on 23 July, left there one Russian frigate (“Soshestviie Sviatogo Dukha”) and one Ottoman corvette, and then sailed along the coast in search for a suitable place for descent. Here Voinovich learned that Senigallia and Fano once more fell into the hands of the French.¹²⁶

On 25 July 1799 Voinovich disembarked near Pesaro the detachment of 430 sailors and soldiers (280 Russians and 150 Ottomans) with 5 cannons, under the command of Captain Sytin. This force was joined by 200 locals with 2 canons and by 40 Austrian hussars. At night the allied troops moved on Fano, and at dawn on 26 July started an assault on the town. The naval squadron supported the attack by the artillery fire from the seaside. In two days Fano capitulated.¹²⁷ The casualties of the allied force were 64 men (Russians: 16 killed, 26 wounded; Ottomans: 7 killed, 15 wounded).¹²⁸ Thereafter, on 2 August, the Voinovich with frigate “Navarkhiia” and one Ottoman frigate (one Ottoman corvette was left to blockade Ancona) proceeded to Senigallia¹²⁹, whereas the landing party (reinforced and consisting now of 387 Russians and 160 Ottomans, plus 200 men of local militia and 6 cannons) was transferred under command of Commander Thomas Messer (like Baillie, a British

¹²⁵ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 616; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 866-67.

¹²⁶ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.1, p. 616; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 874.

¹²⁷ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 1, pp. 616-17; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 875.

¹²⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, p. 323.

¹²⁹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 875.

naval officer in the Russian service, called Foma Fomich by Russians)¹³⁰ and marched towards Senigallia on land. The French left the town without fighting and retreated to Ancona.¹³¹

The siege of Ancona proper began on 12 August, when the city was encircled both from the land and the sea. The garrison of the Ancona fortress, commanded by General Jean-Charles Monnier, consisted partly of the French and partly of the Italian troops of the Cisalpine Republic, numbering up to about 3 thousand men. All fortifications and artillery batteries of Ancona had up to 700 pieces of cannonry. As for the allies, their forces consisted of the Russo-Ottoman detachment of 900 men of Messer along with around 6 thousand of irregular Italian militia of General Lahoz that took up positions on the seven batteries erected in the vicinity of the city and equipped with 30 cannons of heavy calibre taken to the shore from the ships. Apart from that, upon the request of Lahoz, Voinovich sent him additionally from the Russo-Ottoman squadron 112 Russians and 60 Ottomans (commanded by Lieutenant Papastavro, and since 18 August by Lieutenant Ratmanov).¹³²

In the morning on 18 August about 40 French soldiers approached the advanced posts of the Italian militias and made it known that about 500 men, unsatisfied with their present situation, decided on the next night to surrender to the allies under the veil of a sortie from the fortress. Suspecting some ruse de guerre and trying to be on the safe side, Voinovich again strengthened the detachment of Ratmanov with 130 men (60 Russians and 70 Ottomans). In the early morning hours

¹³⁰ Additional biographical information on Messer is available at: G. A. Leer (ed.) *Entsiklopediia voennykh i morskikh nauk* (8 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1883-1895), Vol. 5, p. 141; *Voennyi Entsiklopedicheskiy Leksikon* (14 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1837-1850), Vol. 8, pp. 613-14.

¹³¹ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 1, p. 618; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 875.

¹³² Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, pp. 448-49.

of 18 August the French did make a sortie, drove back the picquets of Italian militiamen, but to their surprise were stopped by the reinforced Russo-Ottomans and had to retreat to the fortress. During this action the allied casualties were 50 killed militiamen, and the Russo-Ottoman detachment of Ratmanov lost 6 killed. Consequently the French sorties occurred almost every night, the most serious of these took place on 27 August when 11 Russians and 6 Ottomans were killed, as well as 6 Russians and 2 Ottomans were wounded.¹³³ Lieutenant Ratmanov reported well on the fighting qualities of the Ottomans in his diary, saying that

“in this memorable war our the most faithful and the most zealous allies were the Turks... Was it a sortie or a combat, they always tried to facilitate the task of our soldiers and fearlessly attacked the enemy. I was in command of them for 69 days and every day I was assured in their devotion to the Russians. In general, the Turks had blind obedience to me”.¹³⁴

The siege of Ancona continued thus throughout August and September. Twice the commander of the Russo-Ottoman squadron Voinovich proposed the French garrison to surrender. The letter addressed to the commandant of the fortress General Monnier, dated 21 September 1799, was handed over to the French on 27 September 1799. Voinovich pointed out that any further resistance would only bring new deaths and new hardships, and in view of the French defeats in the Northern Italy would be in any case futile.¹³⁵ The short response of the French general was that “*l'intention de la garnison et la mienne est de se défendre jusqu'à extinction*”.¹³⁶

¹³³ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, p. 450.

¹³⁴ “... в достопамятную войну сию самые верные и самые усердные союзники наши были турки. Командуя ими 69 дней, я каждый день испытывал их в приверженности к русским. Делалась ли вылазка, перепалка- во всех случаях они старались облегчить наших и с неустрашимостью стремились на неприятеля... Вообще турки имели ко мне слепое послушание.” Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, pp. 604-5.

¹³⁵ The text of Voinovich's letter to General Monnier has been in extenso given at: Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 2, pp. 55-56.

¹³⁶ Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 2, p. 56.

By the end of September – early October 1799 near Ancona appeared the 8 thousand Austrian corps of General Fröhlich, which came from the Northern Italy. Fröhlich himself came to the walls of Ancona on 14 October. The arrival of the significant allied force would normally presuppose the speedy fall of the fortress, but in fact it brought only serious disagreements among the allies. For about one month the Austrians were negotiating with the garrison of Ancona secretly from their allies. Fröhlich preferred, much to the anger of the Russian commander, to use the fruits of more of the siege made by the Russo-Ottoman force and to conclude on 13 November 1799 a capitulation with the French only in the name of Austria, without ever mentioning the Russians or the Ottomans.¹³⁷ Voinovich was just post factum informed about this and was sent the final text of capitulation, made on the most favourable terms for the French garrison. The French were allowed to leave the fortress with all properties and all military honours, drums beating and the colours flying, and to march by land to France.

As the French came out of Ancona on 14 November, Fröhlich occupied the fortress with the Austrian troops and refused to let the Russians and the Ottomans in. Voinovich in his turn ordered Lieutenant Ratmanov to sail towards the quayside of Ancona and raise at dawn the Russian and the Ottoman flags. Also, the commander of the landing troops Commander Messer was to enter the fortress, to occupy guard positions and to raise the Russian and the Ottoman flags there. Ratmanov carried out the orders, while Messer's troops were not accepted inside the fortress.

¹³⁷ The text of capitulation is available at: Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, pp. 612-17; Mangourit, *Défense d'Ancone*, Vol. 2, pp. 170-82.

On the next morning an event occurred, which seriously damaged the relations between the allies and precipitated Russia's withdrawal from the Second coalition. The Austrians at the order of Fröhlich by force hauled down the Russian and the Ottoman flags, and raised the Austrian ones. At that the Russian guardsmen were disarmed and one Russian officer, Lieutenant Tsamutali, was arrested.¹³⁸ To the protests of the Russian side General Fröhlich answered that according to the capitulation concluded with the French garrison the fortress, the city and the quay were surrendered solely to the Austrian troops.

The Russians and personally Ushakov had no other option but to report about the behaviour of the Austrian General to the Emperor Paul I. By the end of the year Russia would leave the Second coalition and the squadron of Ushakov would get the orders to return to the Black Sea ports. On the other hand, Paul I was quite satisfied with his Ottoman allies, and two Ottoman naval commanders participating in the siege of Ancona were granted special presents for their services by the Russian Emperor. Captain Zeynel was sent a gold watch, whereas Captain Süleyman was presented a saber.¹³⁹

With the final departure of the Ottoman fleet from Palermo on 12 September 1799 and the end of the siege of Ancona in mid-November 1799, the heyday of the Russo-Ottoman joint military operations in the Mediterranean was over. The force of Ushakov, reduced to only the Russian ships, still remained at the shores of Italy but its further operations were to be conducted without the Ottomans.

¹³⁸ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, p. 459; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 879-80.

¹³⁹ 'The Highest Rescript to Admiral F. F. Ushakov, 29 / 18 December 1799' *Materialy dlia istorii russkogo flota (MIRF)* (17 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1865-1904), Vol. 16, p. 410.

On 19 September Ushakov came to Naples and disembarked there the detachment of 818 men under Colonel Skipor and Lieutenant Balabin. Immediately the Russians, along with a Neapolitan force of 1500 men, began to prepare for the march on Rome, controlled by the French and the pro-French government of the Roman Republic. However, soon the news came that the British naval commander Troubridge had already accepted the capitulation of the garrison of Rome on the most favourable conditions for the French on 27 September. Troubridge, who was in Naples when Ushakov arrived there, hastened to sail to Civita Vecchia (80 km northwest of Rome) and behind the back of Ushakov opened negotiations with the French before the Russian troops could approach Rome. The French, not even considered to be prisoners of war, were transported on the British ships back to France with all military honours and with the war booty in a few days.¹⁴⁰

Upon receiving the news of what had been done by Troubridge, Ushakov at first wished to recall his troops, but then at the request of Cardinal Ruffo agreed not to cancel the march on Rome. On 11 October 1799 the Russians under Colonel Skipor for the first time in history entered the Eternal City. After staying in Rome for about one month, the Russian detachment was ordered by Ushakov to return to Naples, where it came back on 16 November.¹⁴¹ The squadron of Ushakov (7 ships, one frigate and 8 smaller vessels) left Naples on the last day of 1799 and was already on its way to Malta when in Messina on 2 January 1800 was received the order of Paul I, prescribing Ushakov to take all the Russian troops still remaining on Corfu

¹⁴⁰ Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, pp. 216-17; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, pp. 441-42.

¹⁴¹ N. D. Kallistov, 'Flot v tsarstvovaniie imperatora Pavla' *Istoriia Rossiiskogo flota* (Moscow, 2007), p. 235.

and return to the Black Sea ports. So, instead of Malta Ushakov on 8 January 1800 sailed off from Messina to Corfu.¹⁴²

6.3. Republic of Seven Islands in the Ottoman-Russian Relations

The Seven Islands Republic, as is known, appeared in the wake of the joint Russo-Ottoman naval expedition that took place within the framework of the Second anti-French coalition. The Convention of 2 April (21 March)¹⁴³ 1800, which had been concluded between Russia and the Porte, stipulated the establishment of an autonomous republic on the islands, guaranteed by the Russian and the Ottoman empires. As it was agreed by both sides, the Ionian Islands were to be placed under the formal suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan whereas the position of the principal guarantor of the rights and territorial integrity of the newly created republic was delegated to the Russian Tsar.¹⁴⁴ In this way, in the maelstrom of the European coalition wars of the late 18th- early 19th centuries the precedent of the creation of the first Greek state in the modern European history occurred.

Regarding highly important strategic location of the Ionian islands it is advisable to recall the famous and often quoted words of General Bonaparte, who yet in summer 1797 wrote to the Directory from his headquarters in Milan that the islands of Corfu, Zante and Cefalonia are of more interest for France than even the whole of Italy, and the possession of the Ionian Islands would enable France either to

¹⁴² Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 883-84; Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, p. 501. With that, some Russian ships were still remaining in Italy. Three frigates under Sorokin stayed for repair in Naples, two ships and two dispatch vessels under Semion Afanasievich Pustoshkin were cruising off the coast of Genoa, and the squadron of Count Voinovich (3 frigates and one brig) stayed near Ancona.

¹⁴³ The date corresponding to the Gregorian calendar has been listed first, the next date in the brackets relates to the Julian calendar, or, for the French documents, the French Republican calendar.

¹⁴⁴ Konventsiia, zakliuchennaia v Konstantinopolie mezhdou Rossiyeyu i Portoyu Ottomanskoyu o Respublike sed'mi soedinennykh ostrovov. *PSZRI*, Vol. XXVI, № 19336, columns 88-92.

support the existence of the Ottoman Empire or to take its share as the latter would fall apart.¹⁴⁵ By the time when Bonaparte was writing these lines the French troops had already de facto occupied the former Venetian islands, and finally the Ionian Islands passed under the French rule in accordance with the Franco-Austrian peace treaty, signed on 17 October 1797 near the village of Campo Formio (nowadays Campofornido) in the North-Eastern Italy. Having taken over the islands France received a convenient base for its naval forces as well as a strategic foothold for possible attack on the Balkan possessions of the Ottomans. The Ionian Islands were chosen as the immediate aim of the Russo-Ottoman naval expedition, and were eventually cleared from the French on 3 March (20 February) 1799, the date of the capitulation of the fortress of Corfu.¹⁴⁶

Upon the successful completion of the Ionian campaign Admiral Ushakov with the bulk of his joint Russo-Ottoman force stayed on Corfu from March through July 1799. Now when all the military objectives had been accomplished, the Russian Admiral was also to take care of a great number of organisational issues, from now on concerning not only the current needs of his own squadron but relating to nothing less than the establishment of the provisional Ionian government and defining the principles of the future political existence of the islands. Until the Russian and the Ottoman governments continued their debates upon the fate of the Ionian

¹⁴⁵ General Bonaparte to the Executive Directory of the French Republic, 16 Aug. 1797 (29 Thermidor an V). *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}* (Paris: Henri Plon et J. Dumaine, 1859). Vol.3, № 2103, p.235. Word for word the future Emperor, and at the time a talented and successful General, wrote the following: “*Les îles de Corfu, de Zante et de Céphalonie sont plus intéressantes pour nous que toute l’Italie ensemble. Je crois que si nous étions obligés d’opter, il vaudrait mieux restituer l’Italie à l’Empereur et garder les quatre îles, qui sont une source de richesse et de prospérité pour notre commerce. L’Empire des Turcs s’écroule tous les jours; la possession de ces îles nous mettra à même de le soutenir autant que cela sera possible, ou d’en prendre notre part*”.

¹⁴⁶ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 1, p. 112.

archipelago, Ushakov appeared in a situation when it was necessary to take practical decisions on the spot.

For the purpose of keeping the civil peace and stability one of the first actions of Ushakov after the capture of Corfu was to proclaim general amnesty. On 4 March 1799 the joint proclamation of Ushakov and Kadir Bey, issued both in Italian and Greek, guaranteed all the inhabitants the full pardon for cooperation with the French, and the respect for their religion and private property.¹⁴⁷ At the orders of the Russian commander a constituent assembly consisting of 15 members, termed a Senate, convened at Corfu in May and drafted a project of a Constitution, known as the “Ushakov Constitution”. The final version of the project of Constitution had been approved on 27 May 1799 and was distinctive by giving suffrage to both the nobility and the commoners (those meeting the income qualification requirements).¹⁴⁸ One had to wait, though, what kind of decision regarding the future of the Ionian Islands would be taken by the Russian and the Ottoman governments. In the meantime, the squadron of Ushakov left Corfu on 4 August 1799 and sailed off to Messina to continue the campaign in Italy.

Before the Ionian campaign of the Russo-Ottoman naval forces was completed the allied governments necessarily were to discuss the future political status of the isles. The negotiations on this question started as early as October 1798 when the Porte proposed three alternative solutions. These were to transfer the isles to some secondary state (what could mean only the Kingdom of Naples); to establish an

¹⁴⁷ Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, p. 132.

¹⁴⁸ Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, pp. 139-40. For a detailed account of this Constitution and the circumstances of its creation see the chapter ‘F. F. Ushakov I ionicheskaia konstitutsiia 1799 g.g. in: Stanislavskaia, *Politicheskaia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, pp. 127-80.

aristocratic republic (like that of Ragusa, bound by nominal vassalage to the Ottoman Sultan, but having an independent self-administration and enjoying the right to conduct its own foreign policy); to organise the administration of the isles on the model of the Danubian principalities dependent from the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁹ As regards these solutions the preferences of the Sultan and the Tsarist government were rather different.

Whereas in St. Petersburg spoke in favour of the establishment of an aristocratic republic on the islands, on the shores of the Bosphorus it would be more preferable to see the Ionian islands in the status similar to that of Moldavia and Wallachia, i. e. in a vassal tributary relationship to the Porte, with the right of the latter to appoint the rulers of these dependent territories at its own discretion. By a long established tradition, the hospodars of the Danubian principalities were chosen among the narrow group of rich Greek families of the Ottoman capital, closely associated with the Sultan's court, the so called Phanariotes (named after the district of Phanar (Fener) in the European part of Constantinople). As the practice of the Danubian principalities showed, such appointments were a serious source of corrupt practices and had led to the enrichment of the Ottoman ruling elite by means of bribes on the part of the contenders to the position of the hospodar. Sure enough, as indicated by Tomara,¹⁵⁰ the idea to turn the Ionian islands into yet another milch cow for the Ottoman treasury and some particular high-ranking officials appeared the

¹⁴⁹ J. L. McKnight, *Russia and the Ionian Islands, 1798-1807. The Conquest of the Islands and Their Role in Russian Diplomacy*. MA Thesis. University of Wisconsin, 1962, pp. 151-152; A. M. Stanislavskaja, *Rossii i Gretsii v kontse XVIII- nachale XIX veka: Politika Rossii v Ionicheskoi respublike, 1798-1807 g.g* (Moscow, 1976), p. 68.

¹⁵⁰ 'V. S. Tomara to A. R. Vorontsov, 27 / 16 June 1799' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 249-250.

most inviting for the Porte, as well as had its zealous supporters among the Greek elite of Constantinople.

Aside from that, during the negotiations became clear the wish of the Sultan's government to include the island of Santa Maura (Lefkada) into the Ottoman borders. The line of argument of the Ottoman side was that this island is so close to the mainland that it should be considered rather a part of the continent than a separate island and for that reason excluded from the Ionian archipelago. The Ottomans also thought it possible not to count the islands of Cerigo (Kythira) and Cerigotto (Antikythira) among the Ionian Islands for being too remote from the rest of the archipelago. In regard to these issues the Russian ambassador V. S. Tomara had to have special discussions in Constantinople, striving to secure the incorporation of the mentioned islands into the future Ionian state.¹⁵¹ As far as the Ottoman government was concerned, the Russian unwillingness to accept the idea of establishment on the Ionian Islands of a principality, which would be dependent to the Porte on the model of Moldavia and Wallachia, brought about the growing discontent with Russia among some of the Ottoman officials. The muted grumbling in Constantinople concerned the big sums of money spent to upkeep the Russian naval squadron in the Mediterranean and the participation of the Ottoman navy in the military operations in Italy, for which the Porte was not likely to get any tangible advantages.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ 'V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 23 / 12 June 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 892, f. f. 63-63 ob.

¹⁵² Zapiska Konstantinopol'skikh vestei i razglashenii. May 1799. AVPRI. Fond 89. Relations of Russia with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. 63.

The course of negotiations and their tension¹⁵³ can be judged by the fact that the final Russo-Ottoman Convention about the Ionian Republic had been signed only on 2 April (21 March) 1800. It was the approach of the Russian side, which eventually prevailed. St. Petersburg, as mentioned previously, advocated the autonomy for the Ionian Islands, under the Ottoman suzerainty and the Russian guarantorship. The nominal dependence of the newly created Republic of the Seven Islands on the Sultan lied only in the fact that it was to pay Constantinople years a fixed sum of 75 thousand piastres for every three.¹⁵⁴ The Ionian vessels gained the right to fly their own flag¹⁵⁵, and the Republic could open its own consulates in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁶ As for the Ionian coast on the mainland, the so called Venetian Albania, it passed under the direct rule of the Porte, by conforming all the rights of the local Christian population, which was of the mixed Slavic-Greek origin.¹⁵⁷

Along with the negotiations of the political future of the Ionian Islands that lasted for more than a year the Russians and the Ottomans were also to agree upon the issue of garrisoning the fortress of Corfu. As the allied Russo-Ottoman squadron of Ushakov during the Ionian campaign occupied the islands of the Ionian archipelago one by one, the Russian commander left on each island a mixed garrison of equal, even if very small, number of the Russian and the Ottoman soldiers. Regarding the fortress of Corfu, right after the French capitulation it was garrisoned only by Russians, while the Ottoman forces stayed outside the fortress walls. The

¹⁵³ The twists and turns of negotiations as well as the internal affairs of the Ionian Islands at this time are provided in detail in MA and PhD dissertations of J. L. McKnight: McKnight, James Lawrence. *Russia and the Ionian Islands, 1798-1807*. (MA Thesis). The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1962; McKnight, James Lawrence. *Admiral Ushakov and the Ionian Republic; The Genesis of Russia's First Balkan Satellite*. (PhD Dissert.). The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1965), and in the abovementioned works of A. M. Stanislavskaja.

¹⁵⁴ Article 4 of Convention. *PSZRI*, Vol. XXVI, № 19336, p. 90.

¹⁵⁵ Article 6 of Convention. *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁶ Article 3 of Convention. *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁷ Article 8 and 9 of Convention. *Ibidem*, p. 91.

Ottoman Rear Admiral (Patrona) Şeremet Bey was appointed the governor of the city of Corfu, though these duties were de facto performed by Lieutenant Colonel Skipor.¹⁵⁸ After the departure of all of the squadron to Italy in early August 1799, the overall military command passed to Captain A. P. Aleksiano, the commander of “Bogoiavlennii Gospodnie”, one of the two Russian ships that remained on Corfu for repair. Besides, for the same reason two Ottoman frigates and two Ottoman corvettes were also left on Corfu.¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the negotiations over the garrison for Corfu finally resulted in the agreement that the number of the garrison troops would be 700 Russians and 700 Ottomans. Ambassador Tomara especially instructed Ushakov that the Ottomans should not be accepted inside the fortress other than together with the same number of Russians.¹⁶⁰ In addition, the regiment of Lieutenant General Mikhail Mikhailovich Borozdin¹⁶¹, appointed to serve as the guard at the Neapolitan court and consisting of 1656 men, 8 cannons and 200 horses, arrived at Corfu on 27 November 1799.¹⁶² Waiting for departure to Naples, Borozdin assumed the post of the commandant of the Corfu fortress.¹⁶³

Throughout the summer of 1799, as long as the navigation season in the Black Sea allowed, the Ottoman capital was witnessing on a regular basis the arrival of the Russian transport ships, loaded with provisions and other necessary materials for

¹⁵⁸ Stanislavskaiia, *Politicheskaiia deiatel'nost' F. F. Ushakova*, p. 137.

¹⁵⁹ ‘F. F. Ushakov to N. D. Voinovich, 5 August / 25 July 1799’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 80-81.

¹⁶⁰ ‘V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 6 September (26 August) 1799’ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 111-12.

¹⁶¹ For his participation in the Ionian campaign Borozdin had only recently, in November 1799, been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. See: Slovar' russkikh generalov, uchastnikov boyevykh deistvii protiv armii Napoleona Bonaparta v 1812-1815 g.g. In: *Rossiiskii arkhiv*, Vol. 7. – Moscow, 1996), p.323.

¹⁶² V. S. Tomara to Paul I. 27 / 16 September 1799. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 895, f. 78; A Note of the Russian Ambassador V. S. Tomara to the Ottoman government, regarding the permission for the passage of 13 Russian battleships of Captain Pustoshkin through the Bosphorus, transporting the force of 1600 men under command of Major General Borozdin. 27 / 16 1799. Ibidem, f. 80.

¹⁶³ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 881.

Ushakov's squadron, stationed on Corfu. The archive of the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow contains a portfolio with correspondence of the ambassador Tomara and the captains of the transport ships of the Black Sea fleet, which were visiting Constantinople during the mentioned period. If summarized, the information provided in the reports of the Russian captains could be presented in the following table:

Table 6. The Russian transport ships that arrived at Constantinople in summer 1799. AVPRI. Fond 90. Constantinople Mission. Op. 90/1. Delo 1399. Correspondence of Ambassador Tomara with commanders of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet [*Переписка Томары с командующими судов Черноморского флота*], f. f. 51-93.

Date of arrival	Name of the ship	Cargo
29/18 May 1799	Schooner N2, commander Lieutenant Mikhayla Minitiskii	Not indicated, most probably the dispatch vessel
12/1 June 1799	Schooner N2, commander Lieutenant Mikhayla Minitiskii	Not indicated, most probably the dispatch vessel
16/5 June 1799	Frigate "Sviatoi Nikolai"	<u>Provisions</u> : oil, meat, peas, cereals
17/6 June 1799	Transport vessel "Pospeshnyi"	<u>Provisions</u> : Peas, cereals, oil, wine, biscuits, malt, vinegar, salt
24/13 June 1799	Transport vessel "Grigorii"	<u>Munitions</u> : Bombs and cannon balls for the High Porte; <u>Provisions</u> : Biscuits <u>Other</u> : Ship ropes (The commander asks to pick up his load, for he has to return to Nikolaiev)
1 July /20 June 1799	Scow (gabare) "Platon"	<u>Provisions</u> : Wine, peas, oil, cereals (buckwheat, millet, peeled barley), butter, meat in salt <u>Other</u> : Clothes, soles for shoes <u>Munitions</u> : cannon balls, grapeshot
27/16 July 1799	Transport vessel "Grigorii"	<u>Munitions</u> : Bombs and cannon balls for the High Porte; <u>Provisions</u> : Biscuits <u>Other</u> : Ship ropes (the Register is almost

4 August / 24 July 1799	Scow (gabare) “Iosif”, commander Captain-Lieutenant [Os]okin	<p>identical to that of 24 June)</p> <p><u>Provisions</u>: Wine, peas, oil, cereals (buckwheat, millet, peeled barley)</p> <p><u>Clothing</u>: Red cloth, white cloth, canvas, buckles, ribbons, lacings, ties, hats, buttons</p> <p><u>Other</u>: whetting stones, sheet lead, candles, hammers, spades, needles, thimbles, crowbars, bit- braces, chisels, pincers, saws, nails, writing paper, chalk, pencils</p> <p><u>Books</u>: Gospels, Apostles, Prayer-books</p> <p><u>Munitions</u>: Bombs, cannon balls, grapeshot (of various calibres)</p> <p><u>Munitions</u>: bombs, cannon balls</p> <p><u>Provisions</u>: biscuits “Delivered to the Turks on the merchant ship the bombs, the cannon balls and biscuits”</p>
12/1 August 1799	Transport vessel “Grigorii”, Captain-Lieutenant Iazykov	<p>Not indicated, most probably the dispatch vessel</p>
25/14 August 1799	Schooner N2, commander Lieutenant Mikhayla Minitskii	<p>Not indicated, most probably the dispatch vessel</p>

By the end of 1799 the Emperor Paul I, disillusioned with his British and Austrian allies after the numerous examples of their much insulting for Russia conduct, decided to leave the Second coalition and recall from Europe all his troops. At the beginning of 1800 the army of Suvorov, heretofore operating against the French in the Northern Italy and Switzerland, marched back to Russia.¹⁶⁴ The squadron of Admiral Ushakov, which throughout 1799 had also been engaged in hostilities against the French in the Adriatics and Italy, was ordered to leave the Mediterranean and return to the Black Sea ports.

¹⁶⁴ ‘A. V. Suvorov to Paul I. 22 / 11 1800’ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, pp. 641-42.

As mentioned earlier, in accordance with the order of Paul I, dated 4 December (23 November) 1799 and received by Ushakov on 5 January 1800, the Russian Admiral on 8 January left Messina and moved to Corfu, where he arrived on 19 January.¹⁶⁵ Also in January, but somewhat earlier than Ushakov, the newly appointed Ottoman representative Kapıcı Başı Mustafa Ağa, with 250 Ottoman soldiers arrived in Corfu.¹⁶⁶ Judging by the letters of Ushakov written to Tomara, the relations between the Russian Admiral and the Ottoman official from the very beginning were not too cordial. Mustafa Ağa had been accused of showing little respect to his Russian allies and personally to Ushakov. According to the Russian Admiral, after all his attempts to maintain good relations with the Ottoman official, Mustafa Ağa still knew no gratitude. Despite the fact that the Ottoman troops were admitted inside the fortress and Mustafa Ağa was given the house prepared and always preserved for Ushakov, while Ushakov took a modest house outside the walls of the fortress, the Ottoman official reported to the Porte explicitly false and defamatory information about the Russians. When asked by Ushakov, Mustafa Ağa answered that he was writing his report hurriedly and did not make yet all the necessary enquiries about the situation on the island.

Among the complaints of Mustafa Ağa, which incurred the displeasure of the Russian Admiral, were those concerning the belated allocation of a house for the Ottoman representative and the alleged confiscation by the Russians of all the cannons in the fortress. Ushakov in his turn reported, that Mustafa Ağa was demanding the best house in the fortress, that the house he was eventually given was

¹⁶⁵ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 883-84.

¹⁶⁶ McKnight, *Russia and the Ionian Islands*, p. 207.

kept for Ushakov until his arrival at Corfu, and for that reason could not be given to the Ottoman official earlier. As for the cannons of the Corfu fortress, according to Ushakov, the Russians did not take anything except for some cannons to change the broken ones.¹⁶⁷ The petty misunderstandings between the Russian and the Ottoman commanders continued, when Mustafa Ağa did not stand up at Ushakov's departure after their audience or demanded the Russian squadron to fire a salute on the occasion of the Muslim holiday of Ramadan.¹⁶⁸

In no time the patience of Ushakov seemed to be exhausted, as he wrote to Tomara that "this man (i.e. Kapıcı Başı Mustafa Ağa) appears to be bribed by someone in order to bring about the troubles and upset the friendship".¹⁶⁹ Regarding the demand of Mustafa Ağa for the Russians to fire a salute on Ramadan, Ushakov commented it in this way: "his various incongruous demands make me believe that he is insane".¹⁷⁰ In the end, Ushakov asked Tomara to report about the behaviour of Mustafa Ağa to the Porte so that the latter would send someone with more delicate manners.¹⁷¹ What is more, the majority of the Corfiotes were in general much dissatisfied with the stay of the Ottoman troops on the island. Finally, it was agreed that the Ottoman part of the Corfu garrison would consist of 300 men and any additional Ottoman troops would not be supported at the expense of the local population.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 February 1800' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 251-53.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem; 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 24 / 13 February 1800' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 263-64.

¹⁶⁹ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 February 1800' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 253.

¹⁷⁰ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 24 / 13 February 1800' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 263.

¹⁷¹ 'F. F. Ushakov to V. S. Tomara, 13 / 2 February 1800' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 253.

¹⁷² McKnight, *Russia and the Ionian Islands*, p. 210.

Two weeks after his return to Corfu, on 1 February 1800, Ushakov received new orders from the Tsar, prescribing him to remain on the Ionian Islands and patrol the waters of the Central Mediterranean as a precaution against the possible escape of General Bonaparte from Egypt.¹⁷³ The two battalions of Borozdin in the meantime left Corfu. On 15 March 1800 they embarked on the squadron of Captain Pustoshkin and in four days were landed on the Italian soil in Otranto, in order to serve as the palace guard of the Neapolitan King Ferdinand IV.¹⁷⁴ Soon after the forces of Borozdin departed from Corfu, the Russo-Ottoman Convention of 2 April 1800 established the autonomous Republic of the Seven Islands.

Since the siege of Malta continued (it surrendered only on 4 September 1800) and the rumours of its fall proved to be false, Paul I on 3 June 1800 confirmed his earlier orders for Ushakov to sail with all his fleet back to the Black sea ports. Ushakov thus charged the squadrons of Pustoshkin, Kartsov, Sorokin and Voinovich, still operating in the Mediterranean waters, to return to Corfu. The former two arrived on 11 June and 14 June respectively, while the latter two could not come on schedule and stayed for some more time in Italy. At the council of war gathered by Ushakov, which took place on 13 July 1800, it was decided to leave the two battalions of Borozdin together with three frigates of Captain Sorokin in Naples. Likewise, on the island of Corfu of all the Russian naval and land forces were left only 170 artillerymen and engineers under Lieutenant Colonel Hastfer, appointed a commandant of the Corfu fortress.¹⁷⁵ On 16 July 1800 Ushakov sailed off from

¹⁷³ McKnight, *Russia and the Ionian Islands*, p. 214.

¹⁷⁴ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 886.

¹⁷⁵ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, pp. 889-90.

Corfu. After about one month stay in the Ottoman capital the squadron of Ushakov returned to Akhtiar (Sevastopol) on 7 November 1800.¹⁷⁶

In the next 1801 year, already during the new reign of Alexander I, at the meeting of the State Council that took place on 15 June it was decided to recall the last remaining Russian troops on Corfu and in Naples.¹⁷⁷ By the summer of 1801 there were no more Russian troops on the Ionian Islands. More than that, after France had signed the peace treaty with Russia (on 8 October 1801)¹⁷⁸ and the preliminary peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire (on 9 October 1801),¹⁷⁹ it, according to special Russian-French secret convention, also became the guarantor of independence of the Ionian state along with Russia. This convention stipulated that no foreign troops should stay on the isles.¹⁸⁰ In this way, after the Russian Commander in Chief in fact wielded the highest administrative authority on the isles during 1799-1800, St. Petersburg lost for a while any interest in the Ionian Islands.

The withdrawal of the Russian troops from Corfu resulted in an increased anarchy. Majority of population showed openly antagonistic feelings to the Ottomans and thus was much displeased at the fact that the isles were placed under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. The opinion of Uzunçarşılı that supposedly the majority of the population of the Republic of the Seven Islands wished to be under the Ottoman protectorate while Russia was supported only by a “group of Jacobines”

¹⁷⁶ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 2, pp. 505-506.

¹⁷⁷ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol. 3, pp. 656-57.

¹⁷⁸ Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX - nachala XX veka. Dokumenty Rossiiskogo Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del (Hereafter – *VPR*) (Moscow, 1960), Vol. 1, pp. 95-97.

¹⁷⁹ Gabriel effendi Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris, 1900), Vol. 2, pp. 47-48.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Russian-French Secret Convention. 10 October (28 September) 1801. Article 9’ *VPR*. Vol. 1, pp. 98-101.

¹⁸¹ seems to be at least quite debatable. Apparently, the Ottoman suzerainty was supported only by a narrow circle of noblemen, who like the Ottomans were seeking the establishment of the state system close to that of the Danube principalities, while the majority of the insular population was certainly more sympathetic to their Russian coreligionists.

The inhabitants formed among themselves various parties of pro-French, pro-British and even pro-Ottoman orientation. To restore the internal order on the isles Alexander I at the beginning of 1802 took a decision to deploy the Russian corps under Lieutenant General Borozdin, which was then staying in Naples, on the Ionian Islands again.¹⁸² Alongside with that, Count Mocenigo was appointed the special Russian representative at the Republic of the Seven Islands, with respective instructions. Particularly noteworthy are the closing words of Alexander I addressed to Mocenigo, about the wish of the Russian monarch that his troops “were on the Ionian Islands as less as possible and could in the short term return through the Black Sea to Russia”.¹⁸³

As the documents show, neither immediately after the conquest of the islands nor later did Russia express any wish by all means to retain the islands under its control, contrary to the usual views of the traditional Turkish historiography. So,

¹⁸¹ “...*Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti halkı iki kısma ayrılmıştı. Bunların çoğu Osmanlıların himayesini istiyorlar ve Yakubin taifesi de Rusların emellerine hizmet ediyorlardı*” İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti. Belleten*, 1 (1937), p. 635.

¹⁸² ‘Alexander I to V. S. Tomara. 14 / 2 January 1802’ *VPR*. Vol. 1, pp. 167-68; ‘Alexander I to V. S. Tomara. 27 / 15 February 1802’ *VPR*. Vol. 1, pp. 175-76.

¹⁸³ ‘Alexander I to G. D. Mocenigo. 12 March / 28 February 1802’ *VPR*. Vol. 1, p. 182 (French original); p. 184 (Russian translation).

Uzunçarşılı believed that Russia, under every pretext, sought to prolong its stay on Corfu in order to increase its influence on the Republic of the Seven Islands.¹⁸⁴

In view of Karal, another outstanding Turkish historian, after the threat of the French aggression had been averted there was no point left in keeping friendship with Britain and Russia. On the contrary, the Porte had another task now, which was “to free its territories (apparently, Karal refers here also to the Ionian Republic that remained under the formal suzerainty of the Sultan; V. M.), occupied by the friendly powers”.¹⁸⁵ Of the two main allies of the Ottomans, Russia deployed its forces on the Ionian Islands and Britain continued to occupy Egypt even after the French withdrew their forces from there. For certain, one cannot deny the secret and then open discontent of the Ottomans about the deployment of the two Russian grenadier battalions, which heretofore stayed in Naples under command of General Lieutenant Borozdin, and since September 1802 were again, commanded now by Colonel Fiodor Viktorovich Nazimov¹⁸⁶, deployed on the Ionian Islands.¹⁸⁷ Once again, after less than a year the Russian garrison appeared on Corfu. Here is the list of the officer staff of the two composite grenadier battalions, staying at Corfu by 1 February (20 January) 1803:

Table 7. The List of the Staff and Company Officers, serving at the two composite grenadier battalions, which stay at Corfu. 1 February (20 January) 1803. Russian State Military Historical Archive (*Российский Государственный Военно-Исторический Архив*), Moscow. (Hereafter RGVIA). Fond 1. Chancellery of the War Ministry. Op. 1, Volume 1, Delo 470, f. f. 7-7 ob.

The Battalion of Colonel Nazimov

¹⁸⁴ “...muhtelif bahanelerle Rusların Korfoda ikametlerini uzatmak istemeleri pek aşikâr olarak yeni cumhuriyet üzerindeki nüfuzunu arttırmak içindi” Uzunçarşılı, *Yedi Ada Cumhuriyeti*, p. 637.

¹⁸⁵ “Babı-âli için mevzubahis mesele dost devletlerin işgalinde bulunan toprakları kurtarmak... idi”. Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-i Humayunları* (Ankara, 1999), p. 81.

¹⁸⁶ Nazimov was granted the rank of Major General on 28 May 1803. Additional information on F. V. Nazimov is available at: Slovar' russkikh generalov, uchastnikov boevykh deistvii protiv armii Napoleona Bonaparta v 1812-1815 g.g. In: *Rossiiskii arkhiv*, Vol. 7. (Moscow), 1996, pp. 487-88.

¹⁸⁷ A. L. Shapiro, *Sredizemnomorskiie problemy vneshnei politiki Rossii v nachale XIX v. Istoricheskie zapiski*, (Moscow, 1956), Vol. 55, pp. 266-67.

The Commander of the battalion, Colonel	1
In the companies of the Astrakhan' Grenadier Regiment	
Colonel	1
Captains and Staff Captains (<i>Shtabs-Kapitans</i>)	2
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	4
Sub-Lieutenants (<i>Podporuchiks</i>)	2
Ensign (<i>Praporshchik</i>)	1
In the companies of the Yaroslavl Musketeer Regiment	
Major	1
Captain	1
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	5
Sub-Lieutenants (<i>Podporuchiks</i>)	1
At the Artillery squadron, Lieutenant of Artillery (<i>Artillerii Poruchik</i>)	1
The Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel Zagel (Цагель)	
In the companies of the Noteburg Musketeer Regiment	
The Commander of the battalion, Lieutenant Colonel	1
Major	1
Staff Captain (<i>Shtabs-Kapitan</i>)	1
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	4
Sub-Lieutenant (<i>Podporuchik</i>)	1
In the companies of the Vyborg Musketeer Regiment	
Major	1
Staff Captains (<i>Shtabs-Kapitans</i>)	2
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	4
Attached to this battalion, from the Musketeer Regiments of Fertsch, Rebinder and Miloradovich	
Staff Captain (<i>Shtabs-Kapitan</i>)	1
Lieutenant (<i>Poruchik</i>)	1
Ensign (<i>Praporshchik</i>)	1
At the Artillery squadron	
Sub-Lieutenant of Artillery (<i>Artillerii Podporuchik</i>)	1
In both battalions	
Sub-Doctors (<i>Podlekar's</i>)	3

In the meantime the political crisis in Europe was escalating again, and the strategic importance of the Ionian Islands once more increased. The Peace of Amiens, concluded in March 1802 between Great Britain and France with its satellites, proved short-lived and in May 1803 London and Paris again resorted to the “last argument of politics”. The possibility of a French landing in the mainland Greece appeared not only quite real, but was even expected. This assumption time and again can be seen in the copious Russian diplomatic documents of the time.¹⁸⁸ In

¹⁸⁸ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. R. Vorontsov. 26 / 14 June 1803’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow: Mamontov, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 292-94; ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii, 28 / 16 May 1803’ *VPR*,

this respect the only conclusion made by the Russian side was that the Ottoman Empire was in no position to counter a potential aggression by the French and in order to protect the domains of the Sultan one had to increase the number of the Russian forces on the Ionian Islands.

It is worthy of note that both France and Russia were trying to present themselves in the eyes of the Sultan as the true friends and defenders of the Ottoman Empire, at the same time seeking to frighten the Ottomans respectively with the Russian or the French threat. Definitely, neither side could know for sure about the exact intentions of the others, and therefore to trust each other. As it has been mentioned before, the Russian diplomatic documents of this time are full of comments about the necessity to preserve the Ottoman Empire from destruction. A good example of such views may serve the in-depth report of A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I, dated 29 / 17 February 1804.¹⁸⁹ It was the preservation of Ottoman state that was seen the first priority task, and only in the case when despite all the efforts the Ottoman Empire would anyway appear on the verge of disintegration, one was to be ready for its partition.

For the Ottomans, who could only speculate about the possible aims of their potential enemies and allies, both the Russian and French threat looked very real and it was not that easy to define which one of the two threats should be taken more seriously and what in fact should be expected. Equally, in words of Shapiro, “the

Vol. 1, p.433; ‘A. R. Vorontsov to G. D. Mocenigo. 9 September (28 August) 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 513- 17; ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 530- 31; ‘Report of A. R. Vorontsov. 24 / 12 November 1803’ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva* (Hereafter – *SIRIO*), (St. Petersburg, 1891), Vol. 77, pp. 410-17; ‘A. R. Vorontsov to S. R. Vorontsov. 2 December (20 November) 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 557.

¹⁸⁹ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I. 29 / 17 February 1804’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 619-27.

Tsarist government did not know for sure whether it would have to defend Turkey from Bonaparte's aggression or to fight with it as an ally of Bonaparte."¹⁹⁰ In both cases, however, its Ionian foothold was gaining for St. Petersburg more and more importance. For the Porte, on the contrary, the presence of the Russian fleet and the Russian troops in the Mediterranean objectively remained a source of constant and growing concern.

6.4. Conclusions

Throughout the whole winter of 1798-1799 the allied squadron of Ushakov continued to besiege the last stronghold of the French on the Ionian Islands, which was the fortress of Corfu. Due to the lack of the auxiliary troops and provisions, the direct assault was being delayed. The Russian and the Ottoman ships only blockaded Corfu from the sea, patrolling all the approaches to the island. The internal crisis of the Ottoman Empire and ineffectiveness of the Ottoman state apparatus had largely influenced the siege.

In many respects the will of the central Ottoman government, which promised Ushakov the help of the local Ottoman pashas from the Balkan mainland with the troops and provisions was simply ignored in the provinces. The Ottoman governor of Yanina Ali Pasha Tepedelenli exercised the real authority in the area and did not hurry to follow the orders of the Porte. Looking exclusively how to use the situation to his own advantage, Ali Pasha was continuously bargaining with the Porte, Ushakov and even had the secret negotiations with the French. All these

¹⁹⁰ Shapiro, *Sredizemnomorskiye problemy*, p. 277; A. L. Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota na Sredizemnom more v 1805-1807 g.g.* Dissertatsiia na soiskaniie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk. [Sine Loco], 1951. pp. 117-18.

circumstances, aggravated by the severe winter conditions, had seriously impeded the siege of Corfu. Only in early March 1799, after three and a half months of blockading, the French garrison of Corfu capitulated. Thus, the initial task of the joint Russo-Ottoman naval expedition was accomplished.

Regarding the whole campaign, it did not end with the capture of the Ionian Islands. Quite soon, the struggle with the French brought the Russians and the Ottomans further to Italy, where the subordinates of Ushakov and Kadir Bey continued to fight together against their enemies. In late April- early May 1799, upon the requests of the governments of the Kingdom of Naples and the Austrian Habsburg monarchy, Ushakov sent two mixed Russo-Ottoman squadrons to the Italian shores. The first one was to land a smaller detachment in the Southern Italy and the second one was to operate in the North, in the vicinity of Ancona, which remained the main French base in the Adriatics.

It was with the utmost reluctance that the Porte agreed to send its naval forces together with those of Admiral Ushakov¹⁹¹ to Italy. Being concerned in the first place about the security of its own sea coastline, the Porte deemed it risky to send its naval forces far away from the Ottoman territorial waters. Moreover, even the departure of the Russian warships might result in complaints by the Porte, since according to the terms of the alliance treaty the Russian ships were to defend the Ottoman Empire and, for that reason, were not supposed to sail away from the Ottoman shores. However, there was also the other side of the coin. If the French would contemplate an aggression against the Balkans, Italy objectively could serve a good springboard

¹⁹¹ For the capture of Corfu Ushakov was granted the rank of Admiral

for such an attack. In this way, the best interests of the Porte suggested that the French should not be allowed to occupy the part of Italy adjacent to the possessions of the Ottoman Empire. So, the Ottoman warships and their crews once again joined the Russians in order to meet the common enemy.

Towards the end of summer 1799 the mixed Russo-Ottoman forces, together with the Italian militia, were operating both in the Southern and the Northern Italy. The landing detachment of Henry Baillie (about 500 men), which in mid-June fought its way through to Naples, was strengthened by a group of 84 Ottoman soldiers commanded by Captain Ahmet. Equally, the naval squadrons twice sent by Ushakov to blockade the port of Ancona in the north, consisted of both the Russian and the Ottoman warships. As the successes achieved by the allied forces around Ancona in May-June appeared to be in vain after Ushakov temporarily had recalled all his forces back to Corfu, the squadron of Voinovich was sent in early July to resume the active operations in the area. The squadron of Voinovich consisted of four Russian and two Ottoman warships with total crews of 1200 Russians and 300 Ottomans. Therefore, the Russian and the Ottoman soldiers continued to fight side by side now on Italian soil.

As far as the main forces of the allied squadron are concerned, Ushakov and Kadir Bey came from Corfu to Sicily in late August. At this point the Ottoman crews, complaining about the unusually long duration of their expedition, revolted and demanded from their commanders to return to Constantinople. The situation was aggravated by a quarrel between the Ottomans and the locals of Palermo, which ended in serious human losses on both sides. Despite the attempts of Ushakov and

Kadir Bey to persuade them to stay, the mutinous Ottoman sailors in mid-September 1799 chose to sail back home. Kadir Bey, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman fleet had no other choice but to yield to the demands of his subordinates. Such a departure of the Ottoman fleet became yet another manifestation of the anarchy prevailing in the Ottoman Empire. It also marked the end of the joint Ottoman-Russian military operations in the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, despite that the Ottoman fleet so unpredictably left the Russian squadron of Ushakov, the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia stayed unharmed. Also, the Ottoman-Russian relations were in no way influenced by the incident in Ancona, when the Austrian General Fröhlich insulted the honour of both the Ottoman and the Russian flags. While many times complaining about their Austrian allies, the Russian officers, in particular Captain Lieutenant Metaxa and Lieutenant Ratmanov, emphasized that the Ottomans were “the most faithful and the most zealous” allies of Russia, sharing all the hardships of war with their Russian comrades-in-arms.

After the end of the campaign, however, the disagreements between the Russians and the Ottomans started to grow. These included the debates over the sharing of the spoils of war, garrisoning the fortresses and the future political status of the Ionian Islands. The final Russo-Ottoman Convention about the Ionian Republic had been signed only on 2 April (21 March) 1800, that is, one and a half year after the start of the Ionian campaign. At the same time, it is safe to say that the birth of the Republic of the Seven Islands became possible only due to the alliance

between the Porte and St. Petersburg in the wake of their joint military operations against France.

Contrary to the suspicions of the Ottomans and the British, Paul I did not express a pronounced intention, no matter what, to keep the Ionian Islands under his direct control. Corfu and other islands of the archipelago were looked upon by the Russian Emperor only in view of his struggle with the French, as a convenient strategic foothold enabling Russia to counteract the French advances in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. When Paul cut ties with his Austrian and British allies and began improving his relations with France, the further interest of the Russian Emperor in the Ionian Islands was gone. Paul ordered all his forces in the Mediterranean to return back home. In July 1800 Ushakov sailed off from Corfu, and by the summer 1801 there were no more Russian troops on the Ionian Islands.

Quite soon, however, Russia would restore its military presence in the Ionian archipelago. Considering the precarious peace of Amiens and the eventual resumption of war in Europe the importance of the Ionian Islands had been once again recognized in St. Petersburg. In September 1802 the Russian troops appeared on the Ionian Islands for the second time, and in late 1803-early 1804, after the threat of the French aggression against the Balkan domains of the Sultan re-emerged, St. Petersburg began the active reinforcement of its positions on Corfu.

CHAPTER VII

DYNAMICS OF OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS THROUGHOUT 1799-1805

Nam tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet.
(Quintus Horatius Flaccus, "Epistulae",
Liber I, Epistula 18, versus 84)

7.1. The ways of the Ottoman-Russian cooperation, 1799-1800

At the turn of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire appeared in serious decline and the extreme exhaustion of the Ottoman state afforded ground for speculations by many foreign diplomats that it was, actually, on the verge of crumbling. On 27 January 1799 the Russian ambassador in Constantinople V. S. Tomara reported to the Tsar that "the day before yesterday the Vidin affair¹ finally ended, with Pazvantoğlu and his associates being amnestied..."² It was not a secret, that the term "amnesty" was used to cover the inability of the central authorities to cope with the rebellious pasha. In the same report Tomara mentioned another and very interesting fact concerning the depth of the crisis in the Ottoman finances. By the end of January 1799 the state treasury owed the troops half a year's salary and was empty. Respectively, the leading statesmen had lent the treasury 800 purses, of which the

¹ The military expedition of the central government against the rebellious governor of Vidin Osman Pazvantoğlu, which lasted throughout 1798, yet to no effect.

² 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 January 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 887, f. 36 ob.

Grand Vizier and *Mühürdar* Yusuf Ağa each lent 250 purses, the Defterdar and Çelebi Mustafa Efendi gave 150 purses.³

Furthermore, the corruption pervaded the Ottoman state apparatus up to its highest levels and truly became a scourge to the whole Empire. The Russian ambassador, for example, when describing the personality of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atıf Efendi was mentioning in particular that “Reis Efendi is a good-minded man and he is quite determined in the present political system of the Porte, but he is also a bribetaker to the bone, like all other Turks.”⁴ In this respect Tomara pointed to a rather colourful detail. In exchange for kind treatment of the French prisoners of war Atıf Efendi was taking bribes from the Spanish charge d’affaires, and returned to the latter one false coin found in the purse recently received from the Spanish diplomat.⁵

In terms of taking bribes the Grand Vizier never lagged behind his subordinates. Thus, in order to release the French prisoners of war kept in gaol in Syria and Cyprus for 250 purses (125 thousand piastres), the head of the Ottoman government demanded from the *Reis-ül-Küttab* to issue and send the respective firmans. Atıf Efendi, seething with resentment against the Grand Vizier, repeated the whole story to the dragoman of the Russian embassy Fonton, enquiring whether Fonton had some acquaintances among those French prisoners. Upon receiving the positive answer, the *Reis-ül-Küttab* proposed to write to them, so that they

³ Ibidem, f. 37 ob-38; Zapiska Konstantinopol’skikh vestei i razglashenii. January 1799. Ibidem, f. 47 ob.

⁴ “*Реис Эфенди есть человек благонамеренный и весьма тверд в нынешней политической системе Порты; но интересант до крайности как и прочие турки*”. V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 July 1799. Ibidem, Delo 893, f. 48.

⁵ Ibidem.

additionally pay for firmans, “because the dishonest Vizier would not give me even a single purse of those taken by him”.⁶

In regard to the personality of Atif Efendi, his chronic alcoholism could not be a blessing for the Ottoman state affairs as well. In August 1799 it was reported to the Sultan that his *Reis-ül-Küttab* began to drink more than earlier and while being drunk he was telling the servants about all state secrets. Yusuf Ağa defended Atif from the latter accusation and the Sultan ordered to communicate to Atif that, should it appear above him to give up drinking completely, he was allowed to drink no more than two cups of wine per day. Atif Efendi himself admitted that he was unable to quit drinking.⁷

In his conversation with the dragoman of the Russian embassy, Fonton, the *Reis-ül-Küttab* recognised, though just once and much unintentionally, that the Ottoman Empire was indeed in a state of the extreme exhaustion. In response to the reprehension of Fonton that the Porte not only forgave Pazvantoğlu, but also complied with all his demands, the Ottoman official passionately remarked, “Does the ambassador not know about our pitiable situation? It is so grave and desperate, that even if your Paul I himself happened to rule over us he would anyway have to appeal to Pazvantoğlu and would concede to him as we did”.⁸ This confession is all the more valuable that it was made by one of the highest Ottoman statesmen. Otherwise there was nothing new or something special about it. The affair with Pazvantoğlu quite clearly demonstrated the poor situation of the Ottoman state before the whole Europe. The Russian ambassador in London wrote in summer 1801 to his

⁶ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 September 1799’ Ibidem, Delo 895, f. 15.

⁷ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 26 / 15 August 1799’ Ibidem, Delo 894, f. f. 82 ob - 83.

⁸ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 October 1799’ Ibidem, Delo 896, f. f. 59 – 59 ob.

brother, “...*tout le monde voit, que la Porte est dans une decadence absolue, que toutes ses provinces sont en insurrection et que depuis 8 ans elle ne peut pas soumettre Passavan-Oglou*”.⁹

In March 1800 Tomara was seriously considering the possibility of an imminent disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, stating that it was going to fall not so much because of the external aggression as because of its own internal foes and problems. The first and foremost of these was the “excessive weakening of the head against the limbs”.¹⁰ According to Tomara’s views, Russia in this situation should remain faithful to its allied obligations, yet it was also the time to make a plan regarding the internal situation of the Ottoman Empire, in order to be ready for any kind of events in the future.¹¹ That the Ottoman state could collapse was not only the vision of the ambassador alone, as is clear from the instructions of Paul I to Tomara, dated 8 August 1800. Tomara was informed that upon his request he was sent two packet-boats to provide uninterrupted correspondence with Russia, and should the situation require (“in case of the extremely bad turn of affairs, which would lead to the downfall of the Sultan’s rule and the throne”), Tomara could use the mentioned packet-boats for his own departure from Constantinople.¹²

It stands to mention that the French aggression in Egypt took place at the background of the impotence of the Ottoman central government to effectively control the situation in the provinces. The landing of the Bonaparte’s expeditionary

⁹ ‘S. R. Vorontsov to A. R. Vorontsov, 14 / 2 August 1801’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1876), Vol. 10, pp. 118-19.

¹⁰ ‘V. S. Tomara to F. V. Rastopchin, March 1800 (no date)’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8, Delo 924, f. 17.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, f. f. 21- 21ob.

¹² ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 8 August (27 July) 1800’ AVPRI, Fond 180. The Embassy in Constantinople. Op. 517/1, Delo 1, f. 116.

force in Egypt, as well as the French occupation of the Apennine Peninsula and especially of the Ionian archipelago, gave room for serious concerns not only in Constantinople but also at many European courts. The French advances in the Eastern Mediterranean and the prospect of a French landing in the Balkans brought Great Britain, Austria, Russia, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Ottoman Empire together into the same coalition.

At this point Russia sought to preserve the integrity of the possessions of the Sultan, trying to contain the growing threat posed by the French republican armies to the rest of Europe and favouring an idea to have a “weak neighbour” on its southern borders. It should be mentioned that the proposition to help the Ottoman side with a squadron of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet came from Paul I even before the occupation of Egypt, and the joint Russo-Ottoman squadron of Vice Admiral Ushakov sailed off to its Mediterranean destination long before the official alliance treaty had been concluded.

Along with the aid by its naval forces, Russia at the request of the Porte did send to the Ottomans a certain amount of the artillery munitions. As early as August 1798, i.e. before the arrival of the Russian naval squadron to Constantinople, Çelebi Mustafa Efendi through the agency of the dragoman of the Russian embassy Fonton addressed Tomara with a request to sell the Porte from the Russian Black Sea munition depots the bombs and the cannon balls.¹³ This request was repeated once again in mid-September¹⁴, when Ushakov while staying with his squadron in the Ottoman capital observed the Ottoman fleet and the Constantinople dockyards. The

¹³ ‘V. S. Tomara to Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko, 13 / 2 August 1798’ AVPRI, Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 880, f. f. 52 -53.

¹⁴ ‘V. S. Tomara to Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko, 12 / 1 September 1798’ Ibidem, f. f. 82 -82 ob.

Russian Admiral in general praised the qualities of the Ottoman ships, yet found the artillery and the cannon balls unsatisfactory.¹⁵ Also, the Porte asked the Russian side to send three foundrymen, who would be the experts in production of the bullets and bombs, three foundrymen of the cannons and two minemen. All of them were to be cognizant in all the technological processes relating to the production of the cannons, cannon balls, bombs and mines, and be skilled in construction of the respective foundries.¹⁶

Pursuant to the two requests of the Porte, of 13 August and 12 September, the Russian Emperor issued the decree¹⁷ ordering to provide the Ottoman side with all necessary materials, that is the bombs, the cannon balls, rifles, gunpowder, anchors, etc. In terms of the realization of this project, however, arose the two main difficulties. The first was the non-conformity of the artillery calibres, for the Russians used for this purpose the *poods* (one *pood* = 16,380496 kg) and pounds (one Russian artillery pound = 0,4914 kg) whereas the Ottomans measured their artillery calibres in *okkas* (1 *okka* = 1,2828 kg).

The second problem related to the question who would be dealing with the whole issue in practice. Tomara, apparently unwilling to take additional responsibilities, suggested the Ottomans that the most common and convenient way (obviously, in the eyes of the Russian ambassador and not for the Porte) to transport the needed materials from Russia would be to entrust the practical realization of the

¹⁵ 'F. F. Ushakov to Paul I. 17 / 6 September 1798' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 2, pp. 98-100.

¹⁶ A Note of Çelebi Mustafa Efendi to the Russian government (in French translation). Attached to the letter of V. S. Tomara to Bezborodko, 27 / 16 November 1798. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 881, f. 103.

¹⁷ This decree was issued on 10 September 1798, i.e. two days before the Porte addressed Tomara for the second time. 'V. S. Tomara to Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko, 13 / 2 August 1798' Ibidem, Delo 900, f. f. 16 -18.

project to some contractor. Regarding the Ottomans, they in the similar situations, as Tomara himself pointed out, were not used to have business dealings with the contractors. Usually it was the ambassador of the country, addressed by the Ottoman government, who was expected to organize everything.

As Tomara was not inclined to deal with all the smaller details of this specific issue and referred to the usual practice of other European countries, the Ottomans in February 1799 addressed the British embassy asking to find them a contractor. The Porte was promised the help of the representative of the British Levant Company Peter Tooke. Now it was the turn of the Russian ambassador to be anxious. Tomara was aware, that should the British succeed to provide the Porte with the Russian war materials it wanted, the Ottomans would be grateful to Britain, and Russia, instead, would lose its present positions at the Ottoman government. In that case largely because of Tomara's torpor the Ottomans might, justly enough, regard Russia as an unreliable partner, who even while helping still secretly was opposing the improvement of the Ottoman arms.¹⁸

In early March 1799 Tomara did everything to prevent the British contractor Tooke from the successful accomplishment of his mission. The ambassador insisted in the letters written to the Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko and the Vice President of the Admiralty N. S. Mordvinov that the materials requested by the Porte should be provided directly, without the services of Tooke. Otherwise there was serious threat that the British would augment their influence in Constantinople at the expense of the

¹⁸ Ibidem, f. 17 ob; 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 May 1799' Ibidem, Delo 891, f. f. 33ob -34 ob.

Russian side.¹⁹ In order to avoid misunderstandings about the artillery calibres, Tomara received in May 1799 from the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral Vilim Petrovich von Desen (Fondezin)²⁰ the samples of the bombs and cannon balls, one for each of the nine models ordered by the Porte. The ambassador then presented the samples to the Ottoman side, so that it could estimate the exact amount necessary for each calibre.²¹

Finally on 29 May the first installment of the Russian cannon balls and bombs was brought to Constantinople. Though in general these did not correspond to the needed calibres, the total cargo was re-loaded to another ship and further transported to Acre, where the British troops had a shortage of munitions. The unloading of the Russian shells, according to the observation of Tomara, “favourably impressed the common people, which were looking with amazement at the help provided by Russia, blaming at the same time their own government for the failures also in this field”.²² In his respective report to the Emperor Tomara attached the register of the Russian munitions sent for the Porte:

Table 8. The register of the bombs and cannon balls sent by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleets on the schooner № 2, 21 May 1799 [Ведомость бомбам и ядрам присланным при сообщении из Конторы главного командира Черноморских флотов на Шкуне № 2 от 10-го мая 1799]. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 892, f. 19.

Item	Amount
The bombs of 2 ½ <i>poods</i>	170
The cannon balls of 1 <i>pood</i>	887
----- // ----- of 15 pounds	178
----- // ----- of 10 ¾ pounds	270
----- // ----- of 6 pounds	9.818

¹⁹ ‘V. S. Tomara to Chancellor A. A. Bezborodko, 13 / 2 August 1798’ Ibidem, Delo 900, f. f. 17 -18; V. S. Tomara to N. S. Mordvinov, early March 1799, no exact date. Ibidem, f. 29.

²⁰ On V. P. Von Desen’s biography see: Dezin fon, Vilim Petrovich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar’* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1905), Volume 6 “Dabelov-Diad’kovskii”, pp. 167-71.

²¹ ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 May 1799’ AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 891, f. f. 33 ob-34.

²² ‘V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 12 / 1 June 1799’ Ibidem, Delo 892. f. f. 15-15 ob.

On its way back the schooner of Lieutenant Minitskii, which brought the abovementioned artillery shells, took the samples given by the Porte. The Black Sea authorities were instructed by Tomara not to send any munitions in case when the Russian bombs or cannon balls would not correspond to the Ottoman samples.²³

Throughout the spring and early summer of 1799 Tomara, encouraged by the relating orders²⁴ of Paul I, continued his attempts to push aside the British contractor Tooke from participation in delivering the Russian munitions to the Ottoman Empire. In the end, the *Kapudan Pasha* announced to Tooke in July that there was no need anymore for the earlier ordered items, and demanded from him to return the money he received from the Porte as a downpayment. The only thing which the Porte allowed Tooke to deliver were eight anchors, urgently needed at the time.²⁵ Yet Tomara wished to take away from the British even that modest token of their involvement in the issue. The ambassador was asking the Commander-in Chief of the Russian Black Sea Fleet Admiral von Desen (Fondezin) to deny at any pretext the request of the eight anchors, should it be made by the British contractor, even if those anchors were in fact available. Perfectly obvious, Tomara advised the Russian naval authorities never to reveal the British that the real reason for the refusal was the letter of the Russian ambassador in Constantinople. As to the anchors, they were to be directly delivered to the Ottomans together with other munitions.²⁶

²³ 'V. S. Tomara to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet, 12 / 1 June 1799' Ibidem, f. 35.

²⁴ The order of Paul I to Tomara, dated 20 / 9 June 1799 prescribed the ambassador "to arrange the delivery to the Porte in such a way so that the English would have nothing to do with it". Mentioned in the report of Tomara addressed to the Emperor: 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 27 / 16 July 1799' Ibidem, Delo 893. f. 67.

²⁵ Ibidem, f. f. 67 ob-68.

²⁶ 'V. S. Tomara to Admiral Von Desen (Fondezin), 27 / 16 July 1799' Ibidem, f. f. 71-71 ob.

One can say with reasonable confidence that in general the relations between Constantinople and St. Petersburg were moving forward in a positive way. If what was reported to Tomara in July 1799 by his paid agent was true, some of the Ottoman officials were speaking positively of the behaviour of their Russian allies while discussing among themselves the European politics.²⁷ Russia indeed was seeking to preserve at this time good relations with the Ottoman Empire. In particular, St. Petersburg finally agreed to reconsider the issue of the new Trade Tariff, which for years remained one of the principal stumbling blocks in the relations between the two states. The old tariff was based on the prices fixed at the level of 1783, and the Ottoman side throughout 1790-s continued its fruitless attempts to press for the Russian recognition of the fact that the customs duties paid by the Russian merchants should be calculated according to the real prices instead of those greatly outdated and mentioned in the Ottoman-Russian Commercial treaty of 1783.

On 22 August 1799 the Ottoman and the Russian empires signed the Convention on the Trade Tariff²⁸ and specified the new list of goods as well as the amount of customs duties paid for each specific type of goods included in the list.²⁹ In the same way as before, the tariff was established at the rate of 3 %, but on the basis of the current prices of the day. The new trade tariffs were to come into effect when other European powers would also accept them. It was also agreed that the trade tariffs should be renewed every twelve years.

²⁷ Zapiska konstantinopol'skikh vestei i razglashenii. July 1799. Ibidem, f. 60 ob.

²⁸ The Russian text of the Convention: Ibidem, Delo 894, f. f. 58-60; the Ottoman text of the Convention: Ibidem, f. 56; the French text of the Convention: Ibidem, f. f. 76-77 ob. Also, it was published at: Konventsiia o postanovlenii novogo Tarifa dlia trgovli Rossiiskikh poddannikh v Turetskikh oblastiakh. PSZRI, Vol. XXV, № 19077, 1830, pp. 756-57.

²⁹ The comprehensive list of the trade items and the amounts of customs duties in Russian: Ibidem, f. f. 62-75; in Ottoman: f. 57.

The weakness of the Ottoman central government by the end of the 18th century became so manifest that the close downfall of the House of Osman seemed quite possible for many foreign observers. Following the French aggression in Egypt the concerns about the future of the Ottoman state and the fate of its possessions increased. The Russian authorities seriously contemplated the prospects of the disintegration of the Ottoman state, though in view of the shift of the balance of power in Europe earnestly sought to prevent it. On many occasions during this period St. Petersburg proved that regarding the Ottoman Empire it preferred the politics of the maintenance of the 'weak neighbour' on Russia's southern borders. Apart from conclusion of the defensive alliance and sending the Black Sea squadron to help the Porte, Russia also cooperated with the Ottomans by sending the latter various artillery munitions. Additionally, the old Trade Tariff of 1783 had been finally reconsidered in accordance with the wishes of the Ottoman side.

7.2. Russia and the Porte, 1800-1803

In the autumn of 1799 the Second coalition was already on its last legs. At the same time when the Ottoman-Russian relations at least in some points were gradually turning for the better, the controversies between Russia and its British and Austrian allies were increasingly growing into an open conflict. The Ancona incident, when at the order of Austrian General Fröhlich the Russian and the Ottoman flags were forcefully hauled down and replaced by the Austrian one, became the last straw for Paul I. The Russian Emperor took a decision to recall all his troops from Europe, and both the army of Suvorov and the naval squadron of Ushakov received the respective orders. So, in January 1800 Suvorov's army,

heretofore fighting with the French in the Northern Italy and Switzerland, moved back to Russia.³⁰ The squadron of Ushakov spent the winter of 1799-1800 on Corfu and eventually departed from there on 18 July 1800.³¹

The Porte was informed in detail about the dissatisfaction of St. Petersburg with Austria on 16 November 1799, when Tomara met with two Ottoman officials, Ismet Bey and *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atif Efendi, in the house of the latter. At the conference, which lasted for three hours, the Russian ambassador explained the position of his government regarding the court of Vienna. Tomara pointed out that the actions of Austria indicated that it openly ignored the interests of its allies and was all the time preoccupied exclusively with its own territorial aggrandizement in the Northern Italy and elsewhere. Reis Efendi agreed with Tomara, telling that according to some rumours, which became known to the Porte, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Baron von Thugut frequently had secret conferences with the Spanish ambassador in Vienna. Apparently, the main subject of these meetings was the separate peace the Austrians planned to conclude with the French Republic behind the backs of their allies.³²

On 2 December Tomara once again met with Ismet Bey and Atif Efendi. The Ottoman officials expressed on this occasion their thoughts regarding the behaviour of the Austrian court. Atif told Tomara that the separate peace of Austria with France would certainly affect all other participants of the anti-French coalition. First, the restoration of the monarchy in France would become virtually impossible. Second, in

³⁰ ‘A. V. Suvorov to Paul I, 22 / 11 January 1800’ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.3, pp. 641- 42.

³¹ Miliutin, *Istoriia voiny 1799*, Vol.2, p. 505.

³² Zapiska svidaniia poslannika Tomary s turetskimi upolnomochennymi Ismet Beyem i Reis Efendiyem v dome poslednego. 16 / 5 November 1799. AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 897, f. f. 65-73 ob.

case when the French would have one enemy less it would be much more difficult for the allies to come to terms with them. The *Reis-ül-Küttab* made an interesting proposition to pay the Austrians back in their own coin, enquiring whether it would be possible to find a way of opening the separate negotiations with the French behind the back of Austria. Then, in view of the Ottoman minister, the French would become more unyielding in their negotiations with Vienna.³³

Tomara notified the Ottoman side that the Russian troops were recalled from Switzerland, Italy and the Netherlands, yet preferred not to tell about the same orders sent to Ushakov. The ambassador explained in his report to the Emperor why it was important, in his opinion, to disguise for the time being the decision to withdraw all Russia's naval forces from the Mediterranean. Tomara argued that because of the winter weather the navigation in the Black Sea usually stopped towards the end of November, and for that reason the squadron of Ushakov would anyway stay in the Mediterranean at least until the spring. Furthermore, the Russian ships for the moment were scattered all over the Mediterranean (Corfu, Ancona, Naples and Genoa) and it would take time to gather all of them. Thus even if Tomara would immediately inform the Ottomans about Pavel's orders to Ushakov, this would not tell on the actual position of the Ushakov's squadron in the next four or five months. At the same time, there was no doubt that the Porte, if learned that the Russian fleet sails back home, would feel abandoned and betrayed. This could also make the Porte consider the alliance treaty with Russia to be broken, what in its turn might result in the Ottoman rapprochement with France and Austria.³⁴

³³ Zapiska soobshcheniia sdellanogo turetskimi polnomochnymi Ismet Beyem i Reis Efendiyem chrezvychainomu poslanniku Tomare na svidanii 21 noyabria 1799. Ibidem, f. f. 124-125.

³⁴ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 5 December (25 November) 1799' Ibidem, f. f. 116-122.

It was essential, in Tomara's judgement, not to tell the Porte at this point the whole truth about the recall of the Ushakov's squadron. Tomara personally addressed Ushakov, asking the latter to keep secret, for a while, the orders of St. Petersburg to his squadron to return to the Black Sea.³⁵ The ambassador proposed to explain to the Porte the forthcoming departure of the Russian fleet by the urgent need of repair works, using the pretext that the reparation of the ships could not be done in the ports of the Ottoman Empire because of the lack of the necessary construction timber. In this respect Tomara even ordered the newly arrived councillor Chistiakov to reject all the Ottoman timber as defective, when Chistiakov would make the respective observations together with the Porte's official. Tomara also addressed Ushakov, advising him to write to the *Kaymakam* Pasha. Ushakov was recommended to present the situation with the departure of the Russian squadron in line with Tomara's instructions, so that the Ottoman side would have no other choice but agree that the majority of the Ushakov's ships needed to be repaired and should return to the Black Sea. Tomara emphasized the utmost secrecy of the issue, reminding Ushakov that everyone on the squadron should think that they sail back to the Russian shores only for repair and would be back in the Mediterranean again.³⁶

The attempts of Tomara to soften the reaction of the Porte at the news about the withdrawal of the Ushakov's fleet once more indicate at the Russian interest to preserve good relations with the Ottoman Empire. Instructed to inform the Porte

³⁵ 'V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 5 December (25 November) 1799' Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, pp. 204-205.

³⁶ 'V. S. Tomara to Paul I, 20 / 9 December 1799' AVPRI. Fond 89. Russia's Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 898, f. f. 18-18 ob; 'V. S. Tomara to F. F. Ushakov, 18 / 7 December 1799' Ibidem, f. f. 24-25.

about the reasons of the growing Russo-Austrian and Russo-British antagonism³⁷, Tomara was on any occasion to assure the Ottomans in the unchanging friendship of the Russian Emperor towards the Ottoman state. Paul I even went so far as to think at the possibility of the Russo-Ottoman alliance against Austria.

At the very beginning of 1800 the Russian government learned that the Austrians through their internuncio Baron Herbert were intriguing at Constantinople against Russia, planning to draw the Porte on their side by the promise of the Ionian Islands and “a few villages in Banat”. Tomara was ordered to counteract the Austrian internuncio and, should it be necessary, to tell the Porte that if the court of Vienna would continue its present politics the Ottoman Empire might declare war on Austria and to “gratify itself by taking back the territories lost after the Peace of Belgrade”. In that case the Porte would be supported by the Russian Emperor.³⁸

The last year of the 18th century witnessed further deterioration in relations of St. Petersburg with Austria and Great Britain. In late April of 1800 Paul I recalled his ambassadors in London (Semion Romanovich Vorontsov) and in Vienna (Stepan Alexeievich Kolychev), on 25 April and 29 April respectively.³⁹ On the other hand, after the coup of 18 Brumaire (9 November 1799) in France the Russian Emperor could be assured that the French revolution, so hated by him, ended. At the background of the Russo-Austrian and the Russo-British disagreements started a

³⁷ The project of instruction to the extraordinary envoy and the plenipotentiary minister at Constantinople Tomar, confirmed by Pavel, prescribing to inform Turkey the motives for the termination of the war with France [Проект рескрипта чрезвычайному посланнику и полномочному министру в Константинополе Томаре, апробованный Павлом, с распоряжением о сообщении Турции мотивов прекращения войны с Францией]. December 1799. Confirmed on 13 December 1799. Ibidem, Delo 317, f. f. 1-6 ob.

³⁸ ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 15 / 4 January 1800’ Ibidem, Fond 180. The Embassy in Constantinople. Op. 517/1. Delo 1, f. f. 1-2.

³⁹ Mordvinov, *Admiral Ushakov*, Vol. 3, p. 637.

certain Russo-French rapprochement. In February there were allowed the commercial relations of the Russian merchants with France.⁴⁰ On the international arena Paul I assumed the policy of non-interference, though towards the end of 1800 the anti-British sentiments of the Russian monarch led him to an open conflict with Great Britain and brought about the celebrated project of the Russo-French expedition to India.

In point of fact, throughout 1800 the Second Coalition ceased to exist. One of the most notable battles of this year took place on 14 June 1800 at the village of Marengo in Piedmont. It resulted in the decisive victory of the French army of General (and by then also the First Consul) Napoléon Bonaparte over the Austrians. The Northern Italy once again fell into the hands of the French. Another key event of the year became the fall of Malta, which surrendered to the British on 5 September.

Instead of returning the island to the Maltese knights, as it was expected by Paul I, the British kept Malta for themselves and raised their own flag over Valetta. The Russian Emperor, who was at the same time the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, took it as a personal insult tantamount to the declaration of war. The estrangement between Russia and Great Britain was also reflected in instructions to the Russian embassy at Constantinople. On 12 October 1800 Paul I ordered Tomara to sever all contacts with the British ambassador.⁴¹ Another instruction of the Russian Emperor to Tomara, dated 7 November 1800⁴², contained a detailed

⁴⁰ O razreshenii torgovykh cnoshenii s Frantsiyeyu. 19 / 8 February 1800. PSZRI, Vol. XXVI. № 19746, pp. 524-25.

⁴¹ 'Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 12 October (30 September) 1800' AVPRI, Fond 180. The Embassy in Constantinople. Op. 517/1. Delo 1, f. f. 132.

⁴² 'Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 7 November (26 October) 1800' Ibidem, f. f. 140-43.

description of Pavel's views on the international politics of Great Britain, in very strong terms accusing the British of ambitions for world domination.

Paul I prescribed Tomara to watch closely the British, "whose excessive efforts and designs to lay hands on the world commerce, and, in order to preserve it, to gain the exclusive domination on the high seas, almost daily ... give evidence that all other nations, which have the sea commerce and the naval forces, should definitely expect from this power any kind of oppression."⁴³ The Russian Emperor further pointed out that when even if now the Britain was acting "with impudence" against all the neutral flags on the seas, controlled by its fleets, the British aggressiveness would all the more increase with the new annexations and the appearance of the British naval forces in the new places, heretofore not yet controlled by them.

For that reason, according to Paul I, Egypt necessarily constituted the main object of the British aggressive designs. The annexation of Egypt would bring the Britain the numerous advantages arising both from natural wealth of this country and the Egypt's strategic geographical location, which would help to establish the domination in the Mediterranean, the Black and the Red seas. In this respect the British control over Malta, the first-class naval base, would open the way for the British to strengthen their positions in Egypt. Should the British occupy Egypt, argued the Russian Emperor, they would become the masters of the whole commerce of this part of the world. In words of Paul I, the Britain would not spare anything to reach this first and foremost objective. Accordingly, Tomara was instructed to warn the Porte about this British threat, for "Egypt in the hands of the English may

⁴³ Ibidem, f. 140.

become the nest, which would produce for the Porte the similar predators; in all its actions this nation pursues only its own profit”.⁴⁴ As an example, Tomara was to remind the Ottoman government about India, where the British through using “any means which greediness may suggest to the human mind”⁴⁵ managed to gain exclusive commercial privileges. In the end, the Ottomans were advised by the Russian Tsar to keep a watchful eye on Egypt.⁴⁶

Meanwhile the conflict of the Russian Emperor with Britain was growing. On 4 December 1800 Paul I ordered to stop the payments of the Russian subjects to the British creditors and all the British goods in Russia were sequestered.⁴⁷ One more point, which sparked the anger of many European countries against Britain, was the British violation of the rights of the neutral flag. Under the pretext of the blockade of the French trade the British navy claimed the unlimited right of arresting and searching any commercial ship (*droit de visite*), even though she was flying the neutral flag. Such an attitude was damaging the trade of all neutral European nations and bringing immense advantages solely to the Britain. On 16-18 December 1800 at the initiative of Paul I, with the aim to protect the neutral commerce from the raids of the British Royal Navy, Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Prussia signed the Declaration of the armed neutrality. Great Britain, in its turn, considered the proclamation of the League of the armed neutrality as a declaration of war.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, f. 141 ob.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, f. f. 141-141 ob.

⁴⁶ “Правительство турецкое недремлющим оком да стережет Египет”. Ibidem, f. 142.

⁴⁷ Ob ustanovlenii platezha dolgov anglichanam i o sekvestre angliiskikh tovarov v lavkakh i magazinakh. 4 December (22 November) 1800. *PSZRI*, Vol. XXVI, № 19660, p. 396. This decree was annulled on 18 May 1801, two months after the violent death of Paul I. Ibidem, № 19857, pp. 625-626.

Angry with Austria and Britain, Paul I remained satisfied with his Ottoman allies. Tomara was to call attention of the Ottoman government to the fact that Russia had never planned to annex the Ionian Islands and that all Russian troops were ordered to leave the Ionian archipelago.⁴⁸ In September 1800 Pavel proposed the Sultan to conclude a secret and separate convention on the mutual guarantee of the Russo-Ottoman borders. Apart from the respective instructions given to Tomara⁴⁹, the Tsar sent a personal letter to the Ottoman monarch along with a present of the fox fur coat.⁵⁰ The Russian ambassador at Constantinople had instructions to make his communication with the Porte as much sincere as possible, and to inform the Ottoman side about all political matters, which Tomara himself would manage to learn about.⁵¹

Like many times before, Tomara in the end of November 1800 was ordered once again to assure the Porte in the friendship of Russia. The Russian Emperor reiterated that it was up to the Ottoman side “to use My (i. e. Paul’s) propositions made earlier, and to remain forever in the alliance, which is so happily connecting us”.⁵² Just as at the beginning of the year, in late November Paul I contemplated the possibility of the joint Russo-Ottoman war against Austria. The instructions to Tomara contained the following passage: “Should I be forced to bear arms against the tricky Austrian House, then the Porte may, counting on my army and its strength,

⁴⁸ ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 20 / 9 February 1800’ AVPRI, Fond 180. The Embassy in Constantinople. Op. 517/1. Delo 1, f. f. 3-4.

⁴⁹ ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 3 September (22 August) 1800’ Ibidem, f. 122-122 ob.; Regarding this convention Tomara started negotiations, stopped by the Russian government after the death of Paul I. See: E. D. Verbitskii, ‘K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike Rossii na rubezhe XVIII i XIX vekov (O proekte russko-frantsuzskogo soyuza i razdela Ottomanskoï imperii F. V. Rostopchina’ In: *Kolonial’naia politika I natsional’no-osvoboditel’noie dvizheniie* (Kishinev, 1965), p. 181.

⁵⁰ ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 6 September (25 August) 1800’ Ibidem, f. 124.

⁵¹ ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 9 September (28 August) 1800’ Ibidem, f. 128.

⁵² ‘Paul I to V. S. Tomara, 25 / 13 November 1800’ Ibidem, Fond 89. Russia’s Relations with Turkey. Op. 89/8. Delo 318, f. 7 ob.

to use this opportunity in order to return everything what had been taken from it, as well as to possibly gain the new lands”.⁵³

Along with the official politics of the Russian government at this time to preserve the Ottoman Empire there existed also the projects suggesting the partition of the latter in alliance with other leading European powers. As the relations with Vienna and London increasingly deteriorated, the then Vice Chancellor and the Head of the College of Foreign Affairs Count Fiodor Vasilievich Rostopchin composed a memo⁵⁴ concerning the overall foreign policy strategy of the Russian state in the changed circumstances. It proposed to change the system of Russia’s foreign alliances completely and instead of alliance with Britain and Austria to achieve reconciliation with France.

One of the main consequences of this turn in the Russian foreign policy would be also the change of the attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. Rostopchin put forward the idea of partitioning the Sultan’s domains jointly with France, Austria and Prussia. Furthermore, the Ottoman state was compared to a “desperately sick, whom his doctors would not dare to tell about his being at the point of death”⁵⁵. It was in the memo of Rostopchin when the ‘sick man’ allegory, later widely used throughout the 19th century, appeared for the first time.⁵⁶ In accordance with Rostopchin’s plan Russia was supposed to take Romania, Bulgaria and Moldavia; Austria would annex

⁵³ “Если бы я доведен был до поднятия оружия на коварный Дом Австрийскийб тогда Порта считая на ополчение мое и на силу онаго может воспользоваться сим случаем для возвращения под свою державу всего у ней похищенного, и присвоения может быть новых земель”. Ibidem, f. f. 7 ob-8.

⁵⁴ F. V. Rostopchin, *Zapiska grafa F. V. Rostopchina o politicheskikh otnosheniyakh Rossii v poslednie mesiatsy pavlocskogo tsarstvovaniia*. *Russkii arkhiv*, 1878. Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 103-10.

⁵⁵ Rostopchin, *Zapiska*, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Rostopchin Fiodor Vasilievich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; Petrograd, 1918), Volume 17 “Romanova-Riasovskii”, p. 250.

Bosnia, Serbia and Wallachia. Prussia, even though not sharing directly any part of the Ottoman lands, was to be offered the Hannover electorate together with the Bishoprics of Paderborn and Münster in compensation. The last but surely not the least point was that France would take Egypt, while Greece together with all islands of the Aegean archipelago would be made an autonomous republic, in the same fashion as the Ionian Islands, and to be placed under the joint protectorate of all four powers participating in the partition.⁵⁷ On 14 October 1800 this memo was signed by Paul I.

Obviously the existence of such a memo, and in particular its endorsement by the Emperor, seems to be a clear-cut manifestation of the expansionist intentions of Russia. However, as Kleinman and especially Verbitskii point out, the memorandum of Rostopchin was expressing only one of the two approaches regarding the Russian politics towards the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸ Verbitskii, who did a specific research on the Rostopchin's memo, makes the point that it is more important to speak about the practical implementation of the Russian foreign politics at that time. In fact, the given memo even though it was signed by Pavel did not influence the Russian foreign policy agenda at the end of 1800 – early 1801. Still further, the real politics of Russia as regards the Ottoman state within the given period was precisely the opposite of that one proposed by Rostopchin.⁵⁹

Verbitskii calls attention to the fact that Rostopchin suggested the partition of the Ottoman Empire together with Austria. This necessarily presupposed the Russo-

⁵⁷ Rostopchin, *Zapiska*, p. 109.

⁵⁸ Kleinman, *Russko-turetskii soyuz*, pp. 22-23; Verbitskii, *K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike*, pp. 171-73.

⁵⁹ Verbitskii, *K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike*, p. 173.

Austrian rapprochement, which in reality did not take place. Throughout 1800-1801 the government of Paul I continued to be hostile towards Austria.⁶⁰ In this respect the point of Verbitskii apparently may be strengthened by the previously mentioned ideas of the Russian Emperor about the possibility of the Russo-Ottoman joint military actions against Austria, mentioned in his instructions to Tomara. Moreover, Rostopchin himself, and what is particularly notable in spite of his own views, was prescribing Tomara in January 1801 to reassure the Sultan in Russia's loyalty and the readiness to stay on guard of the integrity of the Ottoman state.⁶¹

Paul I, indeed, wished to conclude peace with France and on 16 January 1801 Stepan Alekseiievich Kolychov was sent as the Russian official representative to Paris, authorized to conduct the peace negotiations with the French government. The instructions given to Kolychov, however, never mentioned any partition of the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, at his negotiations with the First Consul, Kolychov was prescribed to speak all the time in defence of the Porte and to demand the withdrawal of the French troops from Egypt.⁶² After his arrival to Paris on 6 March 1801 the Russian representative during his conferences with the French Foreign Minister, the celebrated and notorious Talleyrand, never even tried to reach an agreement with France at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. In the proceedings of the conference of 14 March 1801 the Ottoman Sultan had been referred to as "*ami et alli *" of the Russian Emperor.⁶³

⁶⁰ Verbitskii, *K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike*, p. 173.

⁶¹ Verbitskii, *K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike*, p. 182.

⁶² Verbitskii, *K voprosu o blizhnevostochnoi politike*, p. 182.

⁶³ Proceedings of the conference of 14 March 1801. *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, p. 57.

One of the main stumbling blocks at the negotiations, as could be expected, became the question of the French evacuation of Egypt. Paris argued, however, that to take Egypt away from France would mean to deprive it of the only means of successful struggle against the British might on the high seas.⁶⁴ According to the observations of Kolychov, France, beyond all doubt, had secret plans against the Ottoman Empire and hoped to make Russia to accept those plans. The First Consul was constantly making allusions to the Porte, whose existence was “very precarious”.⁶⁵ It was thus the French, who, as Kolychov pointed out, tried to “set Russia and the Ottoman Empire at loggerheads with one another, in order to take possession of Egypt”⁶⁶. Nevertheless, the project of Rostopchin had never been communicated to the French, and all propositions of Paris to discuss the future of the Ottoman Empire were being declined by the Russian side.⁶⁷

In the meantime, while the Franco-Russian negotiations were going on in Paris, a palace coup d'état took place in St. Petersburg. On 23 March 1801 the Emperor Paul I was murdered by the plotters and his son, Alexander I, acceded to the Russian throne. Even though the new reign brought many changes in the Russian domestic and foreign politics, the Russian attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire remained the same as during the time of Pavel. The instructions to Kolychov by the new Emperor made it clear that Alexander I was going to keep all Russia's allied obligations regarding the Porte and would insist on the French evacuation of Egypt.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ ‘A Note of Talleyrand to the Russian government, 11 April 1801’ *Ibidem*, pp. 111-13.

⁶⁵ ‘S. A. Kolychov to F. V. Rostopchin, 25 / 13 March 1801’ *Ibidem*, p. 80.

⁶⁶ ‘S. A. Kolychov to the Court, 13 / 1 April 1801’ *Ibidem*, p. p. 113-14.

⁶⁷ ‘S. A. Kolychov to F. V. Rostopchin, 25 / 13 March 1801’ *Ibidem*, pp. 79-81.

⁶⁸ ‘Alexander I to S. A. Kolychov, 28 / 16 April 1801’ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

In this way during the end of 1799 and early 1801 the practical politics of Russia towards the Ottoman Empire did not change much, with St. Petersburg regularly defending the Porte on the international arena and seeking to preserve the Ottoman state in its present situation of Russia's 'weak neighbour'. At the same time the Rostopchin's project, though it was not realized or even taken as a practical guidance for Russian foreign policy, indicated that the old expansionist ambitions of the Catherinian times were still alive among some part of the Russian policymakers.

Soon after his accession to the throne the new Russian Emperor Alexander I clarified the main principles of his foreign policy in instructions issued to the ambassadors at Paris, Berlin and Vienna. In summer 1801 the envoy to Paris Kolychov upon his own request was replaced by Arkadii Ivanovich Morkov. On 9 July 1801 the Tsar signed the instruction for Morkov⁶⁹, who was departing to France in order to continue the peace negotiations started by his predecessor. In the part relating to the Ottoman Empire there was not the slightest hint indicating at the wish of the Russian government to arrange with the French about the partition of the Sultan's domains. Alexander I noted that all projects of conquest and territorial aggrandizement should be alien to a ruler of such a vast empire like his own. At the same time the Russian monarch unambiguously spoke about his firm intention not only to keep peace with the Porte, but to preserve the state, "the weakness and bad administration of which both make a precious pledge of security"⁷⁰. Almost in the same expressions were composed the instructions of Alexander I to A. I. Krudener⁷¹

⁶⁹ 'Alexander I to A. I. Morkov, 9 July / 27 June 1801' *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, pp. 201-22.

⁷⁰ "*Dont la faiblesse et la mauvaise administration est un gage précieux de sécurité*". Ibidem, pp. 216-17.

⁷¹ 'Alexander I to A. I. Krudener, 17 / 5 July 1801' *VPR*. Vol. 1, pp. 42-54.

and A. K. Razumovskii⁷², the Russian ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna respectively.

Speaking about the ‘preservation’ of the Sultan’s domains necessarily meant that according to the Russian point of view there was, or at least appeared to be, a certain threat to the existence of the Ottoman Empire. As seen from the reports of Tomara, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople perceived such a threat in the increased attempts of France to restore its former influence at the Porte, along with the spread of the pernicious French propaganda among the Ottoman Balkan subjects. The difficult internal situation of the Porte and the whole range of the problems it experienced some years earlier did not change much. The weakness of the Ottoman state even before its own subjects, let alone other foreign powers, by observations of Tomara was “making the Porte very coward” and one could expect that this country “would forget the general truths and would act according to the temporary impressions”⁷³. In other words, this meant that the Russian ambassador was afraid that the Ottomans at some point might give up to the French diplomatic pressure. In that case this could lead to the annexation of some part of the Ottoman territory by France, or to the Franco-Ottoman rapprochement and alliance, in both cases these were the last things Russia would like to see.

The newly appointed Russian ambassadors in their first general instructions, summarizing the main principles of the Russian foreign policy, by mid-1802 continued to receive the unchanged descriptions of the official position of St. Petersburg towards the Porte. The focal point of it was “to try always to keep our

⁷² ‘Alexander I to A. K. Razumovskii, 22 / 10 September 1801’ Ibidem, pp. 78-92.

⁷³ ‘V. S. Tomara to Alexander I, 28 / 16 January 1802’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 168-69.

present relations and to care sincerely about the affairs of Turkey”⁷⁴. According to the trustworthy information, known to the Russian government, France intended to “annex the best provinces of the Turkish Empire”. It was expected that having not achieved this aim for a number of reasons, the First Consul would start trying to draw the Ottomans over his side. Then, there was a possibility that the Porte would join the French, “with imprudence, quite typical for the ignorance of the Turks”⁷⁵. In this way, the Russian diplomacy had specific orders not only to keep good relations with the Porte, but even to save the Ottomans from themselves and from their own ‘imprudence’. To put it differently, after signing with France a peace treaty⁷⁶ St. Petersburg was still determined to counteract those activities of the French diplomacy, concerning the Ottoman Empire.

Russian fears of the French threat to the integrity of the Ottoman state were not unfounded. Throughout summer-autumn 1802 the First Consul of the French Republic Citizen Bonaparte constantly remarked in all his conversations with the Russian ambassador Morkov that the Ottoman Empire was about to fall. Even more, Bonaparte considered such a collapse unavoidable and thought aloud in the presence of Morkov that one day it would be necessary “to gather up the Ottoman Empire’s debris”⁷⁷. As to France, it would not make any objections against the partitioning of the Ottoman territories by Russia and Austria, if only France would also be given its

⁷⁴ ‘Alexander I to the ambassador in Hague G. O. Stackelberg, 28 / 16 May 1802’ Ibidem, pp. 207-15; also see: ‘Alexander I to the ambassador in Madrid I. M. Muraviev-Apostol, 28 / 16 May 1802’ Ibidem, pp. 215-20.

⁷⁵ ‘Alexander I to the ambassador in Berlin M. M. Alopeus, 7 August (26 July) 1802’ Ibidem, p. 265; Also see the instructions to the newly appointed, instead of Tomara, ambassador at Constantinople: ‘Alexander I to A. Ia. Italinskii, 11 September (30 August) 1802’ Ibidem, pp. 283-87.

⁷⁶ The Franco-Russian peace treaty was signed in Paris on 8 October 1801. For the text of the treaty see: Ibidem, pp. 95-96; the text of the Franco-Russian secret convention of 10 October 1801: pp. 98-99.

⁷⁷ ‘A. I. Morkov to the Russian Court, 8 August (27 July) 1802’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, p. 484.

own part of the Ottoman legacy.⁷⁸ In Morkov's opinion, the ideas of the First Consul about the Ottoman Empire, on many occasions expressed during the meetings with the Russian ambassador, could be twofold. First, these could be the trap designed to discredit Russia in the eyes of the Porte. Second, Bonaparte might be trying to prepare the actual invasion into the Ottoman lands.⁷⁹ Obviously, there was yet another option, when the French government could pursue the both purposes all at once. The spread of the French revolutionary propaganda in the Balkans, mainly among the Greek subjects of the Sultan, was also troubling St. Petersburg. The Russian ambassador in France reported in April 1802 that there were many allegedly philosophical, but in fact revolutionary books, which were translated into Greek in Paris and which had been or were to be sent to the Morea and to the islands of the Aegean archipelago.⁸⁰

Another source for the concerns of the Russian government was the secret relations between France and Osman Pazvantoğlu, the Governor of Vidin and one of the most influential and virtually independent Ottoman warlords. St. Petersburg was calculating that "the unknown resources, which Pazvantoğlu was always finding during his long rebellions against the Porte" unambiguously indicated to the support given to him by France.⁸¹ All the more suspicious was the presence in Paris of two inhabitants of Vidin, emissaries of Pazvantoğlu, who arrived in Paris under the guise of handling their own business matters.

⁷⁸ 'A. I. Morkov to V. P. Kochbei, 21 / 9 August 1802' *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, p. 491.

⁷⁹ 'A. I. Morkov to A. R. Vorontsov, 20 / 8 October 1802' *Ibidem*, p. 524; See also: 'A. R. Vorontsov to 'A. I. Morkov, 5 January (24 December) 1803' *Ibidem*, pp. 619-25.

⁸⁰ 'A. I. Morkov to V. P. Kochubei, 1 April (20 March) 1802' *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, pp. 387-88.

⁸¹ 'A. R. Vorontsov to A. I. Morkov, 22 / 10 October 1802' *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 314-15.

Notably, in October 1802 these two emissaries addressed the Russian ambassador with propositions from their master to act together with Russia against the Porte. The suspicions of the Russian side only rose, for there was no obvious reason why did Pazvantoğlu send his agents to Paris instead of addressing the Russian consul general in Jassy. More logical explanation, as the Foreign minister A. R. Vorontsov reasoned in his dispatch for Tomara, would be that the emissaries of Pazvantoğlu stayed in Paris for the secret negotiations of the Governor of Vidin with the French government.⁸² Apparently, the separatist inclinations of Pazvantoğlu could become a very powerful instrument in the French Near Eastern policy. Tomara thus received the respective instructions, prescribing him to watch over all activities of the French in the Levant and to keep on convincing the Porte in the strongest terms that it was in its own interests to have the closest alliance with Russia.⁸³

Not Russia alone, but all leading European powers jealously watched each other to make certain that neither of them would get the decisive influence on the shores of the Bosphorus. The Porte, however, was careful enough not to burn its bridges neither with Paris nor with St. Petersburg or London. Following the Franco-Ottoman peace treaty, signed on 25 June 1802 in Paris, the Ottomans at last found themselves in an official state of peace. Despite that the Porte still felt threatened on every side. The aggressive intentions against the Ottoman Empire were mutually ascribed by the European powers to each other, and the worst was that any of such accusations, from the Ottoman perspective, could well be true. Only the open or hidden rivalry among Russia, France, Britain and Austria remained the best guarantee for the existence of the Ottoman state. In this way, it was unlikely that the

⁸² 'A. R. Vorontsov to V. S. Tomara, 28 / 16 October 1802' Ibidem, pp. 318-19.

⁸³ Ibidem, p. 319.

Reis-ül-Küttab was insincere when he told Tomara that the Porte was afraid of France, that Bonaparte in Europe reckoned only with Russia and Britain, and that the Porte firmly intended to adhere to its alliance with the two latter powers.⁸⁴

By the beginning of 1803 the situation did not change. Morkov, the Russian ambassador at Paris, still reported about the allusions of the First Consul about the close downfall of the Ottoman Empire. Like before, Morkov each time was instructed to make it clear to Bonaparte that Russia was not going to take part in any aggressive projects directed against the Porte.⁸⁵ Morkov was to tell the French side that the Russian Emperor “was satisfied with his lot, which the providence had assigned to him, and did not wish to aggrandize it neither at the expense of the Porte nor any other part”. For that reason Russia “would not indifferently watch some other state increasing its possessions at the expense of the Ottoman Porte”.⁸⁶ As is seen from the dispatches of the Russian Foreign Minister and the State Chancellor Alexander Romanovich Vorontsov to Morkov, the Russian government preferred at the moment not to engage into any serious international conflicts, but would resolutely oppose any attempt of aggression against the Sultan’s domains.

Even more informative was the personal dispatch of Alexander I, dated by 1 February 1803 and sent to the ambassador in London Semion Romanovich Vorontsov, the brother of the State Chancellor.⁸⁷ The Emperor stated that all he wished was the preservation of peace. The geographic location of Russia, argued

⁸⁴ ‘V. S. Tomara to V. P. Kochubei, 13 / 1 October 1802’ Ibidem, pp. 305-306.

⁸⁵ “*L’Empereur [i. e. Alexander I] n’est nullement porté à aucun projet hostile contre la Turquie et que S.M. est au contraire déterminé de conserver son bon voisinage avec cette puissance*”. ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. I. Morkov, 5 January 1803 (24 December 1802)’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 70, p. 619.

⁸⁶ ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. I. Morkov, 1 February (20 January) 1803’ Ibidem, Vol. 77, p. 23.

⁸⁷ ‘Alexander I to S. R. Vorontsov, 1 February (20 January) 1803’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1876), Vol. 10, pp. 304-7. The same letter had been also published at: *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1883), Vol. 28, pp. 464-67.

Alexander, made it vulnerable for the foreign attack from only one side, and one could be perfectly sure about all the rest of the Russian borders. Russia was not to be afraid of any aggression, and at the same time it did not need to seek war. In this respect Russia could not worry at all about the European affairs, and the most rational policy for Russia would be to stay tranquil and to care about its own internal prosperity. Though the vague hints of the First Consul of France regarding the invasion of the Ottoman Empire were never transformed into the formal offer on that subject, Alexander I asserted that he would not agree on the partition of the Ottoman state, which he believed to be the most advantageous neighbour for Russia.⁸⁸

On the same day the State Chancellor A. R. Vorontsov also sent a dispatch to his brother, similar in its content with that of the Emperor.⁸⁹ One of the main points of this despatch was that the constant wars waged during the rule of Catherine II, notwithstanding the fact that they were triumphantly concluded, in fact exhausted Russia, especially due to the serious loss of manpower. St. Petersburg urgently needed peace in order to focus on a broad program of domestic reforms, conceived by the new Emperor.⁹⁰ In this situation Russia would prefer to have on its borders the weak Ottoman Empire, rather than wilfully to allow its destruction.⁹¹ For the time being the best solution which could be achieved in regard of the Ottoman state, from

⁸⁸ 'Alexander I to S. R. Vorontsov, 1 February (20 January) 1803' *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1876), Vol. 10, p. 305; The Foreign Minister A. R. Vorontsov defined the Ottoman Empire as "the best neighbour, which Russia could have": "*C'est le meilleur voisin que puisse avoir la Russie, et S.M. ne desire pas d'en changer*". 'A. R. Vorontsov to A. I. Morkov, 1 February (20 January) 1803' *SIRIO*, Vol. 77, p. 23.

⁸⁹ 'A. R. Vorontsov to S. R. Vorontsov, 1 February (20 January) 1803' *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 378-80.

⁹⁰ The first years of the reign of Alexander I witnessed the wide range of reforms, including the reforms of the central and local administration, the reform of the education system, including the establishment of five universities (in St. Petersburg, Dörpt (nowadays Tartu, Estonia), Vilno (nowadays Vilnius, Lithuania), Kharkov (nowadays Kharkiv, Ukraine), and Kazan), the financial reform, the various projects of the liberation of the serfs, and so on.

⁹¹ 'A. R. Vorontsov to S. R. Vorontsov, 1 February (20 January) 1803' *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 379; Also see: 'A. R. Vorontsov to Alexander I, 6 March (22 February) 1803'. Ibidem, pp. 389-90; 'A. R. Vorontsov to S. R. Vorontsov, 24 / 12 March 1803'. Ibidem, p. 397.

the Russian point of view, would be the mutual Franco-British guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, supported by other main European powers.⁹²

Obviously enough, the presence of a weak neighbour state on the Russian southern borders could be welcomed in St. Petersburg only on condition that it would be under the exclusive influence of Russia, and not some other strong European power. Ideally, the Russian government would like to achieve the complete control over the actions of the Porte, so that the latter would consult the Russian ambassador on any matters relating to its foreign policy. Even without that, the influence of Russia at the Porte during this time was quite profound. On many occasions the *Reis-ül-Küttab* was addressing the Russian ambassador, asking and following his advices.⁹³ For instance, in March 1803 Andrei Iakovlevich Italinskii, who replaced Tomara⁹⁴, succeeded in making the Porte refuse to admit to its service a French engineer. Nevertheless the Russian Foreign Ministry still remained unsatisfied that the Ottomans were trying to hide their negotiations with the mentioned French engineer.⁹⁵ Such a behaviour of the Ottoman government indicated that the bonds of the alliance between St. Petersburg and Constantinople were, after all, not that cordial. Italinskii, when writing to S. R. Vorontsov, accepted that “the Turks are afraid of us, and for that reason they often have doubts about our friendship”.⁹⁶

⁹² ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. I. Morkov, 22 / 10 April 1803’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 77, p. 109.

⁹³ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 8 April (27 March) 1803’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, p. 290.

⁹⁴ After V. P. Kochubei and V. S. Tomara, A. Ia. Italinskii was the third in succession Ukrainian at the post of the Russian ambassador at Constantinople (appointed on 21 / 9 July 1802). For some additional details of his biography see: Italinskii Andrei Iakovlevich, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar’* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1907), Volume 8 “Ibak-Kliucharev”, pp. 151-52.

⁹⁵ ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii, 29 / 17 March 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 402.

⁹⁶ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 11 July / 29 June 1803’ 1803’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, p. 295.

When it comes to the Ottoman government, after the peace with France it sought to stay away from any armed conflicts. On 29 May 1803 the Sultan sent a personal letter addressed to the Russian Emperor, expressing his wish to keep the allied relations both with Russia and the Britain. Selim III also suggested Alexander I to make joint efforts in order to reconcile Paris and London, and in this way to preserve peace and avoid the new large-scale European war.⁹⁷ In the context of the Europe of the early 19th century this would be surely an extremely difficult task. By the time when this letter was written, the war between France and the Britain resumed. The answer of the Russian emperor to Selim III, dated 28 July 1803, stated that despite the attempts of the Russian diplomacy the war, unfortunately, had already started. Alexander I once again assured in his friendly feelings towards the Ottoman state, and stressed his intention to defend the integrity of the Sultan's possessions.⁹⁸

As the contradictions between Paris and London resulted in the renewal of the war in May 1803, the apprehensions about the potential French attack on the Balkan possessions of the Ottoman Empire started to grow. The control of the Apennine Peninsula by the French armies would give a superb opportunity for invasion in Morea or Albania. In this respect the importance of the Ionian archipelago, and of the Russian garrison stationed there, increased once again. Not just the Ottoman, but also the Russian government appeared very alarmed at the prospect of the French aggression.

⁹⁷ 'Excerpts from the letter of Selim III to Alexander I, 29 / 17 May 1803' *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 722.

⁹⁸ 'Alexander I to Selim III, 28 / 16 July 1803' *Ibidem*, pp. 497-98.

The Russian ambassador at Constantinople Italinskii was ordered to inform the Ottoman side about these considerations of his government.⁹⁹ It was admitted as an indisputable fact that if the French armies would land in the Balkans and take Rumelia, the Ottoman state most probably would cease to exist. Italinskii himself reported that the Porte simply had not any means to counter the hypothetical French attack. In words of the Russian ambassador, should at least 12 or 15 thousand French troops invade Morea or Albania “then nothing would save the Porte from complete destruction”.¹⁰⁰ Italinskii continued, that the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire were infested with bandits, the prestige of the Sultan because of his childlessness was very low among his own people, and that the Ottoman ministers were in discord with each other, all of them pursuing their own interests rather than the interest of their state.¹⁰¹

Towards the end of the year the suspicions about the intentions of the First Consul kept growing.¹⁰² The foreign Minister of Russia A. R. Vorontsov was sure that the French troops, which were staying in October 1803 in the port of Taranto in Southern Italy, would try to land in Albania.¹⁰³ In November A. R. Vorontsov reported in detail the same concerns in his memorandum to the Emperor.¹⁰⁴ In order to prevent the still expected threat of the French aggression in the Balkans¹⁰⁵, Alexander I decided in mid-December 1803 to increase his forces in the Ionian Republic.

⁹⁹ ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii, 28 / 16 May 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 432-33.

¹⁰⁰ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. R. Vorontsov, 28 / 14 June 1803’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, p. 293.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*

¹⁰² ‘A. R. Vorontsov to the Russian charge d’affaires in Vienna, I. O. Anstett, 9 September (28 August) 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 511.

¹⁰³ ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii, 20 / 8 October 1803’ *Ibidem*, p. 530.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Memorandum of A. R. Vorontsov, 24 / 12 November 1803’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 77, pp. 411-14.

¹⁰⁵ ‘A. R. Vorontsov to S. R. Vorontsov, 2 December (20 November) 1803’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 557; ‘A. R. Vorontsov to A. Ia. Italinskii, 14 / 2 December 1803’ *Ibidem*, p. 570.

7.3. The Reinforcement of the Russian garrison on Corfu, 1803-1805

Starting from the end of 1803 the number of the Russian forces on Corfu was steadily increasing. On 15 December 1803 Alexander I issued the order to send reinforcements to the Russian troops already stationed in the Ionian Republic. In two months, on 18 February 1804, the naval squadron of Captain Leontovich (3 frigates: “Krepkii”, “Pospeshnyi”, “Ioann Zlatoust” and one transport vessel “Grigorii Velikiia Armenii”) departed from Akhtiar (Sevastopol), heading for Corfu and carrying the battalion of Colonel Papandopulo, which consisted of about 1200 men (874 infantrymen, 221 artillerymen and 67 marines).¹⁰⁶ Apart from that, 30 eighteen-pound guns were as well taken aboard. In mid-March the Deputy Foreign Minister Czartoryski informed of the soon arrival of these reinforcements the Russian diplomatic representative on the Ionian Islands G. D. Mocenigo.¹⁰⁷ The battalion of Papandopulo came to Corfu on 26 March 1804.¹⁰⁸ In special dispatch to Mocenigo Alexander I made it clear, that the expenses for the maintenance of all the Russian troops in the Republic of Seven Islands would be covered by Russia and the Ionian government would not have to devote any of its limited resources to the support of the Russian military contingent.¹⁰⁹

In addition to the already mentioned battalion of Papandopulo, Aleksander I on 24 March 1804 ordered Admiral Marquis de Traversay, the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet, to send to Corfu the new reinforcements, including Sibirskii Grenadier Regiment (Major General Bahmetev the Third), Vitebskii Musketeer

¹⁰⁶ ‘Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet Marquis de Traversay to the Deputy Minister of the Navy P. V. Chichagov, 21 / 9 February 1804’ *Materialy dlia istorii russkogo flota (MIRF)* (17 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1865-1904), Vol. 17, pp. 440-41.

¹⁰⁷ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to G. D. Mocenigo, 20 / 8 March 1804’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 658-59.

¹⁰⁸ Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, pp. 130-31.

¹⁰⁹ Alexander I to G. D. Mocenigo, 1 March (18 February) 1804. *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. p. 627-28.

Regiment (Major General Musin-Pushkin), the 13th Chasseurs Regiment (Major General Prince Viazemskii), the 14th Chasseurs Regiment (Major General Stetter), and two artillery companies of the 6th Artillery Regiment (Colonel Buchholz and Major Ivanov the First). After the arrival on Corfu all Russian naval and land forces were to be placed under the general command of Mocenigo.¹¹⁰

Throughout the summer 1804 the transportation of the abovementioned troops continued. Major General Bahmetev the Third with his troops (Sibirskii Grenadier Regiment, part of the 13th Chasseurs Regiment, a company of the 6th Artillery Regiment) on 22 June arrived at Corfu.¹¹¹ On 16 June 1400 men of Vitebskii Musketeer Regiment were embarked on the ships in Akhtiar and also moved towards Corfu.¹¹² In the end of June the commander of the Vitebskii Musketeer Regiment Major General Musin-Pushkin reported that one Sub-Lieutenant (*podporuchik*) died of disease on the way to Constantinople. What can be inferred from this report, sent directly from Constantinople, is that on 29 June 1804 the Vitebskii Musketeer Regiment stayed in the close vicinity of the Ottoman capital.¹¹³ On 10 July 1804 from Akhtiar to Corfu sailed off the 14th Chasseurs Regiment of Colonel Stetter and one company of the 6th Artillery Regiment of Colonel Buchholz, embarked on the

¹¹⁰ ‘The Highest Decree to Admiral Marquis de Traversay, 24 / 12 March 1804’ *MIRF*, Vol. 17, pp. 446-48.

¹¹¹ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomoskogo flota*, p. 894; Also: ‘Major General Nazimov to the Emperor Alexander I. 12 July (30 June) 1804’ RGVIA. Fond 26. Campaign Chancery of His Imperial Majesty [Военно-походная канцелярия Е.И.В.]. Op. 152, Delo 234. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 28 / 16 April to 28 / 16 August 1804 [Донесения Государю Императору с 16.04 по 16.08.1804], f. 341.

¹¹² Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomoskogo flota*, p. 894.

¹¹³ ‘Major General Musin-Pushkin to the Emperor Alexander I, 29 / 17 June 1804’ RGVIA. Fond 26. Campaign Chancery of His Imperial Majesty [Военно-походная канцелярия Е.И.В.]. Op. 152, Delo 234. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 28 / 16 April to 28 / 16 August 1804 [Донесения Государю Императору с 16.04 по 16.08.1804], f. 143.

ship “Mariia Magdalina” and the frigate “Sviatoi Mikhail”.¹¹⁴ In four days, on 14 July, Colonel Stetter reported to the Emperor that his troops arrived on that day at eight in the morning to the Küçükdere roads in Constantinople.¹¹⁵

On 19 July the Russian Corfu garrison was again augmented by two battalions of the 13th Chasseurs Regiment of General Major Prince Viazemskii came.¹¹⁶ Another battalion of the 13th Chasseur Regiment, under command of Major Zabielin, was embarked in Odessa (Odesa) on the frigate “Grigorii Velikiia Armenii” on 21 August.¹¹⁷ Major Zabielin attached to his report regarding the embarkation the full roster of the battalion:

Table 9: The Roster of the battalion of Major Zabielin, of the 13th Chasseurs Regiment, showing the number of the enlisted military ranks, embarked on 21 / 9 August 1804 on the frigate “Grigorii Velikiia Armenii” [*Ведомость 13-го егерского полка имени моего о числе состоящих в оном батальоне воинских чинов амбаркировавшихся на фрегат Григорий Великия Армении*]. RGVA. Delo 236. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 5 June (24 May) to 17 / 5 September 1804 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 24.05 по 5.09.1804*], f. 405.

Ranks	Number
Major	1
Captains	3
Staff Captains (<i>Shtab-Kapitans</i>)	2
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	6
Sub-Lieutenants (<i>Podporuchiks</i>)	4
Battalion Doctor	1
Corporals (<i>Unter-ofitser</i> s)	33
Musicians	9
Privates	378
Workmen	9
Medical Assistant (<i>Feldsher</i>)	1
Barbers	6

¹¹⁴ ‘The Commandant of Akhtiar, Colonel Muratov to the Emperor Alexander I, 11 July (29 June) 1804’ Ibidem, Delo 236. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 5 June (24 May) to 17 / 5 September 1804 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 24.05 по 5.09.1804*], f. 402.

¹¹⁵ ‘Colonel Stetter to the Emperor Alexander I, 14 / 2 July 1804’. Ibidem, Delo 234. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 28 / 16 April to 28 / 16 August 1804 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 16.04 по 16.08.1804*], f. 288.

¹¹⁶ ‘Major General Prince Viazemskii to the Emperor Alexander I. 21 / 9 July 1804’ Ibidem, f. 359.

¹¹⁷ ‘Major Zabielin to the Emperor Alexander I. 21 / 9 August 1804. Ibidem, Delo 236. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 5 June (24 May) to 17 / 5 September 1804 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 24.05 по 5.09.1804*], f. 404; ‘Odessa Military Governor Duc de Richelieu to the Emperor Alexander I, 22 / 10 August 1804’ Ibidem, f. 568.

Hospital attendants	4	
Priests	2	
Carters (<i>Fuhrleits</i>)	6	
Provost (<i>Profos</i>)	1	
Officers' servants (<i>Denshchiks</i>), official	17	
Officers' servants (<i>Denshchiks</i>), from the officers' own serfs	2	
Recruits, brought by Lieutenant (<i>poruchik</i>) Ladogoskii to man the 13 th Chasseurs Regiment	43	
	In total	528
Besides, teenagers not included in the ranks, of whom it was reported to His Imperial Majesty		5

The abovementioned battalion of Major Zabelin came to its final destination on 30 September.¹¹⁸

By the beginning of autumn 1804 the transportation of the Russian troops to Corfu, in accordance with Alexander's decree of 24 March, was finished. In September at Corfu arrived Major General Roman Karlovich Anrep¹¹⁹, appointed the commander of the Russian land forces in the Ionian Republic.¹²⁰ Throughout the summer of 1804 four naval squadrons, including those of Captain Saltanov (ships of the line "Paraskeva" and "Simeon and Anna"), Captain Baillie (ships of the line "Asiia" and "Troitsa", plus three merchant vessels), Captain Messer (ships of the line "Varakhail" and "Pobieda"), and Captain Maksheiev (ship of the line "Mariia Magdalina" and frigate "Mikhail") were also sent to Corfu.¹²¹ These ships transported to Corfu 5610 men. The total number of the Russian forces deployed in the Ionian Republic throughout 1804 increased from 1.200 to about 8.000 men.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomoskogo flota*, p. 895.

¹¹⁹ More biographical information on R. K. Anrep is available at: *Voenniy Entsiklopedicheskii Leksikon* (14 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1837-1850), Vol. 1, p. 428.

¹²⁰ Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, p. 134.

¹²¹ Ibidem

¹²² Ibidem, p. 165.

The dispatch of the Russian to the Ionian Islands continued in 1805. On 23 January the squadron of the Baltic ships (ships of the line “Ratvyzan” and “Sviataia Ielena”, frigate “Venus” and sloop “Avtrol”) under command of the then 29-year-old Captain Commodore (*Kapitan-Komandor*) Alexei Samuilovich Greig¹²³ came to Corfu from Kronstadt.¹²⁴ It should be mentioned that upon his arrival Greig found on Corfu the squadron of the Black Sea ships (one ship of the line and three frigates), by his own words, in rather poor condition (*en très mauvais état*).¹²⁵ In May 1805 it was decided to send to Corfu additional reinforcements, consisting of 4 musketeer regiments, which were the Kolyvanskii Musketeer Regiment (Major General Zherdiuk, quartered in Khorol, Poltava Province), the Kozlovskii Musketeer Regiment (Major General Maksheiev, quartered in Olviopol (nowadays Pervomais’k, Mykolayiv Oblast, Ukraine)), the Alexopolskii Musketeer Regiment (Major General Loveika, quartered in Nemirov), the Nizhegorodskii Musketeer Regiment (Major General Khitrovo, quartered in Odessa), and a company of the 6th Artillery Regiment (commanded by Major Kuleshov, quartered in Kherson). Moreover, the Pereiaslavskii Dragoon Regiment (Major General Zass) and one Cossacks regiment were also assigned to the Ionian Islands. The total number of the forces to be sent to Corfu included (the table is taken from RGVIA)¹²⁶:

Table 10: The Russian troops assigned for Corfu in May 1805.

12 Infantry battalions	8.640 men
5 Dragoon squadrons	969 men
2 Artillery companies	612 men

¹²³ More biographical information on A. S. Greig is available at: Slovar’ russkikh generalov, uchastnikov boevykh deistvii protiv armii Napoleona Bonaparta v 1812-1815 g.g. In: *Rossiiskii arkhiv*, (Moscow, 1996), Vol. 7, pp. 368-69.

¹²⁴ ‘A. S. Greig to S. R. Vorontsov, 15 / 3 March 1804’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 19, p. 431; Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomoskogo flota*, p. 899.

¹²⁵ ‘A. S. Greig to S. R. Vorontsov, 15 / 3 March 1804’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 19, p. 432.

¹²⁶ On transportation of four regiments and an artillery company again to Corfu [*Об отправлении в Корфу вновь четырех полков и артиллерийской роты*]. 21 / 9 May 1805. RGVIA. Fond 1. Chancellery of the War Ministry. Op. 1, Delo 889, f. 5; Alexander I to Admiral Marquis de Traversay, May 1805, Secretly. Ibidem, f. f. 8-10 ob.

1 Cossacks regiment		500 men
	In total, together with non-combatants	10.721 men
	Excluding the carters (<i>fuhrleits</i>)	10.479 men

Obviously, the initial plan to send also the Dragoon and the Cossacks regiments was eventually cancelled. In his instructions dispatched to the commander of the Russian forces on Corfu Major General Anrep, Alexander specifies that he sends four musketeer regiments (Kolyvanskii, Kozlovskii, Alexopolskii and Nizhegorodskii) along with one company of the 6th Artillery Regiment, with light cannonry.¹²⁷ Apart from that, the Russian government decided to send 4.000 old rifles with bayonets, for arming of the Ionian local militia.¹²⁸

In pursuance of the orders, the transportation of the new reinforcements to Corfu started on 23 July 1805, when from Ochakov were sent the Kozlovskii Musketeer Regiment and a company of the 6th Artillery Regiments,¹²⁹ which included:

Table 11. The Record of the ranks and members of the Kozlovskii Musketeer Regiment and the artillery company, which were sent to Corfu [*Ведомость о числе чинов и служителей Коцловского мушкетерского полка и артиллерийской роты отправленных на судах в Корфу*]. RGVIA. Fond 1. Chancellery of the War Ministry. Op. 1, Delo 889, L. 152.

Ranks	Kozlovskii Regiment	Artillery company	In total
Major General	1	-	1
Staff officers (<i>Shtab-ofitsers</i>)	5	1	6
Company officers (<i>Ober-ofitsers</i>)	50	5	55
Corporals (<i>Unter-ofitsers</i>)	120	20	140
Privates	1768	213	1981
Priest	1	-	1
In total	1945	239	2184

¹²⁷ 'Alexander I to Major General Anrep, 23 / 11 May 1805' Ibidem, f. 13.

¹²⁸ 'To Major General Anrep, 6 August (25 July) 1805, Secretly' Ibidem, f. f. 164-65.

¹²⁹ 'Marquis de Traversay to the War Minister S. K. Viaz'mitinov, 24 / 12 July 1805' Ibidem, f. 151.

On 1 August, the Kolyvanskii Musketeer Regiment was embarked on the ship “Pavel” and also headed to the Mediterranean.¹³⁰ The roster of the Kolyvanskii regiment had been attached by the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet Marquis de Traversay to his report to the War Minister S. K. Viaz’mitinov:

Table 12. The Record of the ranks of the Kolyvanskii Musketeer Regiment, the regimental train and personnel, sent on the ship “Pavel” to Corfu [*Ведомость о чинах Колыванского мушкетерского полка, полковом обозе и экипаже, отправленных на корабле Павле в Корфу*]. RGVIA. Fond 1. Chancellery of the War Ministry. Op. 1, Delo 889, f. 174-174 ob.

Ranks	Number
Commander, Major General	1
Majors	3
Captains	2
Staff Captains (<i>Shtabs-Kapitans</i>)	3
Lieutenants (<i>Poruchiks</i>)	6
Aid-de-camps	4
Treasurer	1
Sub-Lieutenants (<i>Podporuchiks</i>)	5
Ensigns (<i>Praporshchiks</i>)	6
Corporals (<i>Unter-ofitser</i> s)	65
Musicians and drummers	37
Privates	799
Non-combatants	
Priest	1
Doctor	1
Subaltern personnel (<i>Nizhnikh chinov</i>)	64
Officers’ servants and servants (<i>Denshchikov i slug</i>)	48
Privates under arrest	3
In total	1.049
The transported regimental train:	
Boxes with tents	6
Treasury wagon [<i>Fura s kaznacheistvom</i>]	1
Treasure chest [<i>Yashchik s kaznoi</i>]	1
Regimental medicine chest	1
Also the regimental munitions and the soldiers’ baggage	

Along with the aforementioned troops there was the decision to strengthen the Russian forces on Corfu with cavalry. The Smolenskii Dragoon Regiment (Major General Hamper, quartered in Karasubazar, and two Cossack regiments (those of

¹³⁰ ‘Marquis de Traversay to the War Minister S. K. Viaz’mitinov, 5 August (24 July) 1805’ Ibidem, f. 173.

Sulin the Sixth and Platov the Third, quartered respectively in Slobozia and Rashkov) were sent the Emperor's orders to be ready for departure.¹³¹

However, on 2 September 1805 Admiral Traversay received the new instructions, informing him that the Emperor rescinded all the previous orders concerning the transportation to the Ionian Republic of the following regiments, which instead of being sent to Corfu now were to stay in Russia: the Kolyvanskii, the Kozlovskii, the Alexopolskii and the Nizhegorodskii Musketeer regiments, together with all assigned to them artillery, as well as the Smolenskii Dragoon and two Cossack regiments. The Commander of the Black Sea Fleet was ordered to stop any embarkation of the troops which were not yet sent. Only if some part of the infantry battalions already departed the rest was to be also sent to Corfu, in order to keep the full battalions.¹³²

In two weeks Marquis Traversay was again given the new instructions stating that the decision not to send the troops assigned for Corfu was once more reconsidered. All the necessary works regarding the embarkation were to be continued, yet still these troops were to stay in the home ports and wait until further orders.¹³³ As for the forces that were already on Corfu, by order of Alexander I on 14 October 1805 all of them (Sibirskii, Vitebskii, Kolyvanskii and Kozlovskii Musketeer regiments, the 13th and the 14th Chasseur regiments with artillery companies, and 1000 Albanians under command of Major General Anrep) left the Ionian Islands and were transported by the naval squadron of Captain Commodore

¹³¹ 'Alexander I to Marquis de Traversay, 27 / 15 August 1805' Ibidem, f. 189.

¹³² 'Adjutant General Liven to Marquis Traversay, 2 September (21 August) 1805' Ibidem, f. f. 206-206 ob.

¹³³ 'Alexander I to Marquis de Traversay, 16 / 4 September 1805' Ibidem, f. f. 216-216 ob.

Greig to Sicily (Syracuse). Then, on 9 November the Russian troops were landed in Naples, with the mission to defend the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from the Napoleonic France. Quite soon, though, took place the ill-fated for the forces of the anti-French coalition battle of Austerlitz (2 December 1805), which made Alexander to withdraw his troops from the Kingdom of Naples and once again, by the January 1806, redeploy them on the Ionian Islands.¹³⁴ Along with the land forces, in September 1805 the Russian government sent the squadron of Vice Admiral Dmitrii Nikolaievich Seniavin, consisting of 5 ships of the line, one frigate and two brigs from the Baltic Sea to Corfu.¹³⁵ Upon his arrival to the Ionian Republic (30 January 1806) Seniavin was to assume the command over all Russian land and naval forces in the Ionian Republic.¹³⁶

The fact was that the significant strengthening of the Russian forces on the Ionian Islands could be explained in different ways, and the French representatives in Constantinople tried to present this situation in a light favourable for their own purposes, as a proof of the aggressive intentions of the Russian side. Karal when speaking on the Ottoman foreign policy preferences notes that after the French threat was over and the French troops were removed from Egypt the Ottomans started to feel the friendship of the allies as a burden as well as to seek rapprochement with France.¹³⁷ On the other hand, the Sultan's government was certainly aware of the worth of all the promises made by Napoléon, as the memory of the Egyptian expedition remained too fresh to be forgotten. For that reason the Ottomans were in no haste to break with their Russian allies.

¹³⁴ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 901.

¹³⁵ Z. Arkas, *Prodolzheniie deistvii Chernomorskogo flota s 1806 po 1856 god. Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei (ZOOID)*, 1867 (6), p. 368.

¹³⁶ Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, pp. 263-64.

¹³⁷ Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları*, pp. 81-82.

When it comes to the considerations of the Russian government about its politics concerning the Ionian Islands, and, in a wider context, the Balkans, a number of instructions sent to G. D. Mocenigo¹³⁸ bring to light the real dilemma faced at this time by St. Petersburg. For one part, the primary task to oppose the French advance in the area determined the true wish to preserve the Ottoman Balkan possessions under the sovereignty of the Sultan and to prevent them from falling into the hands of a stronger European power. In order to counter the French propaganda among the Greeks and the Southern Slavs, the Russian government thought it expedient to use the traditional affection felt by the Balkan Orthodox people for Russia as a means of its own influence. At the same time, though at the moment St. Petersburg was concerned with safeguarding the Ottoman Empire from the possible and even expected encroachments of the Napoleonic France, this would certainly have aroused the suspicions of the Porte if handled without the necessary cautiousness. Furthermore, the Russian statesmen kept in mind that the fact of the common religion with the Ottoman Orthodox subjects, which was kind of a universal trump card, could be always useful in implementation of some other plans as well, and not necessarily of a defensive character.

For that reason, the instructions to the Russian diplomatic representative in the Republic of Seven Islands were looking somewhat paradoxical, i. e. to use the traditional Russian influence among the Orthodox Balkan peoples with the aim to preserve the Balkans for the Ottoman Empire. St. Petersburg tried to pursue a two-

¹³⁸ 'A. R. Vorontsov to G. D. Mocenigo, 9 September (28 August) 1803'. *VPR*. Vol. 1, pp. 513-17; 'A. R. Vorontsov to G. D. Mocenigo, 17 / 5 December 1803' *Ibidem*, pp. 577-84; 'A. A. Czartoryski to G. D. Mocenigo, 12 August (31 July) 1804' *Ibidem*, Vol. 2, pp. 110-13.

fold strategy of both keeping the sympathies of the Balkan Christians and searching to defend the Ottoman possessions from the expected French aggression.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs A. A. Czartoryski wrote to Mocenigo that he “should carefully avoid anything what could discredit us before the Porte, as it is important for us to be on friendly terms with it and not to be in a hurry to give the last impetus to our devoted parties in Greece”. Regarding the “trump card” of the Orthodox Balkan peoples, it was deemed necessary to “prepare everything and adjust the machine in such a way that it could be used *for realization of any plan or decision, which the events would make us to prefer* (Italics are mine; V. M.)”.¹³⁹ For sure, it was a tremendous challenge to the professional skills of the Russian diplomats to avoid discrediting themselves both in the eyes of the Orthodox Ottoman subjects and the Ottoman government at the same time.

7.4. The Porte: Between a Rock and a Hard Place, 1804-1805

In the wake of the growing French advances in Europe one common objective shared by both the Ottoman and Russian governments was to prevent the potential French attack on the Balkan domains of the Sultan. With this end in view the substantial reinforcement of the Russian garrison on Corfu started at the beginning of 1804. Neither St. Petersburg nor the Porte, each for its own reasons, wished to see the French armies marching across the Balkans.

From the Ottoman perspective, any involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the war would pose a grave threat to its very existence. Despite the assurances of the

¹³⁹ “...de preparer tout et de monter la machine de manière qu'elle puisse se prêter également à tel ou tel autre plan et décision que les événements nous obligeront de préférer”. VPR. Vol. 2, p. 111.

French in their friendly dispositions towards the Porte, the hypothetical French landing in Morea or Albania could mark the beginning of the dissolution of the Ottoman state. Lacking the necessary resources for the protection of its borders, the Sultan's government depended on whatever support it could get from other European powers, which were equally interested to block the spread of the French influences in the Balkans. In practice this meant the necessity to maintain cooperative relations with Russia and Great Britain. On the other side of the coin, the Porte had no luxury to deteriorate its relations with France, all the more that it could never be sure that the Russians or the British were not preparing some clandestine anti-Ottoman designs of their own. The Sultan's government thus found itself in an embarrassing position, which required keeping the delicate balance in their relations with all rivalling European parties.

As far as the stance of the Russian government regarding the Ottoman Empire is concerned, it was outlined by the new Foreign minister of Russia (de facto, formally the title of the Foreign minister was retained by the retired A. R. Vorontsov¹⁴⁰) Adam Jerzy Czartoryski in his memorandum addressed to the Tsar and dated 29 February 1804.¹⁴¹ In view of Czartoryski, the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse. Along with the downfall of the Ottoman state Russia would lose all those recent commercial and political benefits it managed to get from the Porte as a result of the Ottoman-Russian alliance of 1799 and the general weakness of the Ottoman state edifice. The Ottoman current position of a weak and quiet neighbour of Russia, together with the advantages enjoyed by the Russian Black Sea commerce,

¹⁴⁰ Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I. Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825* (Berkeley, 1969), p. 111.

¹⁴¹ 'A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I, 29 / 17 February 1804' *VPR*, Vol. 1, pp. 619-27; This memorandum has also been published at: *SIRIO*, Vol. 77, pp. 486-98.

provided a good reason for Russia to bend every effort in order to preserve the Ottoman Empire. In this way the anticipated French aggression in the Balkans would be deemed highly dangerous not only for the Porte, but also for Russia, and regarded by St. Petersburg as a direct intrusion into its own sphere of interests. By defending its practical interests, however, Russia would also throw its weight behind the Ottoman territorial integrity.

Aside from that, Czartoryski specified three much undesirable for St. Petersburg situations, when Russia might lose all its present strategic advantages. First, this could happen as soon as the Ottoman Empire would recover its former strength. Second, when the Ottoman Empire, intimidated by the French, would enter into an alliance with them. Third, when some European power (apparently France) would capture the Black Sea Straits and Constantinople. The first option seemed very unlikely, and Czartoryski himself was almost sure that the Ottoman state would sooner or later fall apart. As regards the prospective extension of the French influence to the shores of the Bosphorus, whether through the alliance with the Porte or as a result of the direct conquest, Russia was by all means to oppose it.

Rendering support to the Ottomans presented an obvious dilemma for the Russian government. By defending the Ottoman Empire St. Petersburg risked jeopardising its special relations with the Orthodox subjects of the Porte. Czartoryski argued that to abandon the Greeks would mean to neglect the future. The Russian minister pointed out that the Ottoman government, “in view of its geographic location, keeping in mind its old scores with us and because of the prejudices of its

religion may before long become our enemy once again”.¹⁴² In that case the pro-Russian sympathies of the Balkan Orthodox people would be crucial. To keep its image of the main protector of the Ottoman Orthodox subjects and to assure the safety of the Ottoman borders were thus the two tasks St. Petersburg had necessarily to combine in its foreign policy. The solution of this dilemma could be found, according to Czartoryski, only if Russia would promise the Greeks to advocate their interests before the Porte. In requesting concessions from the Porte for the Ottoman Orthodox population, Russia could also help the Ottoman government to avoid the domestic crisis and therefore consolidate its own positions.

The primary aim of St. Petersburg in spring of 1804, as is clear from the Russian diplomatic correspondence of the time, remained to safeguard the Sultan’s domains, or rather Russia’s own influence there, from any encroachments from outside. The Russian government thought it possible to make use of its historical and religious bonds with the Balkan peoples, in order to defend the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴³ Alongside with that, the downfall of the Ottoman state seemed still almost unavoidable and for St. Petersburg it was equally important to be prepared to such a disastrous event. Russia could not “afford some other power to gain a foothold in this country (meaning the Ottoman Empire; V. M.)”¹⁴⁴ and for that reason, even though secretly, was to consider the possible consequences of the downfall of the Ottoman Empire beforehand.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² ‘A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I, 29 / 17 February 1804’ *VPR*, Vol. 1, p. 621 (French original), p. 625 (Russian translation).

¹⁴³ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to S. R. Vorontsov, 9 March (26 February) 1804’. *Ibidem*, p. 631 (French original), p. 635 (Russian translation).

¹⁴⁴ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to G. D. Mocenigo, 20 / 8 March 1804’ *Ibidem*, p. 654 (French original), p. 656 (Russian translation).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

Following the execution of the Duke d'Enghien on 21 March 1804 the European war grew even more intense. The great impact of this event was felt not only in Europe but also in Russia. On 17 April 1804 a special meeting of the State Council took place, which discussed the further Russian stance regarding France.¹⁴⁶ Though no final decision was taken, it was clear that Russia was slowly drifting towards the new anti-French alliance with Great Britain.

In the growing conflict of the leading European powers the position, which would be taken by the Ottoman government, gained special importance. While the Porte sought to stay neutral at all costs, the French, Russian and British diplomatic agents pressed the Porte to join the side of their governments. The First Consul of France Napoléon Bonaparte sent in March 1804 a personal letter to Selim III, delivered to the Sultan by Citizen Jaubert on 28 April 1804.¹⁴⁷ Bonaparte reassured the Sultan in his amicable intentions towards the Ottoman Empire and denied any attempts on the part of France to take possession of Egypt or Greece.¹⁴⁸ The Sultan received Jaubert in a friendly way, telling the French envoy that Bonaparte was his friend and emphasizing the wish of the Ottoman side to keep those old-established cordial relations that existed earlier between the Ottoman Empire and France. The answer of the Sultan to Bonaparte was prepared on 18 May 1804. Selim III again expressed his benevolent dispositions to France, informing the First Consul that the rumours of the imminent French invasion of the Balkans had had no effect upon

¹⁴⁶ See, for example: V. G. Sirotkin, *Napoleon i Alexander I: diplomatiia i razvedka Napoleona i Alaxandra* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 63-67.

¹⁴⁷ P. Coquelle, 'L'ambassade du maréchal Brune à Constantinople (1803-1805)' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 18 (1904), pp. 68-69.

¹⁴⁸ Vernon John Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 24.

him.¹⁴⁹ By an interesting twist of fate, on that very day, that is, on 18 May 1804, Citizen Bonaparte was proclaimed the Emperor of the French Napoléon I.

The issue of the official recognition of the new imperial title of Napoléon Bonaparte by the Porte gained special political importance immediately after the news of the Bonaparte's new title reached Istanbul by mid-June 1804. The Ottomans found themselves between a rock and a hard place in the true sense of the word. The French, on the one side, expected the Ottoman Empire to prove all its previous assurances of friendship towards France and to recognise Napoléon Bonaparte as the Emperor. At the same time the Russians and British, stressing the allied character of relations between their courts and the Porte, insisted that the Ottomans should not recognise the imperial title of Bonaparte.

On 29 June 1804 the French ambassador Brune demanded the absolute recognition of Napoléon as the "Emperor and Padishah".¹⁵⁰ At his meeting with the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Brune argued that the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was addressed by the Porte as "*Imperador*" and the Russian Tsar was termed as "*Padishah ve Imperador*". For that reason Napoléon had to be addressed in the same way as Alexander I, since Napoléon was also the Emperor just like Alexander. The Ottoman official gave an evasive reply, explaining that the Porte would recognise Napoléon as "Padishah" (for the Kings of France were formerly recognised by the Porte as "Padishahs") but recognition of the title of "Emperor" should be postponed until the respective decision of the "concerned courts".¹⁵¹ Even so, the Ottoman

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

¹⁵⁰ For discussion of the specific connotations of both titles among the Ottomans see: Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵¹ Coquelle, *L'ambassade du maréchal Brune*, p. 70.

government was in no haste to use officially either of the mentioned titles. On 20 September 1804 the *Reis-ül-Küttab* put it clear to Brune that the Ottoman Empire according to the 4th article of the Ottoman-Russian alliance treaty of 3 January 1799 cannot recognise Napoléon as Emperor without consulting with the Russian side. This answer of the Porte to the French diplomatic representative made the Russian ambassador Italinskii feel triumphant.¹⁵²

Towards the end of September Brune became determined to obtain a favourable settlement of the issue of recognition of Bonaparte's imperial title. The Ottoman side, though, still was providing the French ambassador with only vague hints and evasive replies.¹⁵³ In the first days of October 1804 Brune resorted to an ultimatum, declaring that he would leave Constantinople if the Porte would not soon recognise Napoléon as the Emperor. The answer of *Reis-ül-Küttab* was hardly encouraging for Brune, "This would be arranged, if God permits". Coquelle wittily remarked that God in this affair was the Russian ambassador.¹⁵⁴

Brune requested his passports on 4 October 1804,¹⁵⁵ by this measure hoping to persuade the Ottomans to accept his demands. However, the Porte was also under serious pressure from the Russian and the British ambassadors. On 8 October 1804 Italinskii sent a warning note to the Ottoman government, stating that the Ottomans were to choose between their Russian and British allies or France.¹⁵⁶ Among other things the Russian note contained a hidden threat, mentioning the exclusive naval

¹⁵² 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 8 October (26 September) 1804'. *VPR*, Vol. 2, p. 156.

¹⁵³ Puryear, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁵⁴ Coquelle, "L'ambassade du maréchal Brune à Constantinople (1803-1805)." *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 18 (1904), p. 71.

¹⁵⁵ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁶ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 8 October (26 September) 1804' *VPR*, Vol. 2, pp. 156-58.

preponderance of Britain and the large armed forces of Russia situated along the long Russo-Ottoman frontier. The note implied that in case when the Porte would “forget how it was indebted to both its allies”, the considerable naval and land forces of the Russian and British courts that were now friendly, could turn hostile to the Ottomans. Moreover, Italinskii reminded that should the Porte recognise the imperial title of Napoléon, the Russian government might also recall its ambassador from the Ottoman capital.¹⁵⁷ In fact, the note of Italinskii was nothing else than ultimatum, requiring from the Ottomans an overt and quick reply.

Until the very last moment Brune wished to believe that the Porte would give in as a result of his demarche in the end. Nevertheless, all attempts of the French ambassador proved useless. The gloomy autumn days simply dragged on without much change in the attitudes of the Porte. The Ottomans clearly preferred not to upset their relations with France, yet at the same time feared to rouse the anger of Russia and Britain. On 9 December 1804 Brune gathered the French notables of Constantinople and informed them of his imminent departure, most probably still keeping a secret hope of winning the issue. In three days, as no reaction on the part of the Ottoman authorities followed, Brune left Constantinople and stopped at the place known as Kağithane, a few miles from the Ottoman capital (nowadays one of the city districts in the European part of Istanbul). At this point the messenger of the Grand Vizier came to Brune, asking the latter to return to the building of the French embassy and wait for the Porte’s decision a bit more. Brune replied that he would wait where he was.

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 157.

Again, the Russian diplomacy had to interfere. On 15 December 1804 Italinskii sent his yet another note to the Ottoman government.¹⁵⁸ The Russian ambassador, combining reprimands and the hidden threats, voiced his concern at the latest behaviour of the Porte. While the Ottomans were in no position to enter into a conflict with Russia, Brune had no other choice but finally to leave Constantinople without the coveted Ottoman recognition of Bonaparte's imperial title. Italinskii wrote jubilantly to S. R. Vorontsov, the Russian ambassador in London, that his "labours and troubled thoughts" of last four months at last brought the results. On 18 December 1804 Brune, this time decidedly, proceeded to Adrianople.¹⁵⁹

The success of the Russian diplomacy in preventing the Ottoman recognition of Napoléon as Emperor displayed that St. Petersburg still had strong positions at the Porte. During the summer of 1804, in parallel to the discussions about Napoléon's imperial title, there emerged an idea of renewal of the allied treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. It is difficult, if not impossible, to define which state made the initial proposition to renew the alliance.

The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry Czartoryski wrote to S. R. Vorontsov that, in order to reassure the Porte as regards the Russian reinforcements of Corfu unceasing from the beginning of the year, the ambassador Italinskii only in passing mentioned the possibility of the alliance renewal. The Ottoman side, however, took the words of Italinskii more seriously than it was expected, and on 29 June 1804 made a statement that it accepted the Russian proposal to start negotiations about the

¹⁵⁸ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 15 / 3 December 1804' *VPR*, Vol. 2, pp. 204-206 (French original), p. p. 206-207 (Russian translation).

¹⁵⁹ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 26 / 14 December 1804'. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*, (Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 299-300.

renewal of the Ottoman-Russian alliance.¹⁶⁰ Thus from the Ottoman point of view it was the Russians who first suggested the idea to renew the allied treaty of 1799. As for the Russian diplomatic sources, as well as later Russian historical literature, they hold that it was the Ottomans who asked Russia for the alliance renewal.

According to Verbitskii, the Ottomans were expressing the idea to renew the alliance with Russia as early as the 2nd half of 1802. The similar propositions were repeated by the Porte also in 1803. The principal aim of this manoeuvre, in Verbitskii's view, was to conceal the recent changes in the Ottoman foreign policy and to reduce the discontent of the allies.¹⁶¹ When in June 1804 the Ottomans informed Russia that they were ready to discuss the alliance renewal, this issue had been given a careful consideration by the Russian government. The two dispatches of Czartoryski, which were sent in late August to the Russian ambassadors in Constantinople and London¹⁶², shed light on the attitude of St. Petersburg to the question under discussion.

Czartoryski specified that the alliance with the Porte, in fact, was advantageous exclusively for the Ottoman side, while for Russia it was in large measure a burden. Militarily, let alone the anarchy of its state apparatus, the Ottoman Empire could provide the allies no real help and, even more, would hamper their war operations, the hardships experienced by the Russian troops on Corfu being an example of

¹⁶⁰ 'A. A. Czartoryski to S. R. Vorontsov, 30 / 18 August 1804' *VPR*, Vol. 2, p. 119 (French original), p. 123 (Russian translation).

¹⁶¹ E. D. Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii o vozobnovlenii soyuznogo dogovora 1798 (1799) g.* In: *Rossia i Iugo-Vostochnaia Yevropa* (Kishinev, 1984), p. 61.

¹⁶² 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 25 / 13 August 1804' *VPR*, Vol. 2, pp. 115-16; 'A. A. Czartoryski to S. R. Vorontsov, 30 / 18 August 1804'. Ibidem, pp. 119-23 (French original), pp. 123-26 (Russian translation).

that.¹⁶³ Furthermore, the equivocal position of the Porte towards the allies could not escape the keen eye of the Russian government. Though the Ottomans were at present inclined to keep their allied relations with Russia and Britain, St. Petersburg was aware of the secret Ottoman sympathies for France. The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry wrote to S. R. Vorontsov, that one could never be sure about the sincerity of the Porte, which may switch camps at the most critical moment.¹⁶⁴

In view of Czartoryski, if Russia had to carry the burden of the alliance for the sake of the common cause, caring about the defence of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, it had also to think of getting some rewards. Russia could not afford keeping its hands tied by the alliance with the Porte gratuitously (*ne pas se lier gratuitement les mains*).¹⁶⁵ For that reason the allied treaty, as it had been signed in 1799, did not meet the Russian interests and had to be reconsidered. Italinskii was enjoined to inform the *Reis-ül-Küttab* that before starting to discuss the alliance renewal the Russian side would like to consult with the British and ask for their opinion about the new treaty. In regard to the negotiations with the Porte, Italinskii would have the necessary instructions on the subject as soon as the reply from London would be received.¹⁶⁶

On 23 September 1804 Alexander I signed the secret instruction¹⁶⁷ for Nikolai Nikolaievich Novosiltsev, who was to be sent to London with a special mission of preparing the ground for the British-Russian alliance, one of the most important links

¹⁶³ 'A. A. Czartoryski to S. R. Vorontsov, 30 / 18 August 1804' Ibidem, pp. 119-20 (French original), pp. 126 (Russian translation). pp. 123-24.

¹⁶⁴ "... qui pourrait bien nous tourner casaque au moment le plus critique". Ibidem, p. 121 (French original), pp. 124 (Russian translation).

¹⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 120 (French original), p. 124 (Russian translation).

¹⁶⁶ 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 25 / 13 August 1804' Ibidem, pp. 115-16.

¹⁶⁷ The secret instruction of Alexander I to N. N. Novosiltsev, 23 / 11 September 1804. Ibidem, pp. 138-146 (French original), pp. 146-51 (Russian translation).

of the prospected third anti-French coalition. By and large, in the instruction of Alexander as regards the Ottoman Empire one sees the same arguments that were earlier stated by Czartoryski in his memo to the Tsar in February. The Ottoman Empire was to be protected to the utmost. Only in the last resort, should the existence of the Ottoman state in Europe appear impossible Russia and Britain were to think about the future of the Ottoman European possessions. In the meantime, the protection of the Ottoman Empire was seen as one of the main tasks of both the Russian and the British courts.¹⁶⁸

In addition to his instructions Novosiltsev was given a project of the new treaty of alliance with the Porte, which he had to discuss with the British cabinet. The two key clauses that St. Petersburg planned to include into the renewed treaty concerned the employment of the Russian troops in the Danubian principalities and the extension of the rights of the Ottoman Christian subjects. According to the treaty project, the Russian troops (20 thousand men) were to occupy Moldavia and Wallachia in order to come faster to the aid of the Ottomans in case of the French landing on the Adriatic coast. One more specific condition suggested that the Ottoman Christians were to be granted the same civil rights that were enjoyed by the Muslims. The difference in the status of the Christian and the Muslim subjects of the Sultan was to be reduced only to the payment of kharaj. As regards the Britain it would be given one of the Ottoman ports in Morea, where it could deploy some of its battleships and 4 or 5 thousand men. Also, with the view of protection of Egypt the draft of the treaty stipulated the deployment of the British forces in Alexandria.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 143 (French original), p. 149 (Russian translation).

¹⁶⁹ The draft of the treaty consisted of 17 regular and 9 secret articles. See: *VPR*, Vol. 2, pp. 677-78. The text of the secret articles of this project, sent to the ambassador in Constantinople A. Ia. Italinskii,

The special envoy of Alexander I arrived in London in November 1804. At his meeting with the British Prime Minister Pitt Novosiltsev tried to convince the latter that Russia had no secret designs regarding the Ottoman Empire and sincerely wished to preserve it. On the other hand, the further argument of Novosiltsev added a tinge of ambiguity to his words. The Russian envoy stated that the Tsar did not entertain any plans of territorial acquisitions at the expense of the Porte. However, even if Russia had such plans, why should England, the best friend of Russia, be alarmed?¹⁷⁰ Eventually, after long negotiations in London an Anglo-Russian alliance was signed on 11 April 1805. Apart from that, on 6 November 1804 the declaration about the joint operations against France had been concluded between Russia and Austria. In part concerning the Ottoman Empire both St. Petersburg and Vienna mutually guaranteed the integrity of the Sultan's domains.¹⁷¹

On 29 December 1804 the Russian ambassador at Constantinople Italinskii was sent the respective instructions to start the negotiations with the Ottomans about the renewal of the alliance treaty. The author of the instructions, Czartoryski, pointed out the three main objectives Russia sought to reach by renewing the alliance. These were, first, to tie the Porte closer to Russia and to prevent the Ottoman rapprochement with France; second, to assure the Ottoman participation in the anti-French coalition; third, to acquire the right to intervene on behalf of the Ottoman

has been in large part published at: Armand Goşu, *La troisième coalition antinapoléonienne et la Sublime Porte 1805* (Istanbul, 2003), pp. 129-33.

¹⁷⁰ The Record of the meeting of N. N. Novosiltsev with the Prime Minister of the Great Britain Pitt, 25 / 13 December 1804. *VPR*, Vol. 2, pp. 226-27 (French original); pp. 240-41 (Russian translation).

¹⁷¹ The article V of the given declaration. *Ibidem*, pp. 175-76.

Christian subjects in order to facilitate their existence within the Empire. All the three points, noted Czartoryski, were exactly what the Porte would try to elude.¹⁷²

The draft treaty confirmed in St. Petersburg along with the instructions was to be taken as a basis for the new agreement. The preliminary exchange of opinions on the subject between Italinskii and the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Mahmud Râif Efendi¹⁷³ took place on 6 February 1805.¹⁷⁴ Then, on 28 February 1805, at the residence of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* the parties gathered for the first conference¹⁷⁵, at which Italinskii met with Mahmud Râif Efendi and another high ranking Ottoman official, the *Rumeli Kazaskeri* Ismet Ibrahim Bey.¹⁷⁶ The latter two were to represent the Ottoman side at the negotiations.

Italinskii handed over the text of the Russian project to the Ottoman plenipotentiaries, though told them that he was yet unprepared to discuss the contents of the secret articles. At the next two conferences, held on 18 March and 15 April the two sides negotiated the approval of the regular articles of the treaty, confirmed by the Sultan towards the end of April.¹⁷⁷ These were of a general character, outlining the principles of the alliance, the scope and the type of the allied aid, the mutual guarantee of the territorial possessions as well as the smaller details like sharing the

¹⁷² 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 29 / 17 December 1804' Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 121-22.

¹⁷³ Some biographical information on Mahmud Râif Efendi (İngiliz) is available at: Mehmet Süreyya, *Sicil-i Osmanî yahud Tezkere-i Meşâhir-i Osmanî*. (Istanbul, 1311) (Ottoman script), Vol. 4, pp. 329-30.

¹⁷⁴ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem; Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁶ For additional biographical details on Ismet Ibrahim Bey see: Mehmet Süreyya, *Sicil-i Osmanî yahud Tezkere-i Meşâhir-i Osmanî*. (Istanbul, 1311) (Ottoman script), Vol. 3, p. 472.

¹⁷⁷ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii*, p. 64; Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 23.

war booty or the rules for saluting between the allied naval squadrons. The treaty was to be valid for 9 years.¹⁷⁸

Only after that Italinskii informed the Porte about the essence of the secret part of the treaty and presented the projects of the first two secret articles.¹⁷⁹ At this point, following the incident of Anaklia¹⁸⁰ and the arrival of the special French envoy Jaubert with the letter from Napoléon to the Sultan, the negotiations were suspended. Furthermore, one of the principal Ottoman negotiators, Ismet Bey, fell ill, while the Grand Vizier Kôr Yusuf Ziyaüddin Pasha¹⁸¹ on 24 April 1805 was replaced by Bostancıbaşı Hafız Ismail Pasha.¹⁸²

The envoy of Napoléon Jaubert arrived at Constantinople in mid-April 1805.¹⁸³ He had to deliver the Sultan the letter written by the French Emperor personally to Selim III.¹⁸⁴ The letter was a sample of the strong anti-Russian verbiage. “Have you ceased to reign? How can you stand that Russia gives you laws?” were the opening phrases addressed to the Sultan. Napoléon argued that 15 thousand Russian men on Corfu could not be a serious threat for France and thus were deployed there with an

¹⁷⁸ The text of the Russo-Ottoman defensive treaty, 24 / 12 September 1805. *VPR*, Vol. 2, p. p. 584-589; Also this treaty has been published at: Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux*, Vol. 2, pp. 70-77.

¹⁷⁹ Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 24.

¹⁸⁰ In April 1805 a Russian detachment of Major General Rickhoff, involved into the internecine strife in the Caucasus, was sent against the Abkhazian local ruler Kelesh Bek on behalf of Mingrelia (which remained under the Russian protectorate since 1803). Rickhoff was to release the Mingrelian prince, kept as a hostage by Kelesh Bek. At the same time the Russians occupied the small fortress of Anaklia on the Black sea littoral. Anaklia belonged to Kelesh Bek and at the same time it was under the Ottoman protectorate, having an Ottoman garrison in it. Though the Russians withdrew their troops from Anaklia, this incident certainly had a negative impact on the Ottoman-Russian relations at the time.

¹⁸¹ For his biography see: Mehmet Süreyya, *Sicil-i Osmanî yahud Tezkere-i Meşâhir-i Osmanî*. (Istanbul, 1311) (Ottoman script), Vol. 4, p. 670.

¹⁸² For his biography see: *Ibidem*, Vol. 1, p. 376.

¹⁸³ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 26.

¹⁸⁴ This letter, dated 30 January 1805 (10 pluviôse an XIII), has been published among the Napoléon's correspondence: Napoléon, Bonaparte. *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}* (Paris, 1862), Vol. 10, pp. 130-31.

obvious intention to use them against the Ottomans. The Russian battleships passing through Constantinople and carrying the Russian troops one day may attack the Ottoman capital and put an end to the Ottoman Empire. Napoléon stated that Reis Efendi was betraying the Sultan, as did half of the Divan, bribed by Russia. The real friends of the Ottoman Empire were France and Prussia. It was the Russians who were the real enemies, for they wished to dominate the Black Sea and that aim could not be achieved without capturing Constantinople. What is more, the Russians were the Orthodox Christians, like the half of the Sultan's subjects. In the end Napoléon proposed Selim III to reconsider the system of his alliances, or otherwise Napoléon, who has "never been a weak enemy", may turn against the Sultan. The letter was handed over to Selim on 2 May 1805.¹⁸⁵

As one could expect, the Russian ambassador Italinskii immediately after learning about the mission of Jaubert sent his protest to the Porte.¹⁸⁶ Though composed in a friendly manner, the note of Italinskii contained a veiled threat. The Ottomans were recommended to read the previous note of Italinskii, presented to the Porte on 15 December 1804 on the occasion of the negotiations about the recognition of Napoléon's imperial title. Like then, the Russian ambassador pointed out that the results of the indignation of the Tsar could be disastrous for the Ottoman Empire. Being threatened by both Paris and St. Petersburg, the Porte once again preferred to take a mid-way. On 21 May 1805 the envoy of Napoléon was given the Sultan's reply, written in general polite expressions, but neither recognising the Napoléon's imperial title nor mentioning politics in any way.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 47.

¹⁸⁶ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 19 / 7 May 1805' *VPR*, Vol. 2, p. 156.

¹⁸⁷ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, pp. 48-49.

The Ottoman-Russian negotiations about the renewal of the defensive treaty were resumed in June, by the discussion of the first two secret articles. However, the conferences that were held on 6 June and 15 June brought no results. The articles, which were discussed, incurred the displeasure of the Porte, for they stipulated not only the conclusion of the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance but also the participation of the Ottoman Empire in the anti-French coalition. As for the Ottomans, they would like to conclude only a defensive alliance, but were not willing to join the broader coalition what would eventually involve them into a war with France. Only on 30 June 1805 the parties signed the 1st secret article, emphasizing the exclusively defensive character of the treaty.¹⁸⁸ The direct participation of the Ottomans in the anti-French coalition was not mentioned. Instead, the Porte was to act jointly (*fera cause commune*) with its ally, the Russian Emperor. On 8 July the 2nd secret article was signed, stating that while inviting other European states to join the anti-French coalition the Russian Emperor was to inform them that the Ottoman Empire would act jointly with Russia. In other words, the formal Ottoman participation in the anti-French coalition was excluded.

Then on the same day, on 8 July 1805, the first dragoman of the Russian embassy Joseph Fonton handed over the drafts of the 3rd and the 4th secret articles to Mahmud Râif Efendi. Upon seeing them, the Reis-ül-Küttab was astonished and demanded the text of the rest of the articles.¹⁸⁹ The two articles, which were actually the most important for the Russian side, the 3rd and the 8th, appeared unacceptable for the Porte. The former was about the deployment of the Russian armed forces on the territory of the Danube principalities and the latter proposed to establish the equal

¹⁸⁸ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii*, p. 65; Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 25.

¹⁸⁹ Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, pp. 25-26.

social status for the Christian subjects of the Sultan with the Muslims. The hopes of the Russian side to include both articles in the final text of the treaty were connected with the person of Mahmud Râif, who was under the influence of the pro-Russian agent Dimitrios Moruzi. However, on 14 August 1805 Mahmud Râif was replaced on his post by Ahmed Vasıf. The Russian diplomacy considered this replacement as a measure directed against the Russian influence in Constantinople. The official justification given by the Ottoman side, however, was the delay in signing the allied agreement. In the end, the two most essential for Russia secret clauses were rejected by the Porte without even being discussed. All efforts of Italinskii to influence the decision of the Ottomans proved useless.¹⁹⁰ On 23 September 1805 the renewal of the Ottoman-Russian defensive treaty had been signed, though the most cherished by Russia clauses had been omitted.¹⁹¹

Undoubtedly, both states viewed the idea of the renewal of the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance from completely different perspectives, and by concluding the treaty each party sought to gain its own specific advantages. Puryear and Ismail have little reason to claim that the Ottoman Empire “gave in to Russia’s insistent demand to renew the alliance”¹⁹², or that “the Ottomans ... yielded to pressure and renewed their alliance with Russia”.¹⁹³ First, it is not that clear who first made the proposition to start the negotiations about the treaty renewal. Even though Italinskii might have mentioned the abstract idea to renew the alliance, technically it was the Ottomans who in June 1804 approached the Russian ambassador with a message that they were ready to negotiate. Also, in view of the fact that the two most

¹⁹⁰ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii*, p. 65; Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁹¹ Verbitskii, *Peregovory Rossi i Osmanskoi imperii*, p. 66; Goşu, *La troisième coalition*, p. 42.

¹⁹² Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 52.

¹⁹³ Fehmi Ismail, *The diplomatic relations of the Ottoman empire and the Great European Powers from 1806 to 1821*. PhD Thesis, University of London, 1975, 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 11.

important for Russia clauses were not included in the final text of the treaty, one may hardly argue that the Ottomans “yielded to the Russian pressure”. Finally, it is possible to say that both Russia and the Ottoman Empire, each in its own way, derived certain benefits from the renewed treaty.

As far as Russia is concerned, the defensive alliance with the Ottoman Empire was a certain guarantee that the Porte in the near future would not join the French. Russia retained its garrison on Corfu and its battleships still enjoyed the right of the free passage through the Black Sea straits. In this way St. Petersburg assured its strategic positions in the Balkans, having at its disposal the necessary means to prevent the hypothetical French expansion in the area. Furthermore, in case of war with France the Russian land and/or naval forces would be supplied at the cost of the Porte. Though according to the treaty it would be the side receiving the military help that was to provide the allied troops with provisions, in practice only Russia could send its army/fleet to the help of the Ottomans and not the other way around.

For all that, the renewed allied treaty with the Ottoman Empire was far from what was initially expected by the Russian government. St. Petersburg attached special importance to the clauses, which had been eventually flatly rejected by the Porte, concerning the deployment of the Russian troops in the Danube principalities and the granting of the equal with the Muslims social status to the Ottoman Christian subjects. Why these two clauses could be so important for Russia? One should remember that the Russian government along with the declared aim to preserve the Ottoman Empire was also taking into account the possibility of its disintegration. The downfall of the Ottoman Empire seemed to be quite real should a large-scale

European war start in the Balkans. While trying to convince the Ottomans that the entrance of the Russian troops in Moldavia and Wallachia was essential in order to defend the Sultan's possessions from the French attack, St. Petersburg necessarily had to consider another scenario. Clearly, in case of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire it would be much easier for the Russian troops deployed in the Danube principalities to take over the Ottoman European possessions and to prevent them from being occupied by other European powers.

Regarding the draft of the secret article stipulating the changes in the social status of the Ottoman Christians, the maintaining of its image as the successful protector of the Orthodox coreligionists could lately well be converted by St. Petersburg into the sympathies and practical support of the Orthodox Ottoman population. This might give Russia serious advantages as compared to other European powers in the contest over the Balkans, which might ensue as a result of the disintegration of the Ottoman state.

When it comes to the Ottoman Empire, by renewing the allied treaty with Russia it secured its borders against the possibility of a sudden French invasion. The Ottomans also smoothed over their relations with St. Petersburg and obtained at least a certain guarantee that Russia would not put at risk its present privileged positions at the Porte and would not attack, contrary to the continuous warnings the French were making to the Sultan's government. Furthermore, the Russian demands about the change of status for the Ottoman Christians were not accepted and the Porte managed to stay away from participating in the anti-French coalition. In this way, on the one hand, by having renewed its alliance with Russia the Ottoman Empire remained on

relatively good terms with its northern neighbours. On the other hand, the Ottomans succeeded not to damage their relations with France irrevocably.

7.5. The Two Empires on the Road to War

Despite the renewal of the treaty of alliance the relations between the Porte and St. Petersburg were far from being cloudless. In view of the Ottoman government, the alliance with Russia was to be tolerated as a certain guarantee against the unpredictability of the future. It defended the Ottomans both from the potential aggression of the Napoléonic France and the wrath of Russia. Considering the deep internal crisis in the Ottoman Empire, the Porte was in no position to wage war on anyone at this time. Thus, the Ottoman government in the autumn of 1805, just in the same way as before, preferred to remain an outside observer of the major European conflict between France and the forces of the anti-Napoléonic coalition. As one of the Ottoman state officials confessed, an ideal situation for the Porte would be when the French and the allies would continue to annihilate each other, leaving the Porte alone.¹⁹⁴

The above quote suggests that the Ottoman Empire, after all, was not that much happy about its alliance with Russia. The Porte did not wish to see its Russian allies to be victorious and, on the contrary, wished them to exhaust their strength. No doubt, the preponderant Russian influence, confirmed in the clauses of the treaty of alliance, was seen by the Ottomans as an annoying and dangerous burden to be got rid of. The Porte would not be able to remove it without the help of some other powerful European state. In practice, such a state could only be France. On the other

¹⁹⁴ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 30 (18) November 1805' *VPR*, Vol. 2, p. 641 (French original), p. 643 (Russian translation).

hand, the recent successful French expansion all over the European continent was making Paris a dangerous ally as well.

After the decisive French victories over the Austrian and Russian armies at Ulm (16-19 October 1805) and Austerlitz (2 December 1805), in accordance with the Franco-Austrian Peace of Pressburg (26 December 1805), France gained Istria and Dalmatia. While the Russian forces on Corfu were supposed to prevent the descent of the Napoléonic armies in the Balkans, the French acquired the Balkan provinces of Austria without firing a shot. Napoléon became a next door neighbour of Sultan Selim. The Ottoman government hastened to reconsider its official attitudes towards France. In January 1806 the Grand Vizier sent an official letter to Napoleon, recognising the latter's imperial title.¹⁹⁵

St. Petersburg was likewise to decide which line of foreign policy should be adopted in regard to the Napoléonic Empire in view of its ever growing military and political might. Austerlitz and the Peace of Pressburg created a completely new situation in Europe. The balance of power was switching to France. Austria was destroyed, and the French were now controlling Italy and the Adriatic coast of the Balkans. France could more effectively exert its influence upon the Ottoman Empire. It was the time for Russia to start worrying about its positions at the Porte, put at danger by the recent French progresses.

¹⁹⁵ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 67; Vostochnii vopros vo vneshnei politike Rossii, konets XVIII-nach. XX v. (Moscow, 1978), p. 58; Ignace de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottomane: avec les puissances étrangères depuis le premier traité conclu, en 1536, entre Suleyman I et François I jusqu'à nos jours*, (11 vols.; Paris, 1865), Vol. 2, p. 341.

All previous Russian politics towards the Porte in its very essence consisted of retaining full and unrivaled control over the Ottoman government. Extremely revealing in this respect is a passage from a memorial of Czartoryski, written in early January 1806:

...We had to have Turkey solely at our disposal. One had to try to increase our influence on this state, having removed all rivals in such a way that the Porte would not follow anybody else's will or politics, but ours.¹⁹⁶

From now on, however, the Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire was to be shared by France and, in Italinskii's opinion, it could not be otherwise.¹⁹⁷ After the French armies gained a foothold in the Balkans, a number of scenarios, much undesirable for Russia, were to be counted with. Should the French decide to destroy the Ottoman Empire or to make it their ally, the Russian ambitions to dominate the area would be seriously threatened.

When the Porte in its politics was gradually drifting towards France, Italinskii had no other choice but to resort to the new assurances of friendship combined with the veiled threats. The Russian ambassador at Constantinople continued to frighten the Porte with a possible French expansion and to promise the Russian protection of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Italinskii was instructed to warn the Ottomans that by rejecting the Russian advices they risked to lose their state quite soon. The Porte would be recommended to reinforce its fortresses in Bosnia and Serbia, since the French attack might be expected there. Apart from that, the Ottoman government

¹⁹⁶ “Нужно было для нас иметь Турцию единственно в нашем распоряжении. Надлежало стараться усилить наше влияние на сие государство, удалив всех совестников так, чтобы Порты не следовала никакой другой воле, ни другой политике, кроме нашей...” ‘A Memorial of A. A. Czartoryski, early January 1806 (late December 1805)’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 11; This memorial has been also published at: *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, pp. 200-14.

¹⁹⁷ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 29 / 17 January 1806’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*, (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 306-8.

would be advised to “win the hearts” of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, in order to prevent them from joining the French.¹⁹⁸ In this way, St. Petersburg hoped to reconcile its allied relations with the Porte and the alleged Russian mission of protecting the Orthodox coreligionists.

Furthermore, the Russian ambassador was to make it clear that the unfortunate outcome of Austerlitz by no means influenced the positions or the strength of Russia and that his government would always be able to defend the Porte. On the other hand, the Ottomans were threatened that Russia might reconsider its friendly attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire, if the Ottomans would “neglect their true interests” and “yield to the will of France”.¹⁹⁹ At the same time, the power of the words of the Russian ambassador was already not like it used to be earlier. Italinskii was probably more than anybody else aware that the time of the strong and exclusive influence of Russia at the Porte remained in the past.

On 4 February 1806 Italinskii delivered a note to the Porte, trying to prevent recognition of the imperial title of Bonaparte. He argued that even if the Ottomans recognize Bonaparte as the Emperor of France, this would not guarantee the Ottoman state from destruction. If the main point of the Ottoman side was the fear of the French might and the common border with France in the Balkans, the Porte should mind that Russia was also a mighty neighbour, bordering the Ottoman Empire both on land and on sea.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, all these attempts were to no avail. In a week, on 12 February, the Sultan sent a letter to Alexander I, coldly informing that the Porte

¹⁹⁸ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 15 / 3 January 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 24.

¹⁹⁹ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 30 / 18 January 1806’ *Ibidem*, p. 36 (French original), p. 37 (Russian translation).

²⁰⁰ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 4 February (23 January) 1806’ *Ibidem*, pp. 37-38 (French original), pp. 38-39 (Russian translation).

agreed to recognize the imperial title of Bonaparte.²⁰¹ By the end of February Italinski already did not exclude the possibility that the Ottoman submissiveness to Napoléon might lead to war between Russia and the Porte.²⁰²

At this time the naval base on Corfu remained a serious tool of the Russian influence in the Mediterranean. Transferred for a short period (October- November 1805) from Corfu to Naples, the Russian troops of General Boris Petrovich Lacy²⁰³ soon after the battle of Austerlitz were ordered to return to the Black Sea.²⁰⁴ The instructions of Alexander I, dated 6 December 1805, prescribed Lacy to leave on Corfu only the smaller part of forces, which he would deem sufficient for garrison duties.²⁰⁵ The squadron of Vice Admiral Dmitrii Nikolaievich Seniavin, which was sent from the Baltic Sea to Corfu in September 1805, received similar instructions. Seniavin, who was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of all Russian land and naval forces in the Ionian Republic, was ordered on 26 December 1805 by Aleksander I to proceed to the Black Sea, since the presence of his squadron in the Mediterranean “became unnecessary”.²⁰⁶

When Lacy came to Corfu in mid-January 1806, the Pressburg peace treaty made the French the masters of the whole Dalmatian coast.²⁰⁷ The hasty decision of the Tsar now looked to be very much outdated, as it was putting at danger the

²⁰¹ ‘Selim III to Alexander I, 12 February (31 January) 1806’. Referred to at: *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 671.

²⁰² ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 28 / 16 February 1806. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*, (40 vols.; Moscow, 1881), Vol. 20, p. 309.

²⁰³ On his biography see: Lacy Boris Petrovich, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; Moscow, 1914), Volume 10 “Labzina- Liashenko”, pp. 79-80.

²⁰⁴ Arkas, *Deistviia Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 901.

²⁰⁵ These instructions are referred to at: ‘Alexander I to B. P. Lacy, 15 / 3 February, 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 50.

²⁰⁶ Тарле Е.В. *op. cit.*, p. p. 265-266.

²⁰⁷ Аркас З. Продолжение действий Черноморского флота с 1806 по 1856 год [Further operations of the Black Sea Fleet from 1806 to 1856] *Записки Одесского Общества Истории и Древностей* [Records of Odessa Society of History and Antiquities] (ЗООИД), 1867 (6), p. 368.

Russian positions on Corfu. Seniavin arrived by the end of January 1806 and was yet unaware of the last Tsar's orders.²⁰⁸ Seniavin addressed Lacy with a request to leave the larger part of the Russian troops on Corfu, trying to persuade the latter how important it would be for retaining the Russian hold on the Ionian archipelago.²⁰⁹ Thus Lacy before his departure to Odessa reported the Tsar that he decided to leave on the Ionian Islands the following troops: the Kozlovskii, the Kolyvanskii and the Kurinskii Musketeer regiments, the 13th and the 14th Chasseurs regiments, defense battalion of Major Popandopolo and two artillery companies. Among those forces that were to sail off to Odessa were the Sibirskii and the Vitebskii Musketeer regiments (eventually, the Vitebskii regiment also remained on Corfu), one battalion of Alexopolskii Musketeer regiment and two companies of the 6th Artillery regiment (in fact, there had been sent one and a half artillery company).²¹⁰

The new instructions of Alexander I, which in view of the consequences of Pressburg nullified the earlier decision to remove the major part of the Russian forces from Corfu, were issued only on 15 February 1806²¹¹ and did not find Lacy. The transports carrying Lacy with his troops departed from Corfu on 28 February 1806²¹² and arrived in Odessa on 13-15 April 1806.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Because of the French blockade Seniavin received the Tsar's order of 26 December 1805 only in April 1806. Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, p. 343.

²⁰⁹ Tarle, *Admiral Ushakov na Sredizemnom more*, p. 269.

²¹⁰ 'B. P. Lacy to Alexander I, 5 February (24 January) 1806' RGVIA. Fond 26. Campaign Chancery of His Imperial Majesty [*Военно-походная канцелярия Е.И.В.*]. Оп. 152, Delo 311. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 13 / 1 May to 30 / 18 May 1806 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 1.05 no 18.05.1806*], f. 308.

²¹¹ 'Alexander I to B. P. Lacy, 15 / 3 February, 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 50-51.

²¹² 'D. N. Seniavin to Alexander I, 2 March (18 February) 1806' *Ibidem*, f. 420.

²¹³ 'The Military Governor of Kherson and Odessa Lieutenant General Duc de Richelieu to Alexander I, 16 / 4 April 1806' *Ibidem*, f. 315; 'B. P. Lacy to Alexander I, 17 / 5 April, 1806' *Ibidem*, f. 1.

The bulk of the Russian force, however, was still remaining in the Ionian archipelago. Making reference to the materials of the Central State Archive of the Russian Navy in St. Petersburg, Shapiro estimates the number of the land force, which remained on Corfu under Seniavin by the beginning of 1806 as more than 12 thousand men²¹⁴:

Regiments	Number of enlisted men	Commander
Kozlovskii Musketeer Reg.	1528	Major General Maksheev
Kolyvanskii Musketeer Reg.	1601	Major General Zherdiuk
Vitebskii Musketeer Reg.	1765	Major General Musin-Pushkin
Kurinskii Musketeer Reg. (2 battalions)	1230	Major General Nazimov
The 13 th Chasseurs Reg.	1149	Major General Prince Viazemskii
The 14 th Chasseurs Reg.	1154	Major General Stetter
Composite battalion of 2 companies of the 1 st Maritime Reg.	699	Colonel Voiselle
Defense battalion of Corfu (including 62 men on the islands of Cerigo and Paxos)	622	Commander of the Kurinskii Regiment Major General Nazimov
Artillery companies	433	Major Kuleshov
Russian troops in total	10 181	
The Legion of the light riflemen	1964	Major General Popandopolo
In Total	12 145	

Of these forces in late February 1806 the Vitebskii, the Kozlovskii and the Kolyvanskii Musketeer regiments, one battalion of the Kurinskii Musketeer regiment, the Defense regiment of Major General Popandopolo, the 13th Chasseurs regiment, five detachments of the Legion of the light riflemen together with one and a half company of the 6th Artillery regiment (about 10 thousand men) stayed on Corfu; two companies of the Kurinskii Musketeer regiment, two companies of the 14th Chasseurs regiment, a squad of the Defense artillery company (about 500 men)

²¹⁴ Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, p. 301.

on Santa Maura; one company of the Kurinskii Musketeer regiment, one battalion of the 14th Chasseurs regiment, a squad of the Defense artillery company (about 500 men) on Cefalonia; one company of the Kurinskii Musketeer regiment, six companies of the 14th Chasseurs regiment, a squad of the Defense artillery company, one detachment of the Legion of the light riflemen (about 1 thousand men) on Zante; a squad of the battalion of Major General Popandopolo (14 men) on Paxos; a squad of the battalion of Major General Popandopolo (48 men) on Cerigo; a squad of the Kurinskii Musketeer regiment (14 men) on Ithaca.²¹⁵ Apart from the land troops, the Russian naval forces in the Ionian archipelago by February 1806 included 10 ships of the line, 5 frigates, 5 brigs, 4 brigantines, 1 schooner, one vessel without type and 12 gunboats.²¹⁶ The crews of the Russian fleet amounted to 7908 seamen, mariners and gunmen, having in total 1154 guns.²¹⁷

The forces of Seniavin were not only keeping the Ionian Islands under the Russian control, but they managed to occupy a few strategic points along the eastern littoral of the Adriatic Sea. Of these the most important was the former Venetian town of Cattaro (Kotor) situated in the most secluded part of the much indented inlet of the Adriatic Sea. After 1797 Cattaro became Austrian, and according to the Pressburg treaty was to be transferred to the French along with other Dalmatian possessions of Austria.

²¹⁵ 'D. N. Seniavin to Alexander I, 2 March (18 February) 1806' RGVIA. Fond 26. Campaign Chancery of His Imperial Majesty [*Военно-походная канцелярия Е.И.В.*]. Op. 152, Delo 311. Reports to the Emperor for the period from 13 / 1 May to 30 / 18 May 1806 [*Донесения Государю Императору с 1.05 по 18.05.1806*], f. f. 421-421 ob.; Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, p. 311.

²¹⁶ Shapiro, *Kampanii russkogo flota*, p. 302.

²¹⁷ Arkas, *Prodolzheniie deistvii Chernomorskogo flota*, p. 369.

For the reason that the allies dominated the sea and because of difficult coastal terrain the French armies by the end of February 1806 still did not reach the Bay of Cattaro and the place remained under Austrian control. The majority of Cattaro's inhabitants, the Orthodox Christian Slavs, were very much unsatisfied at the prospect of the French rule. In that case the British and Russian blockade of the Mediterranean trade routes would undermine the commercial well-being of the local community, which was largely dependent on the foreign sea trade. Thus when in late February 1806 the Russian squadron of Captain Baillie arrived in Cattaro, it was even welcomed by the locals. Neither did Russians have any problems with the Austrian authorities. On 5 March 1806 General Ghislieri, the Austrian Commandant of Cattaro known for his anti-French attitudes, surrendered the place to the Russians without struggle.²¹⁸ Consequently, the Russian navy also occupied the Dalmatian islands of Lissa (presently Vis, Croatia) and Curzola (presently Corčula, Croatia) on 30 March and 10 April respectively.²¹⁹

In this way, a very complicated situation came about. Due to the Treaty of Pressburg Austria was to submit its Adriatic coast to the French. The area of Cattaro, however, without any resistance was handed over to the Russians. The Russian side explained the occupation by the fact that formally the territory of Cattaro already did not belong to Austria, but to France. Since Russia was at war with France, the Russian troops had the right to enter and occupy the French territories whenever it would be possible. As for the Austrians, they did not have the right to occupy Cattaro anymore. Austria was not at war with them and thus the Austrian troops were not

²¹⁸ Paul Pisani, *La Dalmatie de 1797 à 1815* (Paris, 1893), p. 160.

²¹⁹ Pisani, *La Dalmatie de 1797 à 1815*, p. 163.

obliged to defend the French possessions against the Russian attack.²²⁰ Be that as it may, Seniavin gained a firm foothold on the Adriatic coast, which would be surrendered by Russia to the French not otherwise than at the negotiating table at Tilsit in July 1807.

In truth, the Russian military presence in the Mediterranean, including the positions newly acquired by the Seniavin's forces on the mainland, were the source of serious concern not only for the French, but also for the Ottomans. Despite whatever declarations of friendship were made by St. Petersburg, the Porte in view of its past experience had good reasons not to put much trust in Russia. Hardly the Sultan Selim, his statesmen or the ordinary Ottoman people could be bursting with joy while watching the Russian warships constantly go to and fro through the Black Sea Straits in the close vicinity of the Ottoman capital. It was more fear than anything else that made the Porte still clinging to its alliance with St. Petersburg. That the Ottomans had certain fears in regard to Russia can even be seen from the instructions issued to Italinskii in early March 1806. The Russian ambassador was enjoined to keep persuading the Ottomans that it was France to be feared of, and not Russia.²²¹

The Russian government, well aware that its influence at the Porte was gradually waning after the recent French successes, continued to pose itself as the most caring ally of the Ottomans. Italinskii was to assure the Porte that the sole object of the Russian forces on Corfu was the defence of the Ottoman Empire against Napoléon and that, for that reason, the right of passage for the Russian warships

²²⁰ Pisani, *La Dalmatie de 1797 à 1815*, pp. 161-62.

²²¹ 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 2 March (18 February) 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 65 (French original), pp. 65-66 (Russian translation).

through the Straits would remain indispensable.²²² As a protective measure against the French invasion the Russian ambassador advised the Porte to reinforce the frontiers, to prepare armament depots in Rumelia and to keep an observation army near Adrianople (Edirne) and Sofia.²²³ Also, ostensibly in order to save the Ottomans from grave complications in their relations with France, St. Petersburg had softened its stand on the issue of the recognition of the imperial title of Bonaparte.²²⁴ It should be noted that the latter step in fact had already no practical meaning, since the Porte had recognised Bonaparte as the Emperor of the French. The official news of this recognition reached the Russian capital on 7 March 1806.²²⁵

While assuring the Porte in its friendly dispositions, St. Petersburg had to consider the possibility of further anti-Russian actions of the Ottoman government and to think of what could be done should things go wrong. This also holds true for the Porte. Both sides, distrusting each other, kept in mind that it would be better to be prepared against all hypothetical or real war emergencies. The mutual distrust only aggravated the situation.

By early March 1806 St. Petersburg learned about the Ottoman military preparations on the Russian border, consisting of the reinforcement of the frontier fortresses of Khotyn and Ismail.²²⁶ Such a move on the part of the Ottomans was the sign that the Porte felt the support of France and made the Russian government to

²²² 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 2 March (18 February) 1806' Ibidem, pp. 66-67 (French original), pp. 68-69 (Russian translation).

²²³ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 2 March (18 February) 1806' Ibidem, p. 69 (French original), p. 72 (Russian translation).

²²⁴ 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 2 March (18 February) 1806' Ibidem, p. 66 (French original), p. 68 (Russian translation).

²²⁵ The observations of Czartoryski regarding Turkey, 7 March (23 February) 1806. *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, p. 315.

²²⁶ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 2 March (18 February) 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 69 (French original), p. 72 (Russian translation).

think of appropriate responsive actions.²²⁷ Apparently, it was not so much the Ottoman attack (the reinforcement of the fortresses, after all, is a defensive measure) as the threat of losing its heretofore unbound political influence at the Porte that alarmed the Tsarist government. Czartoryski in his memorandum written for Alexander I proposed to send orders to the General-in-Chief of the Dniester army to be ready at any moment to enter Moldavia and Wallachia, saying that “the fear is the only means that may have an effect on the Turks in such cases”.²²⁸ The idea of entering the Russian troops into the Danube principalities remained at the time one of the most effective means Russia still could use on the Porte.

After the recognition of the imperial title of Bonaparte the next anti-Russian step which could be expected by St. Petersburg from the Porte was the opening of negotiations about the closure of the Straits for the Russian ships. Should the Porte decide to touch upon this issue, Italinskii was recommended to use a direct threat. The Russian ambassador was to remind the Porte that it was risking to come into conflict with such a mighty naval power as Britain. Russia, even though much regretting to break the allied bonds with the Ottoman Empire, would be obliged to support Britain.²²⁹

No assurances of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Vâsîf Ahmed Efendi to the Russian ambassador of the Ottoman wish to preserve the alliance with Russia²³⁰ could hide the increasing hostility towards Russia among the Ottomans. The British ambassador Arbuthnot at this time “had heard that the Council of Ministers had discussed

²²⁷ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I, 7 March (23 February) 1806’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, pp. 315-19.

²²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 317.

²²⁹ ‘A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 2 March (18 February) 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 67 (French original), p. 69 (Russian translation).

²³⁰ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 2 March (18 February) 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 71 (French original), p. 73 (Russian translation).

whether the time were advantageous for Turkey, in conjunction with France, to undertake war on Russia”.²³¹ In view of Arbuthnot, the Ottoman side delayed its decision in favour of war only through fear of a British naval attack. In mid-March 1806 the British ambassador hastened to support his Russian colleague, warning the Ottomans that any hostile acts against Russia would also be considered as a threat to the interests of Great Britain.²³² As the influence of the Russian and the British ambassadors at the Ottoman capital was gradually declining, the pressure of joint Russo-British threats on the Ottomans only increased.

As early as 6 March 1806 Italinskii had an audience at the Porte, where he expressed all the recent Russian discontents with the Ottoman government. These consisted of the Porte’s refusal to renew its alliance with Britain; the recognition of the imperial title of Bonaparte without getting the preliminary Russian approval; the secret Ottoman overtures with the French; the military preparations in the close vicinity of the Russian frontiers; and the obstacles to the Russian trade in the Ottoman Empire.²³³ The Russian side continuously emphasized that it was ready to protect the Sultan’s domains from any foreign aggression, whenever possible speaking about the impending French threat. It was solely for this aim that Russia was keeping 100 thousand men on its border with the Ottoman Empire.²³⁴ No one except Russia, however, could guarantee the Porte that these forces could not be used also for other purposes.

²³¹ P. F. Shupp *The European powers and the Near Eastern question, 1806-1807* (New York, 1966), p. 54.

²³² Shupp *The European powers*, p. 54.

²³³ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 14 / 2 March, 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 82-83 (French original), pp. 83-84 (Russian translation).

²³⁴ ‘Alexander I to A. Ia. Italinskii, 8 March (24 February) 1806’ *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, pp. 325-26.

The Russians demanded from the Porte to remain faithful to its alliance with Russia and to decline any propositions of Napoléon, save for the already resolved issue about the imperial title. Italinskii was instructed by his government to tell the Ottomans that the military preparations in the principalities should be stopped. If the Porte would continue its military preparations in the Danube area, or change in any way the status of Moldavia and/or Wallachia, the Russian troops might receive the order to enter the Danubian principalities.²³⁵ The Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia in this case would be undertaken not with the aim to conquer the country, but exclusively to defend the Ottoman independence threatened by the French.²³⁶ Hardly this alleged Russian care about the Ottoman independence and the Ottoman interests could be appreciated by the Sultan and his ministry. At the time the only remaining sure means of the Russian influence on the Ottomans, as the Russian officials themselves admitted, was fear. In general terms, except for the threat of possible occupation of the principalities, the Russian demands were presented to the Porte in the note of Italinskii, dated 31 March 1806.²³⁷

Pressed on both sides, the Sultan's government kept assuring the Russian ambassador in its intentions to preserve the current friendly relations between the two empires. Italinskii in early April 1806 reported that the Porte sent everywhere the firmans to the effect that the rumours about the approaching war with Russia would be stopped. The foundation of a warcamp in Ismail was cancelled, and the governor of this fortress was reprimanded. The earlier orders concerning the supply of provisions from Moldavia to Ismail had also been cancelled. The repair works in

²³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 327-28; 'A. A. Czartoryski to A. Ia. Italinskii, 14 / 2 March, 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 79-81 (French original), pp. 81-82 (Russian translation).

²³⁶ 'Alexander I to A. Ia. Italinskii, 8 March (24 February) 1806' *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, p. 327.

²³⁷ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 4 February (23 January) 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 95-99 (French original), pp. 99-102 (Russian translation).

the fortresses of Khotyn and Bender were very much insignificant and lacked sufficient financing.²³⁸ Italinskii was positive, that among the members of the Ottoman government the majority, and above all Sultan Selim himself, would prefer to remain on good terms with Russia.²³⁹ The most telling argument against the Ottoman entrance into war was a very grave situation of the Ottoman state. For that reason Italinskii was inclined to believe the assurances of the Ottoman statesmen, though pointed out that the whole picture at any time could be changed.²⁴⁰

Probably more than anything else, the Ottomans would have liked to avoid being involved in the current conflict of the great European powers. Unfortunately for the Porte, under the circumstances this was absolutely impossible. The issue about the passage of the Russian war vessels through the Black Sea Straits had clearly shown that there was no in-between. The Ottomans were to make their choice whether in favour of Russia or the Napoléonic France. Should the Porte continue to keep the narrows open for the Russian fleet, this would explicitly mean an unfriendly act towards France. On the other hand, should the Ottomans close the the Straits, even though under the pretext of their wish to observe strict neutrality, this time it would be a move unambiguously hostile to Russia.

The Porte was in a state of uncertainty, though the pendulum of its foreign policy had long before swung in favour of the French. On 26 April 1806 the Russian ambassador was presented a note of the Sultan's government²⁴¹, where the Ottomans

²³⁸ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. A. Czartoryski, 12 April (31 March) 1806. *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 111 (French original), pp. 114 (Russian translation).

²³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 114 (French original), p. 116 (Russian translation).

²⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

²⁴¹ This note has been referred at: *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 684; Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 77; Serge Goriainow, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles* (Paris, 1910), p. 9.

were asking the Russian side to cease sending its war vessels through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Both in the note and in a conversation of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* with the first dragoman of the Russian embassy Fonton, the Porte argued that the passage of the Russian ships through the narrows violated the neutrality of the Ottoman Empire and might bring about the war with France. According to the Ottoman point of view, due to the end of the military operations in Italy it was not necessary any more to maintain a large garrison on Corfu. As for the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance, the 4th secret article of the treaty stipulated the free passage for the Russian war vessels only in case of the common defensive war of Russia and the Ottoman Empire against France. As one might have expected, the Russian side rejected all the Ottoman arguments, stating that the company in Italy did not end, and there still existed the threat of the French invasion in Sicily and in the Balkans. Thus, the Russian troops on Corfu were protecting Albania and the Republic of the Seven Islands, and their presence there was also in the interests of the Porte.²⁴²

The Ottomans did not risk insisting on their demands, when on 24 June 1806 the Russian brig “Jason”, destined for Corfu, arrived in Istanbul. Italinskii declared that if the Porte would prefer to oppose the passage of the Russian brig, it would have to employ force and that it was up to the Ottoman side to think of the consequences of such an act of violence. The similar situation occurred when the Russian frigate “Kildiun” arrived in Istanbul on 23 July 1806. The Ottoman ministers yielded to the Russian ambassador, stating that their requests to cease the passage of the Russian ships were only of a friendly character, because they were afraid of the French reprisals.²⁴³ Despite the fact that its fear of Russia had largely diminished²⁴⁴,

²⁴² *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 684.

²⁴³ Goriainow, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles*, pp. 9-10.

the Porte simply did not dare yet to finally sever relations with its deadly allies from the North.

In the meantime, on 20 May 1806 the Ottoman ambassador Seyyid Abdurrahim Muhib Efendi arrived at Paris.²⁴⁵ The official audience of Muhib Efendi with Napoléon took place on 5 June 1806 at the Tuileries Palace.²⁴⁶ In addressing Napoléon as the Emperor, Muhib Efendi formally confirmed the recognition of the imperial title made by the Porte. It was a matter of time before the French ambassador again appeared on the shores of the Bosphorus.²⁴⁷ Appointed on 2 May 1806²⁴⁸ the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, General Horace Sébastiani would soon start out on his journey to Constantinople.

By mid-June 1806 Italinskii openly wrote to S. R. Vorontsov that there was no doubt that the Ottomans hated Russia and waited with impatience for an opportunity to break relations with it. Such favourable circumstances might occur, in the view of the Ottoman government, when Napoléon would open hostilities against Russia in Poland. Meanwhile the Porte continued the war preparations using as a pretext the disorders in Serbia. As for the French, they would try to subdue the Ottoman Empire whether through an alliance or a conquest. Italinskii thought that in this dangerous situation the Russian and the British courts, in order to be still shown “proper respect” by the Ottomans, should act in concert and not otherwise than by using

²⁴⁴ The changes in the Ottoman attitudes towards Russia became so evident that in early May 1806 Italinskii wrote to S. R. Vorontsov: “*La crainte dans laquelle la Russie tenait toujours la Porte a diminué maintenant incroyablement*”. ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 6 May (24 April) 1806’ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow: Mamontov, 1881), Vol. 20, p. 311.

²⁴⁵ Bekir Günay, *Paris’te bir Osmanlı* (İstanbul, 2009), p. 41.

²⁴⁶ For description of this audience see: Günay, *Paris’te bir Osmanlı*, pp. 57-59.

²⁴⁷ After the departure of Marshal Guillaume Brune in December 1804 France was represented in Istanbul by its Chargés d’affaires Parandier and Ruffin.

²⁴⁸ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 79.

fear.²⁴⁹ Expecting the arrival of the newly appointed French ambassador Sébastiani, Italinskii believed that the crucial moment was coming. Very soon it was to be decided which side, Russo-British or French, would get the upper hand at the Porte. Italinskii remarked with regret that in all probability France would win.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Russia was not going to give up, as a last resort intending to use both threats and its influence among the Orthodox Ottoman subjects.²⁵¹

The commitment of the Russian government to continue its struggle with France even more clearly appeared after Alexander I had refused to ratify the project of a Franco-Russian peace treaty, signed in Paris by the special Russian diplomatic representative Pierre Oubril on 20 July 1806.²⁵² While the instructions given to Oubril in St. Petersburg²⁵³ specified among the principal Russian demands the evacuation of Dalmatia by the French and the guarantees of independence to Denmark, Sweden and the Ottoman Empire, the final version of the treaty contained only the mutual Franco-Russian guarantee of independence of the Ottoman Empire (Article 6). Instead, Russia was to seriously weaken its positions in the Mediterranean by ceding to the French the Bay of Kotor (Bocca di Cattaro) and reducing the garrison of Corfu to 4 thousand men. The Russian refusal to ratify the treaty allowed the French side to use this fact later in its anti-Russian propaganda at the Porte, arguing that St. Petersburg did not wish to guarantee the Ottoman independence.

²⁴⁹ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 13 / 1 June 1806'. *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova* (Moscow: Mamontov, 1881), Vol. 20, pp. 311-13.

²⁵⁰ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to S. R. Vorontsov, 28 / 16 June 1806'. Ibidem, pp. 313-14.

²⁵¹ 'A. A. Czartoryski to Alexander I, 29 / 17 June 1806' *SIRIO*, Vol. 82, p. 391-92.

²⁵² The text of this failed treaty has been published at: *VPR*, Vol.3, pp. 226-28 (French version), pp. 229-31 (Russian version).

²⁵³ 'A. A. Czartoryski to P. Ia. Oubril, 12 May (30 April) 1806' Ibidem, pp. 134-36 (French original), pp. 136-37 (Russian translation).

On 11 July 1806 the new Russian Foreign minister Gotthard von Budberg²⁵⁴ presented at the first meeting of the Military Council of Russia²⁵⁵ his report about the general political situation in Europe and how it was related to Russia.²⁵⁶ As regards the Ottoman Empire, Budberg pointed out that this state, which was “weak, disorganised and split by the warring factions”, would not be able to extend its existence without the aid of a strong European power. While for a long time it was Russia which had been protecting the Porte, after the Treaty of Pressburg and the French acquisition of Dalmatia the Ottomans obviously changed their foreign political preferences. The Porte was behaving ever more hostile towards Russia. Thus, for the moment, the pressing task for St. Petersburg would be not to allow the Ottomans to act according the wishes of Bonaparte.²⁵⁷

Considering the increased possibility of a conflict with the Ottoman Empire the Tsarist government thought it necessary to prepare its naval and land forces for war. At the second meeting of the Military Council, which took place on 17 July 1806, the Deputy Minister of Navy Pavel Vasilievich Chichagov noticed that Russia had only 7 ships of the line and 3 frigates on the Black Sea at the moment, while the Ottoman Black Sea fleet consisted of 23 ships of the line, 21 frigate, 10 corvettes and a few lesser vessels. Thus, the Russian Black Sea ports remained unprotected against the superior naval forces of the Ottomans.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴The details of the biography of Gotthard von Budberg, or, as he was called by the Russians, Andrei Iakovlevich Budberg, are available at: Budberg, baron Andrei Iakovlevich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*. (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1908), Volume 3 “Betankur- Biakster”, pp. 431-35.

²⁵⁵ The Military Council of Russia had been created on a temporary basis in early 1806 when Russia was preparing for a new war against Napoléon. The Council was gathering on special occasions, in order to discuss some particularly important issues.

²⁵⁶ ‘A Report of A. Ia. Budberg to the Military Council, 11 July (29 June) 1806’ *VPR*, Vol.3, pp. 218-19 (French original), pp. 219-20 (Russian translation).

²⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 219 (French original), p. 220 (Russian translation).

²⁵⁸ ‘A Report of P. V. Chichagov to the Military Council, 17 / 5 July 1806’ *Ibidem*, p. 695.

Chichagov saw two ways to solve the problem, which were either to increase the Russian naval presence in the area or to divert the Ottoman fleet from there. Saying that the Russians had 9 ships of the line and 5 frigates in the Mediterranean, and 14 ships of the line and 10 frigates in the Baltic Sea, Chichagov proposed to transfer all of the ships of the line from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Should the Ottomans not allow these ships to pass through the Straits, one could consider it a declaration of war. In order to be prepared for such a course of events, it was necessary to send 7 ships of the line from the Baltic fleet to the Mediterranean. This measure would make the Ottomans also to transfer to the Mediterranean a large naval force from the Black Sea. In this way, the Russian Black Sea coast could be guaranteed from an Ottoman attack.²⁵⁹

Equally, the Russian land troops were to be prepared to enter the Danubian principalities, should the situation require it. Late in July 1806 St. Petersburg sent a special diplomatic agent Konstantin Konstantinovich Rodofinikin²⁶⁰, who was instructed to stay as a private person in Jassy under the pretext of illness and to gather strategic information that might be useful for the Russian Military command on the Moldavian border. Alexander I enjoined Rodofinikin to learn about the number of the Ottoman forces in the frontier area, the condition and the garrisons of the Ottoman frontier fortresses, the personal qualities of the Ottoman commanders, the military supply depots, where the latter were situated and how abundant they were. It was also important to know about the local Ottoman landlords, their forces and whether they would support the Porte in case of war.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Ibidem.

²⁶⁰ For the details of his biography see: Rodofinikin, Konstantin Konstantinovich. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* (25 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1913), Volume 16 "Reitern- Rol'zberg", pp. 317-18.

²⁶¹ 'Alexander I to K. K. Rodofinikin, 24 / 12 July 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, p. 235.

Moreover, Rodofinikin was to find out how much provision and forage would be available in the principalities for the Russian troops in the event of their entrance into Moldavia and Wallachia. Rodofinikin was ordered to maintain contact with the commanders of the Russian troops on the border, informing them about all the recent movements of the Ottoman forces and all kinds of reinforcements being made by the Porte. As could be expected, the Russian government did not forget about the possibility to use its influence among the Ottoman Orthodox subjects. Should the war with the Ottomans start, Rodofinikin was to try bringing the Serbs on the Russian side.²⁶²

Preparing its naval and land forces for war, St. Petersburg tried to show that this was done exclusively in the interests of the Porte, in order to protect the Ottoman state from the French aggression.²⁶³ Without doubting for a moment that they knew the Ottoman interests better than the Ottomans themselves, the Russians demanded from the Porte to abide by its obligations under the Ottoman-Russian allied treaty of 1805. Only in this case, according to the official Russian position, Russia could help the Ottomans to save their state from destruction. In fact, St. Petersburg was prepared to defend the Ottoman Empire only as long as the Porte would remain in a great measure a Russian puppet. Otherwise, if the Ottomans would decide to join forces with the French, St. Petersburg “with extreme regret” retained the right to employ the

²⁶² Ibidem, p. 236.

²⁶³ ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 28 / 16 July 1806’. Ibidem, pp. 239-41 (French original), pp. 241-242 (Russian translation); ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 30 / 16 July 1806. Ibidem, pp. 239-241 (French original), pp. 241-42 (Russian translation).

Russian forces in order to oblige the Porte “to respect and to fulfil its obligations towards the imperial court”.²⁶⁴

Even though the Porte was explaining to the allies its military preparations by the fear of the French, the friendly exchange of the ambassadors between Constantinople and Paris in summer 1806 showed the contrary. As a matter of fact, the Ottomans had good reasons to be afraid of Russia, in view of the presence of the large Russian army on the Ottoman borders, the Russian naval base on Corfu, the Russian war vessels passing through the Straits, and the threats of the Russian ambassador. The belief of both the British and the Russian ambassadors in Constantinople, Arbuthnot and Italinskii, was that the Ottoman military preparations, in the first place, were directed against Russia, that the Porte had already decided upon war and was only awaiting the arrival of the new French ambassador General Horace Sébastiani.²⁶⁵

On 22 August 1806 Sébastiani arrived in Constantinople.²⁶⁶ The first and foremost aim of Sébastiani would be not only to convince the Porte that Napoléon intended to strengthen and consolidate the Ottoman state, but to secure the military alliance of Paris with the Ottomans. Under the circumstances this would mean nothing else but war against Russia and Britain. The envoy of Napoléon was to dispel the last remaining doubts of the Ottoman government about entering into war with Russia. Among the practical tasks awaiting Sébastiani in Constantinople was to achieve the closure of the Straits for the Russian ships, including those Greek

²⁶⁴ ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 30 / 16 July 1806’ Ibidem, p. 253 (French original), pp. 254-55 (Russian translation).

²⁶⁵ Shupp *The European powers*, pp. 136-37.

²⁶⁶ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 101.

merchant vessels sailing under the flag of Russia; to help the Porte to reinforce its fortifications against Russia, to subdue the Georgians and to restore the absolute Ottoman authority over Moldavia and Wallachia.²⁶⁷

It is notable that the instructions of Napoléon to his ambassador ended with the words that the French Emperor did not wish the partition of the Ottoman Empire, even if he would be offered three quarters of it.²⁶⁸ Aiming to emphasize the amicable intentions of France, these words also showed something else. In fact, this meant that the French Emperor might not be satisfied by controlling some part of the Ottoman Empire and thus sharing it with somebody else, but preferred to control all of it. The same was true for Russia. In declaring itself the champion of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, St. Petersburg, first of all, sought to retain its exclusive influence in the Ottoman European provinces. As a result, the rivalry of the major European powers objectively diminished the threat of partition of the Ottoman state.

On 24 August 1806, only a couple of days after the arrival of Sébastiani to Constantinople, the Porte decided to take a fateful decision that eventually would lead the Ottomans to a war with Russia. Alexander Moruzi (Mourousis) and Constantine Ypsilanti (Ypsilantis), the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia known for their pro-Russian sympathies, were deposed.²⁶⁹ In their stead the Porte appointed as the Hospodars the supporters of the pro-French party Scarlat Callimachi and Alexander Suzzo (Soutzos). To what extent the arrival of the new ambassador of

²⁶⁷ P. Coquelle, 'Sébastieni, ambassadeur à Constantinople, 1806-1808' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 18 (1904), pp. 576-78.

²⁶⁸ Coquelle, *Sébastieni, ambassadeur à Constantinople*, p. 578.

²⁶⁹ In the note sent to the Russian ambassador on 26 August 1806 the Ottoman government explained the reasons of the deposition of the Hospodars. Constantine Ypsilanti was accused of treason against the Ottoman Empire, for inciting the Serbs to revolt and lending support to the rebels. Alexander Moruzi, as it was indicated in the note, supposedly for a long time on his own free will asked for a resignation. *VPR*, Vol.3, pp. 703-704.

Napoléon influenced the decision of the Porte is not clear, as the Ottomans had announced about this step earlier.²⁷⁰

Italinskii in his report, sent to the Russian Foreign Ministry on 23 August 1806, i.e. one day before the deposition of the Hospodars had been officially proclaimed, informed that the decision in this respect had already been taken, even though kept in secret. By this time Sébastiani told the Porte that he brought the letter of Napoléon, advising the Sultan to dismiss the Hospodars of the Danubian principalities for being the traitors bribed by Russia and spying against the Ottoman state.²⁷¹ In a way, this was true. One week after the deposition of the Moldavian and Wallachian Hospodars the Russian ambassador complained that he was instantly deprived of a very important source of valuable information, and thus became completely ignorant about what was going on in the Ottoman government.²⁷² As Italinskii explained it, the Ottoman ministers thought it important to dismiss the Hospodars before the letter of Bonaparte would be officially submitted to the Porte, in order to retain the prestige of the Ottoman Empire.²⁷³

Since both Ypsilanti and Moruzi assumed their posts in 1802, the deposition of the Hospodars became an outright violation of the Hatt-i Şerif of 1802²⁷⁴ regulating

²⁷⁰ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 102.

²⁷¹ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 23 / 11 August 1806' *VPR*, Vol.3, pp. 264-65 (French original), p. 267 (Russian translation). The mentioned letter of Napoléon to Selim III has been published at: Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottoman*, Vol. 2, pp. 277-78.

²⁷² 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 30 / 18 August 1806' *VPR*, Vol.3, p. 286 (French original), p. 289 (Russian translation).

²⁷³ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 23 / 11 August 1806' *Ibidem*, p. 265 (French original), p. 267 (Russian translation).

²⁷⁴ The Ottoman text has been published, along with its Russian translation, at: M. Guboglu, *Dva ukaza (1801 g.) i «Sviashchennii reskript» (1802 ä.), sviazanniye s turetsko-rusko-rumynskimi otnosheniami*. In.: A. S. Tveritina (Ed.) *Vostochnie istochniki po istorii narodov Iugo-vostochnoi i Tsentral'noi Yevropy* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 252-72; The French text is available at: Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux*, Vol. 2, pp. 55-67.

the status and the privileges of the Danubian principalities. That document had been issued by Selim III at the urging of the Russian ambassador on 24 September 1802 and stipulated that the Hospodars should remain on their posts for the fixed term of seven years. During this time the Porte had no right to dismiss the Hospodars unless they commit a proven crime. In that case the Ottomans were obliged to inform the Russian ambassador and only after the latter agrees the Hospodars could be deposed before the fixed seven-year term.²⁷⁵

Italinskii was not surprised at the news of the deposition of the Hospodars. In view of the later behaviour of the Porte, starting from December of 1805, the Russian ambassador observed the “deviations in the policy, which the Porte had the temerity to afford”²⁷⁶ and expected such a step by the Ottoman government. Italinskii was positive that no representations or admonitions could help to successfully influence the Porte. According to Italinskii, the only means to be efficiently used in this situation was the brutal force, as he was repeating it many times before. For this reason, the ambassador expressed an opinion that it was necessary to promptly issue orders for the Russian troops on the Dniester to enter into the principalities and to oust the newly appointed pro-French Hospodars or their representatives.²⁷⁷

A few days after the deposition of the Hospodars the Russian ambassador, quite expectedly, delivered a strong protesting note to the Ottoman government.²⁷⁸ Obviously, Italinskii did not have enough time to get the instructions relating to the

²⁷⁵ Guboglu, *Dva ukaza*, pp. 257-58 (the Ottoman text), p. 268 (the Russian text); Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux*, Vol. 2, p. 63 (the French text).

²⁷⁶ “... les écarts qu'elle avait la témérité de se permettre...” ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 23 / 11 August 1806’ *VPR*, p. 265 (French original), p. 267 (Russian translation).

²⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 266 (French original), p. 268 (Russian translation).

²⁷⁸ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 28 / 16 August 1806’ *Ibidem*, pp. 273-76 (French original), p. 276-78 (Russian translation).

last events in the Danubian principalities. His note, dated 28 August 1806, was ordered to be prepared earlier, in view of other numerous discontents of St. Petersburg with the Porte. The deposition of the Hospodars only hurried the ambassador to hand the note over to the Sultan's government.

Among other complaints presented by Italinskii to the Porte were the difficulties faced by the Russian merchants in the Ottoman lands; the refusal of the Porte to renew its alliance with Britain; the Ottoman requests to stop the passage of the Russian ships through the Straits, as well as the transportation of the Russian troops to the Ionian archipelago. The Russian ambassador pointed out at the violations of the following treaties concluded earlier between Russia and the Ottoman Empire: the Trade treaty (1783), the Alliance treaty (1798 and 1805), the Convention about the Ionian Islands (1800) and the Hatt-i Şerif concerning the Danubian principalities (1802).

Italinskii demanded from the Porte to reconsider its policy once more and to fully observe all its treaty obligations towards Russia. Apart from that, Italinskii wished the departure of the newly appointed Hospodars to the principalities to be cancelled. In order to be more convincing, the Russian ambassador called the attention of the Ottoman ministers to the fact that a huge Russian army was being gathered on the Dniester. These forces, in words of Italinskii, would always be ready to give assistance to the Ottoman Empire, though could be used also in order to make the Ottoman government to carry out its commitments to the Russian Imperial Court.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Ibidem, pp. 274-75 (French original), p. 277 (Russian translation).

By early September 1806 it became clear that the war in all likelihood could not be avoided. The only question remaining was when it would start. As the dispatches of the Russian Foreign Ministry sent at this time to Italinskii show, St. Petersburg was under no illusion about the consequences of the ultimatum, which the Russian ambassador was instructed to deliver to the Ottoman government. If the Porte would not agree to satisfy the Russian demands to restore the former rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia, Italinskii was to leave Constantinople with all the personnel of his mission. Only the first dragoman of the embassy, Fonton, would stay in capacity of the Russian Charge d’Affairs.²⁸⁰ At the same time, Italinskii received yet another instruction prescribing him to take measures in order to protect the embassy archives and his own property, as there was almost no doubt that the reply of the Porte would be either equivocal or negative.²⁸¹ Equally, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army on the Dniester General Ivan Ivanovich Michelson²⁸², if he would learn about the departure of Italinskii from Constantinople, was instructed to move his troops closer to the Dniester and be ready to cross it as soon as he would get the respective orders.²⁸³

As to the Ottoman side, it obviously had made its strategic choice and only sought to gain time in order to be better prepared for war. The Ottoman officials, in the first place the *Baş Tercüman* Constantine Hangerli and the *Reis-ül-Küttab* Vâsîf Efendi, tried to persuade the Russian ambassador that the recent actions of the Porte

²⁸⁰ ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 7 September (26 August) 1806’ Ibidem, pp. 300-302 (French original), pp. 302-303 (Russian translation).

²⁸¹ ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 7 September (26 August) 1806’ Ibidem, pp. 303-304 (French original), pp. 304-305 (Russian translation).

²⁸² For additional details of his biography see: Michel’son Ivan Ivanovich. S. V. Rozhdestvenskii (Ed.) *Russkii biograficheskii slovar’* Unpublished materials in 8 Vols. (Moscow, 1999), Vol. 4 “Maak-Miatleva”, pp. 210-11.

²⁸³ ‘Alexander I to I. I. Michelson, 8 September (27 August) 1806’. Referred to in: *VPR*, Vol.3, p. 306.

were caused by the general chaos in the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman wish to be protected from the dissatisfaction of the French. The outward friendliness of the Ottomans did not make Italinskii to change his opinion that only the demonstration of force could make the Porte to accept the Russian demands.²⁸⁴ Despite his friendly conversations with Hangerli and Vâsîf Efendi, Italinskii argued that it was the actual deeds of the Porte, and not the words, which should be taken into account.²⁸⁵

The French ambassador was doing his best to widen the breach between St. Petersburg and the Porte. When the news about the non-ratification of the Franco-Russian peace treaty by the Tsar reached Constantinople on 6 September 1806, Sébastiani used it in his anti-Russian propaganda at the Porte. Sébastiani argued that, since the treaty stipulated the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Corfu and guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the nonratification of the treaty meant the Russian refusal to guarantee the Ottoman independence.²⁸⁶ On the same day Sébastiani passed to the Porte a note demanding to close the Straits to the Russian ships, having declared that he would leave Constantinople should even one Russian vessel pass through the narrows. However, after this declaration the Russian corvette “Pavel” still passed from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.²⁸⁷

Just like Italinskii, Sébastiani among his methods of persuasion used outright threats. On 16 September 1806 once again addressing the Porte with a demand to close the Straits, Sébastiani argued that if the Russian vessels may freely pass the

²⁸⁴ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 15/ 3 September 1806’ Ibidem, pp. 314-17 (French original), p. 317-319 (Russian translation).

²⁸⁵ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 15/ 3 September 1806’ Ibidem, pp. 319-20 (French original), pp. 320-21 (Russian translation).

²⁸⁶ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 102.

²⁸⁷ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 15/ 3 September 1806’ Ibidem, p. 319 (French original), p. 321 (Russian translation).

Bosporus, then the French armies in Dalmatia should be given a permission to proceed through the Ottoman territories up to the Russian borders on the Dniester. The strong French army in Dalmatia, in words of Sébastiani, could be used to defend the Ottoman Empire against Russia and Britain, but could be as well deployed against the Porte.²⁸⁸ It is worthy of note that both Italinskii and Sébastiani in their communication with the Porte used the same carrot and stick policy, which was even formulated in the similar expressions. The Ottomans were proposed to choose the friendship of a great European power or to face the consequences of its wrath.

In six days after Sébastiani demanded from the Porte to close the Straits, on 22 September 1806, it was the turn of Italinskii to threaten the Porte with the possible results of the Russian and British dissatisfaction. Italinski urged the Porte to give him a reply for his earlier note of 28 August. For 25 days the Ottomans kept silence, using as a pretext the illness of the *Reis-ül-Küttab* and in fact trying to gain time. The Russian ambassador was not original in his argumentation. Italinskii told that he knew about the threats of Sébastiani and assured the Sultan that they were groundless, since both Russia and Britain were able to protect the Ottoman Empire from Napoléon. It was with this aim that the Russian army of about 120 thousand men had been gathered on the Dniester. However, if the Ottomans would comply with the French demands, then Russia and Britain would be forced to start hostilities against the Ottoman Empire.²⁸⁹

In accordance with the orders received from his government, on 29 September 1806 Italinskii delivered to the Porte an ultimatum, informing the Ottoman side that

²⁸⁸ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, pp. 104-105.

²⁸⁹ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to Selim III. *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 322-24 (French original), p. 324-25 (Russian translation).

he had instructions to leave Constantinople if the Hospodars would not be restored, and if the Porte would not comply with all its treaty obligations towards Russia.²⁹⁰ In their reply, which was delivered to the Russian ambassador on 1 October 1806, the Ottomans held that the Russian demands concerning the Straits infringed the principle of the Ottoman neutrality. As for the deposition of the Hospodars, they were justly removed from their offices.²⁹¹ Upon the interference of the British ambassador Arbuthnot, though, the immediate conflict was delayed. At the conference with Arbuthnot, on 5 October 1806, the Ottomans proved ready for further negotiations about the key issues of the renewal of their alliance with Britain, the passage of the Russian ships through the Bosphorus and the deposition of the Hospodars. Italinskii agreed to stay for a while in Constantinople, though refused to depart from his instructions.²⁹²

On 12 October 1806 the Porte proposed Italinskii through the first dragoman of the Russian embassy Fonton instead of the public restoration of the Hospodars to depose the newly appointed Hospodars and in concert with the Tsar to choose the new ones. Italinskii declined the Ottoman proposal as an attempt to delay the final solution of the issue. Once again the Ottoman side was threatened that the Russian ambassador along with the whole personnel of the embassy would leave Constantinople, if the demands about the restoration of the Hospodars would be unsatisfied.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to the Ottoman government, 29 / 17 September 1806' Referred at: Ibidem, p. 330.

²⁹¹ Puryear, *Napoleon and the Dardanelles*, p. 107; Shupp. op. cit., p. 159.

²⁹² Shupp *The European powers*, pp. 159-61.

²⁹³ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to *Reis-ül-Küttab* Galib, 13 / 1 October 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 341-42 (French original), pp. 342-343 (Russian translation).

Arbuthnot advised the Ottomans to yield to the Russian demands and to restore the Hospodars. Otherwise the Russian troops would, no doubt, cross the border and Britain would have to support them. On 12 October 1806 the Ottoman government convened for a special meeting to discuss what should be done with the Russian ultimatum.²⁹⁴ Apparently, to wage a war against a long-time enemy in order to recover former possessions to the north of the Black Sea would in itself be a very attractive option for the Porte. Some of the Ottoman statesmen were determined to take vengeance on Russia and for that purpose supported the French. On the other hand, the “pro-allied” party in the Ottoman government called attention to the fact that the Ottoman Empire was not ready yet to throw the gauntlet to St. Petersburg. Furthermore, the fear of war against Russia and Great Britain at the same time remained a serious constraining factor on the Ottoman ambitions. The Ottoman ministers, influenced by both the French and the Allies, were consulting for a few days. In the end the Ottoman side agreed to comply with the Russian demands. On 16 October 1806 Constantine Ypsilanti and on 17 October 1806 Alexander Moruzi were reinstated as the Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia respectively.²⁹⁵

However, even though the Hospodars were restored, it was almost generally believed on both sides of the Dniester that the approaching war could not be avoided. The Porte, as the restoration of the Hospodars showed, was afraid of the prospect of entering a war with Russia and the Great Britain at the same time. On the other hand, the Sultan’s government was under serious pressure from the common people, the Muslim clergy (*ulema*) and the French ambassador Sébastiani, which were pushing the Porte to war. In this way, the restoration of the Hospodars could be nothing else

²⁹⁴ Shupp *The European powers*, pp. 164-65.

²⁹⁵ ‘A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 18 / 6 October 1806’ *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 347-48 (French original), p. 348 (Russian translation).

than an attempt to gain time before the start of hostilities. The news of the French decisive victory over the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstädt (14 October 1806) only increased the influence of the pro-French party in Constantinople. The peace between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires grew ever more precarious.

From the Russian point of view, the simple restoration of the Hospodars already could not recover the former unbounded Russian influence at the Porte. For that reason the last step of the Ottoman government did not make St. Petersburg to abandon the intention to occupy the Danubian principalities. At the moment the only way to pacify the Russian side would be to return to the earlier friendly relations between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. In the language of St. Petersburg this meant to make the Ottoman government an obedient instrument of the Russian will and to completely eliminate the French influence at the Porte. Since it was obviously impossible, Russia had no other option but to restore the “friendly relations” with the Sultan’s court by force. In the situation when the Ottoman government in fact never was a sincere ally of St. Petersburg and tended to prefer the alliance with France, in words of the Russian Foreign Minister Budberg, it would be better for Russia to have an open conflict with the Porte rather than anyway to keep constantly the troops on the Dniester.²⁹⁶ Apart from exerting pressure on the Porte, the occupation of the Danubian principalities was also to ensure the Russian side the strategic advantages at the beginning of the war.

²⁹⁶ ‘A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 27 / 15 November 1806’ Ibidem, pp. 387-89 (French original), p. p. 389-90 (Russian translation).

Thus on 28 October 1806,²⁹⁷ despite that the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia were reinstated, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army on the Dniester General Michelson was ordered to cross the Dniester and to occupy Moldavia.²⁹⁸ Already knowing about the restoration of the Hospodars, the Russian government still confirmed its earlier orders regarding the occupation of the Danubian principalities on 4 November and 8 November 1806.²⁹⁹ It was not enough, in view of St. Petersburg, to reinstate the pro-Russian Hospodars in their offices. Until the Porte satisfies other Russian demands, which were to keep the Black Sea Straits open for the Russian fleet, to renew the Ottoman alliance with the Great Britain and to sever all relations with the French, the Russian troops were to stay in the Danubian principalities.³⁰⁰

Towards the end of November and in December the Russian troops occupied the fortresses of Khotyn (27 November)³⁰¹, Yassy (28 November)³⁰², Bender (6 December)³⁰³, Akkerman (13 December)³⁰⁴, Kilia (21 December)³⁰⁵ and Bucharest (25 December).³⁰⁶ The only fortress unoccupied by the Russians remained Ismail. In about one and a half month the Russian troops took the key fortified positions in

²⁹⁷ Shupp wrongly gives the date of this order as 16 October 1806, mixing up the Julian and the Gregorian calendars. While according to the Julian calendar, officially used in Russia until 1918, the date of the order given to Michelson is indeed 16 October 1806, according to the Gregorian calendar it was 28 October 1806. Therefore, Shupp also wrongly assumes that the orders to cross the Dniester were sent from St. Petersburg on the same day (16 October) when the Hospodars were reinstated in their offices. Shupp *The European powers*, p. 203.

²⁹⁸ Alexander I to General I. I. Michelson, 28 / 16 October 1806. Published at: A. N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey 1806-1812 g. g.* (3 Vols.; St. Petersburg, 1885), Vol. 1, pp. 377-79.

²⁹⁹ 'Alexander I to General I. I. Michelson, 4 November (23 October) 1806' Ibidem, pp. 380-81; 'A. Ia. Budberg to General I. I. Michelson, 8 November (27 October) 1806' Ibidem, pp. 381-82.

³⁰⁰ 'Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 27 / 15 November 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 381-84 (French original), pp. 384-87 (Russian translation).

³⁰¹ Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, p. 89.

³⁰² Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, p. 92.

³⁰³ Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, p. 112.

³⁰⁴ Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, p. 114.

³⁰⁵ Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, p. 114.

³⁰⁶ Petrov, *Voina Rossii c Turtsiyey*, pp. 102-104.

Bessarabia, Moldavia and Wallachia under their control, for the most part without the resistance of the Ottomans.

While the Russian troops of Michelson were occupying the principal fortresses of the Danubian principalities, Italinskii was at a loss what to say to the Ottomans about the recent events going on in Moldavia and Wallachia. Addressed by the First Dragoman of the Porte Hangerli, who asked the Russian ambassador to explain the occupation of Khotyn, Italinskii honestly replied that he did not know the reasons of it. Though, should it be war, it would be officially declared to the Ottoman government. On 13 December 1806 Italinskii wrote to the Foreign Minister Budberg, asking the ministry to clarify the situation.³⁰⁷ The belated instructions for Italinskii regarding the occupation of the fortresses of Khotyn and Bender did not contain anything new. The Russian ambassador was to assure the Porte in friendly intentions of the Russian side, to explain that the occupation of the fortresses was a temporary measure and that the Tsar was ready to return to the Sultan the Ottoman flags taken in the fortresses.³⁰⁸ The die was already cast, though. On 24 December 1806 the Porte sent an official declaration of war to the Russian embassy. Next day Italinskii and the whole personnel of the Russian embassy embarked on a British ship and left Constantinople.³⁰⁹ St. Petersburg and the Porte once again appeared to be at war with one another.

The war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires ended the eight years period of the Ottoman-Russian alliance. Despite the long record of wars between the

³⁰⁷ 'A. Ia. Italinskii to A. Ia. Budberg, 13 / 1 December 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 412-14 (French original), pp. 415-16 (Russian translation).

³⁰⁸ 'A. Ia. Budberg to A. Ia. Italinskii, 17 / 5 December 1806' *VPR*, Vol. 3, pp. 417-18 (French original), pp. 418-19 (Russian translation).

³⁰⁹ Shupp *The European powers*, pp. 263-64.

two empires throughout the whole 18th century, their alliance showed that at times unthinkable cooperation of the Russian Tsar and the Ottoman Sultan was still possible. Nevertheless, in trying to defend the Ottoman Empire from the French aggression Russia in the first place sought to preserve its own exclusive influence in the Balkans. The cooperation between the Tsar's and the Sultan's courts guaranteed the independence of the Ottoman state only in capacity of an obedient Russian ally. To preserve the weak neighbour on its southern borders seemed the best solution for St. Petersburg, as it could secure and enjoy all those advantages, which it was impossible to gain earlier by many wars, as a result of the alliance with the Porte. Understandably, Russia could not afford seeing the domination of some other strong European power in Constantinople.

As for the Ottomans, they felt equally threatened on all sides, and obviously could not get rid of feeling of a constant danger lurking in the North. Neither could the Ottoman government calmly observe the Russian war vessels going to and fro through the Straits in close vicinity of the Sultan's capital, tolerate the continuous interferences of the Russian ambassadors on behalf of the Danubian principalities and the Ottoman Christian subjects, and see the large Russian armed forces kept on the Ottoman borders. Wider Ottoman population, including many highest officials and especially the Muslim clergy, wished war with Russia in order to get revenge for former defeats and territorial losses, should they be allowed such an opportunity. Thus, the French anti-Russian propaganda appeared to be much successful among the Ottoman people.

The Russian wish of absolute control over the Ottoman foreign and domestic politics; the French intentions to restore the former influence of Paris in the Ottoman Empire and to use the Porte against Russia; the Ottoman eagerness to get rid of the burden of the alliance with Russia and, if possible, to return the territories that were lost in the previous war with Russia- all these led to a new armed conflict between St. Petersburg and the Porte.

7.6. Conclusions

During the first years of the Ottoman-Russian alliance, at the background of the growing antagonism between St. Petersburg on the one side and Austria and the Great Britain on the other, the relations between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires continued to be quite friendly. It is worthy of note that Paul I was so enraged with the Austrians that in late 1799, and then once again towards the end of 1800, he even contemplated an interesting idea of an anti-Austrian alliance between Russia and the Porte. The Russian Emperor thought it possible to promise the Porte the Russian aid in restoring the former Ottoman territorial possessions lost to Austria. Moreover, Paul I was ready to help the Ottomans to secure some new territorial gains at the expense of the Habsburg monarchy. While such a fancy idea of the Russian Emperor appeared to be nothing more than a mere speculation, the cooperation between St. Petersburg and the Porte was not only limited to the joint military operations of their fleets in the Mediterranean, but also had some other dimensions.

So, the Russian side at the request of the Ottomans delivered to Constantinople various ammunition supplies from the stocks of the Black Sea Admiralty. These included the bombs, the cannon balls, the rifles, the gun powder, the anchors, etc. In

seeking to preserve at this time good relations with the Porte, Russia also agreed to sign on 22 August 1799 the new Ottoman-Russian Convention on the Trade Tariff. Thus, a very important issue that for a long time continued to be a stumbling block between the two empires had been finally resolved. This did not mean, of course, that the mutual distrust and suspicions ceased to exist and the relations of the Tsar's and the Sultan's courts turned exceedingly cordial. However, both the Russian and the Ottoman Empires demonstrated that they could cooperate and under the current circumstances were far from wishing to embark on a war against one another.

Even though in late 1800 appeared the notorious memo of the Head of the College of Foreign Affairs Count F. V. Rostopchin, containing an idea of the partition of the Ottoman Empire in concert with other leading European powers and being covered with the critical remarks of Paul I, this document did not influence in any way the practical politics of St. Petersburg towards the Porte. As a matter of fact, it showed that the spirit of aggressive designs of the previous reign was still alive among the highest classes of the Russian ruling elite. At the same time, the Rostopchin's memorandum was expressing only one of the two approaches to the politics of St. Petersburg regarding the Ottoman Empire. It did not conform to the official political program of the Russian government concerning its relations with the Porte, which was currently based on the principle of maintaining a "weak neighbour".

The Russian wish to preserve the territorial integrity of a weak and controllable Ottoman state remained the same both during the reign of Paul I and after his death, when the Russian throne was ascended by Paul's eldest son Alexander. That St.

Petersburg did not intend to discuss any propositions with regard to the partition of the Ottoman Empire was made clear by the Russian diplomatic representatives in Paris S. A. Kolychov and A. I. Morkov, during their negotiations with the French government in 1801 and 1802 respectively. Following the resumption of war in Europe in 1803, the Russian apprehensions about the potential French attack on the Balkan possessions of the Sultan once again increased. For that reason in mid-December 1803 the Tsar decided to reinforce the Russian garrison on Corfu, what necessarily raised the suspicions of the Porte. It is hard to say which government, the French or the Ottoman, was in fact more alarmed by the Russian military presence in the Mediterranean.

From the Ottoman point of view, any war would be fatal to the Empire and any leading European power posed a potential threat to the Sultan's possessions and even the very existence of the Ottoman state. Under the circumstances, it was important to stay on good terms with all big European powers and at the same time to think of possible means of defence against all of them. While the Porte exerted itself to avoid being involved into the ongoing all-European war, the Ottoman capital continued to witness the rivalry of the French, Russian and the British diplomacies trying to lure the Ottomans to their side. The issue of recognition of the imperial title of Napoléon Bonaparte well illustrates the difficult situation in which the Porte found itself in, facing the opposing demands of the French on the one hand and the Russians and the British on the other. In the end, by late 1804 the Russo-British influence in Constantinople outweighed the French one and the imperial title of Napoléon for the time being remained unrecognised by the Porte.

At the same time, when the issue about the recognition of Napoléon's imperial title was at its high, there emerged an idea to renew the Ottoman-Russian alliance. Though it is not so clear who was the initiator of the negotiations about the alliance renewal, both St. Petersburg and the Porte regarded it as a good opportunity to achieve their own specific goals. While for Russia it was important to retain its influence at the Porte, the Ottoman government thought of nothing else but how to protect the possessions of the Sultan from the encroachments of both the French and the allies. Rather long period of negotiations, which started in February 1805 and ended only in September of the same year, showed that the parties, after all, had serious disagreements as regards their vision of the renewed alliance. The final text of the treaty did not include the two most cherished by the Russian side clauses concerning the deployment of the Russian troops in the Danubian principalities and the guarantee of the equal rights to both the Christian and the Muslim Ottoman subjects. For that reason, it is not appropriate to say that by renewing its alliance with Russia the Porte yielded to the Russian demands.

Through signing this treaty both Russia and the Ottoman Empire partly achieved their aims. St. Petersburg retained its military presence on Corfu, could still enjoy the right of the free passage through the Black Sea straits and was assured that at least formally the Porte remained its ally. The Porte protected itself against possible French attack and at the same time managed to avoid joining the anti-French coalition, the deployment of the Russian troops in the Danubian principalities and giving the equal rights to the Christian subjects of the empire. Thus, the Ottomans succeeded both to smooth their relations with Russia and to stay on relatively even terms with France.

After the French successes at Ulm and Austerlitz, followed by the Franco-Austrian Peace of Pressburg, the European balance of power had noticeably shifted to France. As regards the Balkan region, occurred what the Russians and the Ottomans were afraid of and what was supposed to be prevented by the Russian garrison kept on Corfu. According to the Pressburg treaty the French acquired Istria and Dalmatia and in this way without firing a shot became neighbours of the Ottoman Empire. The French influence at Constantinople began to grow, while that one of Russia and Britain appeared to be in decline. In January 1806 the Ottomans hastened to recognise Napoléon Bonaparte as the Emperor of the French.

Fear remained the only means which, in opinion of the Russian ambassador Italinskii, could still have effect on the Ottomans. Along with the usual assurances of the Russian friendship Italinskii kept reminding the Ottomans that it would be in the best interests of the Porte not to incur the wrath of Russia. Following the occupation of Cattaro by the forces of Seniavin St. Petersburg gained an additional trump card to be used both against the French and the Porte. In point of fact, the Ottomans were indeed frightened at the prospect of war with Russia and Britain at the same time. On the other hand, should the circumstances allow it, the Ottomans had many reasons to desire such a war.

The deposition of the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia in late August 1806 became an overt step towards war. The arrival of the new French ambassador Horace Sébastiani to Constantinople only strengthened the positions of the war party in the Ottoman government. Even though the ultimatum of Italinskii and the

mediation of the British ambassador Charles Arbuthnot seemed to be successful in persuading the Porte to reinstate the dismissed Hospodars, the war could not be avoided. St. Petersburg was well aware that the restoration of the Hospodars was only an attempt by the Ottomans to gain time in order to be better prepared for war, and that the former Russian influence anyway could not be restored. Thus, despite the news that the Hospodars were reinstated, the Russian army on the Dniester was still ordered to cross the Ottoman border and to occupy the principalities. As a logical and well expected result of this move, came the declaration of war to Russia made by the Porte in late December 1805.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the special time in the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations, which witnessed a short-lived cooperation between the Sultan's and the Tsar's courts in the wake of the growing French advances in Europe and especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. It seemed advisable to limit the scope of the study by the years 1792 to 1806, which marked respectively the end and the beginning of the two Ottoman-Russian wars. It was during this inter-war period that the two empires, much unexpectedly for both, faced the necessity to cooperate and even to conclude a defensive alliance. In view of the long record of the previous and later sanguinary encounters between the Russian and the Ottoman empires, the episode of their rapprochement that led to military and diplomatic cooperation appears to be of particular interest.

The purpose of the current study was to reveal the main tendencies in the Ottoman-Russian relations during the last decade of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century. Another specific point was to determine how the first ever alliance between the Russian and the Ottoman empires became possible, to look into the situation of its origin, the practical implementation and the implications for the European politics at the

time of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Furthermore, this research was to analyse the circumstances under which the Ottoman-Russian rapprochement and the defensive alliance of 1799, renewed by both sides in 1805, ended in yet another Ottoman-Russian war.

In the present work it has been shown that after the Peace of Jassy the Ottoman and the Russian empires appeared to be in search of a *modus vivendi*, which would enable both sides to avoid further confrontation. For different reasons each party was very much interested in preserving peace. At the same time the shared distrust and the fresh memories of the recent wars brought about a situation when both the Ottomans and the Russians felt insecure about the intentions of the opposite side and thus were bound to keep preparing for war even while seeking peace. So, during the first years after the Peace of Jassy the Porte and St. Petersburg were balancing on the brink of war. It was the fact that neither of the two could afford fighting, which, much to the chagrin of the French diplomacy, in all probability saved the Ottoman and the Russian governments from a new conflict.

A certain thaw in the relations between the two empires became possible after the death of the Empress Catherine II. The news about the death of the former nemesis of the Ottomans was received in Constantinople with great joy. The accession to the throne of the new Russian monarch, Catherine's unloved son Paul I, had a positive impact on the Ottoman-Russian relations. Paul I made it clear that he was not going to embark on the aggressive anti-Ottoman projects of his mother, being rather engaged in the massive internal reforms. While the growing belligerence of the French Republic was seriously

disturbing the European governments, including the Porte, the relations of the Ottomans with Russia appeared improved. As early as September 1797, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople V. P. Kochubei even assumed the possibility of an alliance between St. Petersburg and the Porte. Somewhat later, in spring 1798, the same idea was considered by *Reis-ül-Küttab* Atıf Efendi.

It is noteworthy that Paul I proposed his military aid to the Ottomans long before the actual French attack on Egypt took place. Already when the massive preparations of a huge French naval squadron were going on in Toulon, the Russian ambassador was ordered to contact the Porte on this matter. However, the Ottoman side was in no haste to accept the Russian aid, and agreed to receive the Black Sea squadron under Vice Admiral Ushakov only after the news about the French occupation of Egypt reached Constantinople. In such a way, it was the Egyptian expedition of Napoléon Bonaparte that caused the military cooperation and the eventual alliance between the Porte and Russia. Nevertheless, despite the French aggression in Egypt such an alliance might have never occurred without the necessary prerequisites for it, which evolved earlier. Such were the general Ottoman-Russian rapprochement towards the late 1790-s and the change of monarch in Russia. Furthermore, at the moment the interests of both the Ottoman and the Russian governments appeared very much the same and lied in preventing the French advances in the Balkans and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

By signing the treaty, both Russia and the Porte benefited from it in their specific ways. The Ottoman Empire, weak and affected by serious internal crisis, received an urgent aid amid the ongoing war with France. As to Russia, it gained without firing a

shot what otherwise could not be reached in all Ottoman-Russian wars throughout the whole 18th centuries. From now on St. Petersburg enjoyed an unprecedented influence at the Porte and acquired the right of a free passage through the Black Sea straits for the Russian war vessels. It should be noted that this latter condition was granted to Russia only for the duration of the current war. Accordingly, the Russian government had no obvious reasons to put at risk the advantages of its present position and wish something else than preserving the Ottoman Empire as a weak and controllable neighbour.

During the time under discussion Russia pursued in regard to the Ottoman Empire a policy of a “weak neighbour”. Even though in late 1800 appeared the notorious memorandum of F. V. Rostopchin, which suggested partition of the Ottoman Empire and which had even been signed and approved by Paul, it did not provide the basis for the Russian official policy towards the Porte. On the contrary, the instructions to the Russian ambassadors abroad time and again underlined the wish of St. Petersburg to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman state. In fact, it was the Russian own privileged position that the Tsar’s government sought to preserve. Until the Ottoman Empire would remain weak, and be in many respects a puppet of the Russian court consulting on the matters of its foreign policy with the Russian ambassador, St. Petersburg preferred not to share its influence at the Porte with some other strong European power.

On the other hand, the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire was expected by many. Thus, such a possibility, even though largely undesirable, was also necessarily to be taken into account by the Russian government. It was extremely important for Russia to make the most use of the situation, should the downfall of the House of Osman

become an inevitable reality. In that case the special relations between St. Petersburg and the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan would appear as an additional trump card at the disposal of the Russian diplomacy. For that reason, Russia could not and did not intend to abandon its image of the main protector of the Ottoman Orthodox Christians.

The alliance with the Ottoman Empire presented a serious dilemma for St. Petersburg. The Tsar's government found itself in a very complicated situation when it was at the same time to stay on guard of the Ottoman integrity and to keep friendly relations with the actually or potentially separatist Orthodox peoples of the empire. The idea of Czartoryski to find a solution through promising the Ottoman Orthodox peoples to advocate their interests before the Porte, which would make Russia an intermediary between the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan and the Ottoman government, despite its seeming consistency could not completely resolve the existing problem.

After the French had been defeated and ousted from the Ionian Islands and Egypt, the solidarity of the Ottoman and the Russian interests, in large part, ceased to exist. From then on, the Ottomans would prefer to stay out of the continued European conflict, wishing both belligerent parties to exhaust each other. However, the Porte remained under the constant pressure of the diplomatic representatives of all leading European powers. Under such circumstances it was almost impossible for the Ottomans to keep their neutrality. As the issue about the recognition or, rather, non-recognition by the Porte of the imperial title of Napoléon Bonaparte in 1804 has shown, the foreign political decisions of the Ottoman government were much dependent on the international conjuncture. The Porte would not dare to stand against the joint demands of the Russian

and the British ambassadors and did not recognise Napoléon as the Emperor of the French. Moreover, the Ottomans started negotiations about the renewal of the alliance treaty with Russia, which was finally signed in September 1805. The renewed treaty became rather a compromise guaranteeing both signatories a certain stability of their relations in the near future.

Following the victories of Napoléon at Ulm and Austerlitz, when the international conjuncture changed in favour of France, the Ottoman capital also witnessed the increase of the French influence. At the beginning of 1806 the Ottomans recognised Napoléon's imperial title, while their relations with Russia were gradually deteriorating. In spring 1806 the Ottomans expressed their discontent at the passage of the Russian war vessels through the Black Sea straits. Heretofore hidden Ottoman belligerency and the seeking of revenge against Russia grew more manifest. Already in summer 1806 the Russian ambassador Italinskii was convinced that the fear remained the only means of influence that Russia could still use on the Porte.

The deposition of the pro-Russian Hospodars in Moldavia and Wallachia became a symbolical move on the part of the Porte, testifying the Ottoman intention to get rid of the Russian influence. With the arrival of the French ambassador Horace Sébastiani in late August 1806 the Porte's resolution to reconsider its relations with Russia only gained an additional boost. The spectre of war cast a growing shadow over the Ottoman-Russian frontiers. Despite the fact that due to the mediation of the British ambassador the Porte agreed in the end to revoke its previous decision and to restore the Hospodars, the Russian troops on the Dniester were given orders to enter the Danubian

principalities. The contradictions were much more serious than the deposition or restoration of one or another Hospodar.

Owing to the recent raise of the French power in Europe the Ottoman hopes to take revenge upon Russia for all previous grievances gained a new life. In this respect the reinstatement of the Hospodars was for the Ottomans nothing else than an attempt to buy time. For Russia, and this was well understood in St. Petersburg, the fact that the Porte restored the Hospodars did not mean that in the same way the earlier Russian influence at the Porte could also be easily restored. With the entrance of the Russian troops into the Danubian principalities the die was cast. The outbreak of a new Ottoman-Russian war became a matter of time.

Thus, the findings of this study suggest that the Ottoman-Russian rapprochement in late 18th- early 19th centuries passed through several stages. It started when following the Peace of Jassy (1792) both the Ottoman and the Russian states for many practical reasons felt an obvious necessity to stay in peace with one another. Even though mutual hatred and distrust prevailed, and the war preparations were seen as the essential means to guarantee its own security from a sudden attack, neither Russia nor the Porte were in position to embark on war. However, as the secret activities of the ambassadorial mission of M. I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov showed, Catherine II was not going to refuse from her earlier anti-Ottoman projects. Gathering of the detailed intelligence information on the Balkans by the Russian military experts included in Kutuzov's delegation unmistakably indicated which area was considered in St. Petersburg as a hypothetical war theatre.

It was only after the death of Catherine II, who remained a formidable nemesis of the Ottomans throughout her long reign, that some thaw in the Ottoman-Russian relations became possible. The new Russian Emperor Paul I made it clear that he would not pursue the aggressive politics of his mother as regards the Ottoman Empire. Towards the end of 1790-s the Ottomans had much more reasons to be worried not about the behaviour of their Russian neighbours but about the growing belligerence of the French Republic. In all likelihood the started thawing in relations of the Sultan's and the Tsar's courts would have never led to their eventual defensive alliance if it were not for the Egyptian expedition of General Bonaparte.

The Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance, concluded on 3 January 1799 marked the highest point of military and diplomatic cooperation between St. Petersburg and the Porte. Throughout the duration of the Mediterranean anti-French campaign this alliance was meeting the interests of both countries. For the first time in history the Ottoman and the Russian soldiers were fighting on the same side, both in the Ionian archipelago and in Italy. Moreover, there was also fixed the heretofore unbelievable precedent of the delivery of munitions from the Russian Black Sea Admiralty to the Ottoman side. One of the most tangible results of the Ottoman-Russian cooperation became the birth of the Republic of the Seven Islands. Thus, in a way, the Ottoman Empire assisted in the creation of the first independent Greek state of modern time.

On the other hand, the Ottoman-Russian alliance was not and could not be a strong durable partnership. After the common aim to oust the French from the Ionian Islands

and Egypt had been accomplished, the Ottoman government began to feel it as a burden. The growing estrangement between the Sultan's and the Tsar's courts eventually led to the final breach in relations and war. The declared Russian concerns about the integrity of the Ottoman state did not make the Porte happy. The disagreements about the future political status of the Ionian Islands, the Ottoman apprehensions at seeing the Russian war vessels sailing in the vicinity of the Sultan's palace, the Russian interference into the domestic affairs of the Porte on the side of the Orthodox Ottoman subjects did not add to the friendly feelings towards Russia both among the Ottoman ruling elite and the common people. Apart from that, the continuous endeavours of the French diplomacy to kindle the smouldering Ottoman wish of revenge on Russia in course of time and largely due to the French successes in Europe grew increasingly effective. The crisis around the issue of the deposition of the Hospodars of the Danubian principalities became the last and the most outward manifestation of the fact that the short-lived period of the Ottoman-Russian rapprochement and alliance was over.

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