

6 The Eastern Question and the First Turko-Egyptian Conflict

When Palmerston took up the role of Foreign Secretary for Great Britain in 1830, the Ottoman Empire was generally perceived in Europe as a declining power.¹ Even so, it covered vast territory from the Balkans to Mesopotamia and from the Arabian Peninsula to Algeria. Yet, the Sultan had little power in some of its provinces.² Some areas were ruled by local dignitaries who had little regard for decrees from Constantinople. During the Greek War of Independence, Europe was horrified by reports of Turkish brutality towards Christians and the ossified Sultanate regime. The weak Ottoman army was easily defeated by Russia in the war of 1828–1829 and had an atrocious reputation. In fact, the Russian Tsar had managed to expand the Russian Empire's territory in the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, securing Russia's dominant position on the Black Sea. Thus, Europe's overall image of the Ottoman Empire was negative.³

In the early 1830s, in addition to the traditional threats from the north, Sultan Mahmud II also had to deal with rivalry in the form of the Egyptian governor, Muhammad Ali.⁴ This former Albanian tobacco merchant had succeeded through several economic, administrative, and military reforms in turning the North African province into a prosperous state. Muhammad Ali's position was so strong that even though he was officially the Sultan's vassal, Mahmud II could only remove him from power through force.⁵ The conditions prevalent at the time meant that the Sultan used the Egyptian army to suppress the Greek uprising.⁶ Following the defeat at the Battle of Navarino and the subsequent evacuation of troops, Muhammad Ali focused on rebuilding his army and staying out of the Russo-Turkish War.⁷

1 COLLIER, Ian, *Hassuna D'Ghies and the 'New Ottomanism' of the 1830s*. In: MAURIZIO, Isabella (ed.), ZANOÙ, Konstantina, *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long nineteenth Century*, 2016, London, p. 99.

2 PRIESTLEY, Herbert Ingram, *France Overseas. A Study of Modern Imperialism*, New York 1938, p. 30.

3 RODKEY, Stanley Frederick, *Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1830–1841*. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 1, 1929, 4, p. 570.

4 Gordon to Baker, Constantinople, 22 May 1830, TNA, FO 78/190.

5 MARRIOTT, John Arthur Ransome, *The Eastern Question. An Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, Oxford 1917, p. 207.

6 JELAVICH, Barbara, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821–1878*, Cambridge 1984, p. 34.

7 BAUMGART, p. 294.

He made his forces' involvement in the campaign against the Greeks conditional upon Syria being placed under his direct administration. Mahmud II did not comply with this demand and offered him Crete as compensation. The Egyptian governor was not satisfied with this Mediterranean island and, as such, reiterated his claim to Syria in 1830. When he received the same answer, he decided military action was needed to resolve the dispute. In this regard, he sent his army to Lebanon with his son, the excellent strategist Ibrahim Pasha, in command.⁸

Palmerston paid very little attention to the approaching war in the East.⁹ His view of Near East policy was metaphorically Canningite. His primary interest was to ensure a prosperous and independent Greece that would remain outside Russian influence.¹⁰ He sent Stratford Canning, an expert on Ottoman affairs, to Constantinople in 1831 with this task in mind.¹¹ Palmerston was dissatisfied with the results of his negotiations, which lasted for over eighteen months. He thought Bavarian Prince Otto's choice for the Greek throne was a mistake, merely replacing one tyrant with another.¹² Palmerston's general approach to the Eastern Question also influenced discussions about Greece.¹³ From his perspective, the Ottoman Empire was "falling rapidly to pieces,"¹⁴ although this conflicted with British foreign policy's traditional interest in the continuation of the Sultan's empire as a foundation stone for peace in Europe. No other Power could control the Black Sea Straits, a vital interest for maintaining this balance of power, better than the Ottoman Empire. Stratford Canning repeatedly warned from Constantinople that this was indeed the case and that the Sultan would not be able to maintain control over the empire.¹⁵ But Palmerston ignored these reports during the first two years of his appointment.¹⁶ It was not until 1833 that he began to reassess his position regarding the entire problem and realised the importance of the situation.

8 SAUVIGNY, p. 464.

9 TULASOĞLU, *Gülây, Ein Muslimischer Pascha im Zentrum der Orientalischen Frage: Muhammed Ali von Ägypten*. In: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, Haziran, 37, 2020, 1, p. 239.

10 ENGEL-JANOSI, Friedrich, *Geschichte auf dem Ballhausplatz. Essays zur österreichischen Außenpolitik 1830–1945*, Graz 1963, p. 33.

11 HOLLAND, Thomas Erskine, *The European Concert in the Eastern Question*, Oxford 1885, p. 19.

12 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna 26 September 1832, TNA, FO 120/125; BOURNE, *Palmerston. The Early Years*, p. 374.

13 LEVANDIS, John, *The Greek Foreign Debt and the Great Powers 1821–1898*, New York 1944, p. 43.

14 BOURNE, *Palmerston. The Early Years*, p. 375.

15 Stratford Canning to Palmerston, Paris, 3, 11 August, 13, 19 December 1832, TNA, FO 352/25a.

16 LANE-POOLE, Stanley (ed.), *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford de Redcliffe from his Memoirs and Private and Official Papers*, vol. I, London 1888, p. 507.

The Foreign Secretary's reserved approach would have clear consequences in the future for diplomacy in London.¹⁷

Initially, not even the Ballhausplatz paid much attention to Ibrahim's invasion of Syria. Relations between Austria and Egypt were good prior to 1831. In the early 1820s, Vienna had been highly suspicious of Muhammad Ali and saw him as a new Ali Pasha of Ioannina.¹⁸ Austrian concerns disappeared after Egypt's military assistance on the Peloponnese peninsula, so the Habsburg Monarchy paid little attention to initial reports of Ibrahim's intervention.¹⁹ Vienna remained relatively calm because of the general conviction that the Sultan's army would secure an easy victory. This atmosphere was boosted by inaccurate reports from Austria's Consul General in Alexandria, Joseph von Acerbi, who referred to the Egyptian army's poor situation. Even the Austrian Internuncio in Constantinople, Baron Franz von Ottenfels, was convinced of Mahmud's soldiers' inevitable victory. Based on this information, Metternich did not attribute much significance to the situation in the eastern Mediterranean until 1832. He was busy with matters in Belgium, Poland, and, in particular, the Italian Peninsula, an approach identical to that also taken at the time by Palmerston.²⁰

British diplomacy was entirely focused on revolutionary events in Europe.²¹ Additionally, the domestic political situation surrounding electoral reform had a significant impact on the country's foreign affairs.²² During the heated debates on

17 BAKER, R. L., *Palmerston and the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi*. In: *English Historical Review* 43, 1928, 169, p. 85.

18 Ali Pasha, the Governor of Yanina, wielded power and pursued politics that were almost independent of Constantinople, making him a thorn in Mahmud II's side, who launched a military campaign against him from 1820 to 1822.

19 RODKEY, Frederick Stanley, *The Views of Palmerston and Metternich on the Eastern Question in 1834*. In: *The English Historical Review* 45, 1930, 180, p. 627.

20 RODKEY, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 572.

21 SETON-WATSON, *The Russian Empire*, p. 303.

22 SATTLER, p. 11. It is important to briefly acknowledge this pivotal moment in British history. Negotiations for a coalition of Whigs, Canningites, and Ultra-Tories took place in 1829. Only after George IV's death and Wellington's electoral defeat did Grey dare to start talks about forming a new government. The situation on the Continent inspired British public opinion to conclude that their desired changes in politics could also be achieved through revolution. However, Grey and Palmerston were determined to avoid this. The leading liberal Tory leader, William Huskisson, was convinced that His Majesty's government could only continue following a general internal reconstruction. After his tragic death in 1830, Palmerston and the future Prime Minister, Melbourne, embraced this idea. Palmerston saw some parallels between the July Revolution and the rising tensions on Britain's streets. Parliamentary reform, therefore, became the cabinet's key solution for addressing domestic unrest. The government was in crisis from 1831, which impacted its stance on foreign affairs and the position of the other Powers towards it. Metternich's delay-

electoral reform in Britain's House of Commons, Muhammad Ali began his siege of the fortress of Acre, which lasted from November 1831 until May 1832. The Egyptian governor carefully monitored the situation in Britain and believed that the outbreak of revolution would secure the successful completion of his military campaign.²³ Palmerston did not respond to the fall of Acre and did not even send any instructions to Britain's Consul General, John Baker.²⁴ Only British Under-Secretary Backhouse sent a brief note on maintaining good relations with Muhammad Ali. In the meantime, Stratford Canning tried to assure Mahmud II of British military support.²⁵ Still, he could not provide official guarantees because only the government in London had that power. His main interest was to use the circumstances to secure the best possible conditions in Greece. In a private letter to Canning, Palmerston only assured the Sultan with a vague declaration of the necessity of keeping friendly relations:

ing tactic during 1832 regarding the ratification of the agreement on Belgium was influenced by British domestic political circumstances and the anticipated fall of Grey's cabinet.

In Palmerston's view, electoral reform meant redistributing political power to favour the middle class. His position came up against opposition from John Russell, the reform's central agitator. The Tories were also against the concept of the entire law. Thus, several schools of opinion were formed within Great Britain, which opposed each other and exacerbated the already tense situation. By mid-1831, Palmerston opposed Grey's proposal and, in the Tory spirit, desired the preservation of the aristocracy's greater political role. In March 1832, Palmerston joined forces with Melbourne and Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, to propose a moderate reform plan. During this period of political chaos in May 1832, Wellington attempted to form a government, leading to great unrest in British streets. Ultimately, the Duke gave up his attempt due to minimal support. During this period, the threat of revolution again reached a peak. For many politicians, Wellington's failure was a sign to adopt a reform plan, which eventually happened on 7 June 1832. MILES, Taylor, *Empire and Parliamentary reform. The 1832 Reform Act Revisited*. In: BURNS, Arthur, INNES, Joanna (ed.), *Rethinking the Age of Reform. Britain 1780–1850*, Cambridge 2003, p. 296; MARCOWITZ, Reiner, *Großmacht auf Bewährung. Die Interdependenz französischer Innen- und Außenpolitik und ihre Auswirkungen auf Frankreichs Stellung im europäischen Konzert 1814/15–1851/52*, Stuttgart 2001, p. 130; DIPPEL, p. 25; MILTON-SMITH, p. 69; MARCHANT LE, Denis, *Memoir of John Charles Viscount Althorp Third Earl Spencer*, London 1873, p. 377; VERETÉ, Mayir, *Palmerston and the Levant Crisis 1832*. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 24, 1952, 2, p. 145; ANDERSON, Matthew Smith, *The Eastern Question 1774–1923*, London 1966, p. 79. More on the impact on international and colonial policy in: MIDDLETON, Alex, *Conservative Politics and Whig Colonial Government, 1830–41*. In: *Historical Research*, Oxford, 94, 2021, 265, pp. 522–553.

²³ VERETÉ, Mayir, *Palmerston and the Levant Crisis 1832*. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 24, 1952, 2, p. 145.

²⁴ BAUMGART, p. 295.

²⁵ Stratford Canning to Palmerston, Paris, 19 December 1832, TNA, FO 352/25a.

This person [Palmerston] wanted to assure me that Mehmet Ali is well-intentioned, thinking only of wanting to strengthen the Ottoman Empire. And I told him,

wrote Neumann to Vienna,

that it was a strange way to strengthen an Empire by taking away provinces and making advances to him.²⁶

Ambassadors from other courts in London encountered a similar response:

Lord Palmerston responded with a few words which have been relayed to you on the subject, but the Prince de Lieven finds that it is not enough; the progress of Ibrahim Pasha in Syria demands more prompt remedies than those employed by England.²⁷

At this moment, Palmerston had not yet realised the seriousness of the situation.

The Ottoman ruler eventually urged London to provide naval support to halt Ibrahim Pasha's advance.²⁸ To secure the assistance of fifteen British warships, he dispatched his chargé d'affaires in Vienna, Jean Mavroyéni, and Namik Pasha on a special mission to London. Mahmud II believed that his ground army was sufficient to defeat his Egyptian vassal, but following the Battle of Navarino, the Ottoman navy was in a weakened state. Aware of this vulnerability, he pressed Canning to persuade Palmerston to offer aid.²⁹ In his report to the Foreign Office, the British diplomat wrote: "The situation of this country is, however, tremendously critical, and a fresh disaster by sea or land [from Muhammad Ali] may produce incalculable consequences."³⁰ Diplomat John Henry Mandeville conveyed His Majesty's Government's stance to the Porte³¹ and warned that London's response could be negative, given the political climate.³² Metternich shared a similarly cautious outlook and made his reservations clear to Namik Pasha during his stop in Vienna.³³ The Austrian Chancellor supported the Ottoman request for

26 Neumann to Metternich, London, 21 November 1832, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 198.

27 Neumann to Metternich, London, 11 November 1832, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 198.

28 CLAYTON, David Gerard, *Britain and the Eastern Question. Missolonghi to Gallipoli*, London 1971, p. 64.

29 LANE-POOLE, vol. I, p. 513.

30 Stratford Canning to Palmerston, Therapia, 11 August 1832, TNA, FO 352/25a.

31 Also, the Higher Porte or the Sublime Porte represented the central authority of the Ottoman Empire, including the Sultan's government and its administrative offices.

32 At this time, there was no official British ambassador in Constantinople, which was also reflected in the quality of information arriving in Britain from the Ottoman Empire.

33 MOLDEN, Ernst, *Die Orientpolitik des Fürsten Metternich 1829–1833*, Wien 1913, p. 40.

naval assistance. As early as the autumn of 1832, he had questioned the strength of the Sultan's army and recognised Muhammad Ali's growing power.³⁴

Following Acre's fall, Metternich became fully aware of the gravity of the situation and began to adopt a more active diplomatic approach. From a political standpoint, the Austrian Chancellor was clear: the conflict breached the principle of sovereignty, as it was a dispute between a sovereign and his subject. However, given the geopolitical realities and the resources available to Austria, his options for intervening in the Turko-Egyptian conflict were limited.³⁵ Another significant factor was Austria's economic interests. Trade between Alexandria, Trieste, and Venice was flourishing in the early 1830s.³⁶ If Vienna complied with Ottoman requests to impose an embargo on Egyptian ships, this would severely harm its trade. For this reason, the Ballhausplatz rejected the idea, alongside the request to adopt economic sanctions. In fact, ships were being built in Trieste for Muhammad Ali at this time. Therefore, Metternich's policy relied on Austria's dependence on trade with Alexandria, and he anticipated no hostile action from Egypt.

Great Britain was in a similar situation, and although it was a Maritime Power, it was not in its interest to disrupt relations with Egypt. One of Muhammad Ali's declarations summarised relations with London: "With English for my friends, I can do anything; without their friendship, I can do nothing. Wherever I turn, she is there to baffle me."³⁷ Britain's desire for good relations with the Egyptian vassal was also reflected in its rejection of the Sultan's request to provide naval assistance.³⁸ Palmerston's proposal to secure such support and the plan for a joint approach with Austria were outvoted by the other ministers.

British naval activity on the coast of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and around the Iberian Peninsula had entirely strained the Royal Navy's operational capabilities, and it did not have the resources to intervene in the Near East.³⁹ Palmerston explained this fact to the Austrian ambassador as well during a diplomatic conversation:

The Principal Secretary of State repeated to them [Ottoman plenipotentiaries] what he had said before: that the affairs of Holland and Portugal were occupying their naval forces, and that they could not, without addressing Parliament for a subsidy, equip a fleet in the current

³⁴ Lamb to Palmerston Vienna, 13 September 1832, TNA, FO 120/124.

³⁵ Metternich to Neumann, London, 17 October 1832, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 199.

³⁶ PAWELKA, Hedwig, *Englisch-Österreichische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Ankara 2011, p. 31.

³⁷ SETON-WATSON, *Britain in Europe*, p. 174.

³⁸ Neumann to Metternich, London, 29 January 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201; Neumann to Metternich, London, 1 February 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

³⁹ INGRAM, Edward, *The British Empire as a World Power*, London 2001, p. 77.

situation and act against the Pasha of Egypt – that he hoped that the energetic instructions carried by Colonel Campbell, combined with the representations of other Powers, would be sufficient to bring Mehmet Ali to reason.⁴⁰

Half a year later, Palmerston made a similar statement at the British Parliament:

Without giving any very detailed explanation of the matter, he would only remind the House that when we were embarking in naval operations in the North Sea, and on the coast of Holland, and were under the necessity of keeping up another naval force on the coast of Portugal, it would have been impossible to have sent to the Mediterranean such a squadron as would have served the purpose of the Porte, and at the same time have comported with the naval dignity of this country.⁴¹

This speech was essentially an attempt to defend his policy after having poorly assessed the beginning of the crisis in 1832. Holland headed a pro-French group that simultaneously supported Muhammad Ali, and its advocates included Henry Peter, Baron Brougham-Vaux, and John Charles Spencer, Viscount Althorp. These facts hindered Palmerston's diplomatic options.⁴²

Thus, nothing stood in the way of Ibrahim Pasha's army. In the decisive Battle of Konya on 21 December 1832, he defeated Reshid Pasha's army, captured the Ottoman dominion in the Near East, and gained free passage to Constantinople. In early 1833, Metternich called on the London government, again without success, to intervene in the conflict alongside other Powers.⁴³ In a letter to Neumann, he outlined Austria's and Great Britain's identical interests in the Orient and the necessity of working together.⁴⁴ However, considering the different approaches regarding Belgium, Palmerston was not inclined to cooperate with the Habsburg Monarchy and relied on taking action with France, of which Metternich was well aware.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Great Britain looked at French activity in North Africa and the Middle East with similar suspicion as Austria. Good relations between Paris and Alexandria only strengthened this impression.⁴⁶ Increased French influence in the Mediterranean threatened British domination in the area. Therefore, the Sultan's victory over his Egyptian vassal, alongside limitations on

40 Neumann to Metternich, London, 1 March 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

41 Palmerston's speech at the British House of Commons, London, 28 August 1833, *Foreign Affairs, HC Deb 28 August 1833 vol 20 cc899–901* [online], [quoted 2019-03-01]. Available on: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1833/aug/28/foreign-affairs#S3V0020P0_18330828_HOC_9.

42 SOUTHGATE, p. 63.

43 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 15 February 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

44 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 3 February 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

45 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 23 January 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

46 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 17 October 1832, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 199.

French power in the Middle East, was crucial for Great Britain.⁴⁷ By the spring of 1833, Palmerston had increasingly advocated for an active policy in the East and wanted his government to secure it.⁴⁸ Despite this, strong opposition in Parliament and even within the cabinet was against any engagement in the conflict. Even public opinion was indifferent to the fate of the Sultan.⁴⁹ During Namik Pasha's urging for British assistance, the Foreign Secretary told him that "someone would be sent to Alexandria in a very few days, and another person to Constantinople." The Ottoman representative replied that "he had come not to ask for mediation, but for assistance."⁵⁰

In the meantime, the situation in Constantinople changed once again. When Nicholas I learned about the Sultan's defeat at Konya, he sent General Nikolay Nikolayevich Muravyov to the Porte on a special mission.⁵¹ St Petersburg was concerned about the potential outcome of the Sultan's negotiations with his governor. For Russia, the worst-case scenario was that Muhammad Ali would end up ruling the entire Empire. The Tsar could not allow his Empire to have a neighbouring state capable of threatening his position in the Black Sea.⁵² Moreover, like Great Britain, St Petersburg viewed French influence in Egypt negatively, especially as it threatened to spread further into Anatolia.⁵³ Upon his arrival in Constantinople, Muravyov offered Mahmud II assistance from Russian land and naval forces. In addition to this, he travelled to Alexandria, where he demanded that Muhammad Ali cease all military operations. The Egyptian governor agreed to this request on the condition that he would gain control over Syria and Adana.⁵⁴

Among the foreign representatives in Constantinople, there was clear anti-Russian sentiment. The French chargé d'affaires, Édouard Burignot, Baron de Varrenne, opposed the Russian proposals and took the initiative by sending an official request to Ibrahim to withdraw his soldiers. Nonetheless, this request had no impact on the Egyptian commander, leaving the Sultan with no option but to turn to

47 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 14 February 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

48 Neumann to Metternich, London, 16 March 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

49 Neumann to Metternich, London, 29 January 1833 (first dispatch), AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

50 Neumann to Metternich, London, 29 January 1833 (second dispatch), AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

51 Neumann to Metternich, London, 1 February 1833 AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

52 TODOROVA, Maria, *British and Russian Policy Towards the Reform Movement in the Ottoman Empire*. In: *Études Balkaniques* 13, Paris 1977, p. 18.

53 FLORESCU, Radu, *The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities 1821–1854*, Monachii 1962, p. 172.

54 Palmerston to William Temple, London, 7 May 1833, BULWER, vol. II, p. 136. Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 15 February 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

Russia for help. By the 1830s, Austria no longer regarded St Petersburg as an enemy but as an ally. Metternich expressed his opinion in a letter to London: "The Tsar is espousing a policy which, considering the situation in the [Ottoman] Empire, is the best possible one."⁵⁵ He also supported the Russian stance by instructing Acerbi, to convey Austria's opposition to Muhammad Ali's military actions. Nevertheless, this diplomatic move was the most Metternich could do.⁵⁶

Ultimately, on 2 February 1833, Mahmud II formally requested Russian assistance. The first of the Tsar's fleet arrived at the Golden Horn on 20 February.⁵⁷ In response to the Russian presence in the Straits, Louis Philippe appointed Baron Albin Reine Roussin as the new ambassador in Constantinople. He protested against the presence of Russian troops and promised the Sultan that if the foreign army withdrew, he would negotiate peace terms with Ibrahim Pasha, ensuring that Adana remained under the Sultan's control.⁵⁸ However, he miscalculated, as Egypt did not accept his proposal. Instead, Muhammad Ali ordered his army to resume its march on Constantinople to secure the conditions he demanded. This French diplomatic intervention ended in failure, convincing the Porte of the necessity of immediate Russian aid.

The new Austrian ambassador, Bartolomäus von Stürmer, aligned himself with Russia, aiming to establish a diplomatic counterbalance against France. During this period, Palmerston contracted the flu and was absent from his diplomatic duties for three weeks.⁵⁹ Upon his return, he took a far more assertive stance on the Eastern Question. He proposed that Great Britain, in cooperation with the three Eastern courts, draft a joint memorandum outlining a course of action in the Turko-Egyptian conflict, with the aim of resolving the situation in favour of the Ottoman Empire. He also suggested holding a diplomatic conference in Vienna to present a united front against French policy in Constantinople.⁶⁰

One of British diplomacy's positive steps was appointing Patrick Campbell as its new representative in Alexandria, replacing the unconvincing Baker.⁶¹ Campbell informed Muhammad Ali that the government in London would never allow the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, a small fleet headed by

55 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 15 February 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

56 MOLDEN, *Die Orientpolitik*, p. 44.

57 KARPEYEV, Igor, *Russia and Turkey. From Geopolitical Rivalry to Cooperation*. In: ÇIÇEK, Kemal (ed.), *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilisation. Philosophy, Science and Institutions*, Ankara 2000, p. 435.

58 Palmerston to William Tempel, London, 21 March 1833, BULWER, vol. II, p. 124.

59 Neumann to Metternich, London, 19 April 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

60 Neumann to Metternich, London, 10 May 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

61 Neumann to Metternich, London, 16 March 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 201.

Admiral William Hotham was sent to Alexandria's shores. Also, Austria's exceptional diplomat, the capable Anton Prokesch von Osten, was in Alexandria.⁶² Osten's task was to deter French attempts at mediation between the Sultan and his vassal and secure peace conditions so that Mahmud II would not lose the strategically important territory of Adana.⁶³ In this case, Austria's policy was not just against Egypt but also against France. At the Ballhausplatz, there was a general conviction that France planned to support Muhammad Ali in overthrowing the Sultan's regime.⁶⁴ Lamb sent Palmerston a report on Metternich's opinions on French policy: "Her [France's] object is the extension of her influence and power in the Mediterranean."⁶⁵ While this accusation was not officially confirmed, Paris had evident sympathy for the Egyptian government. The Austrian Chancellor criticised France's position and Roussin's intervention in Constantinople and hoped London would heed his words.⁶⁶ He believed that the entire affair was a "regrettable event."⁶⁷ The British ambassador hoped that the shared interests of the two states, the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and the limiting of French influence in the Mediterranean would lead to natural cooperation between them.⁶⁸ In this case, for Britain, it was more about pursuing its interests rather than protecting general international principles, as it was for Austria.

Despite pressure from Britain and Austria, Muhammad Ali refused to give up his claim on Adana. In the end, Mahmud II had to concede the matter. Interestingly, the Russians encouraged him to do so. The Tsar's army was able to defend the Bosphorus against a foreign army, but it could not wage an offensive war. Consequently, Nicholas I preferred that a peace treaty be signed immediately.⁶⁹

⁶² Campbell to Palmerston, 4 April 1833, TNA, FO 78/343; Metternich did not select him randomly for this position. Through his extensive experience, he had proven himself to be an expert on the Orient and the Ottoman Empire. In addition to his diplomatic and military career, he travelled widely and wrote extensively. He took up the role on 2 April 1833. Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 14 February 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

⁶³ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 14 February 1833, TNA, FO 120/136; ŠEDIVÝ, Miroslav, *Anton Prokesch von Osten. The Co-author of Austria's Policy Towards Egypt in Vormärz*. In: Acta Fakulty filozofické Západočeské univerzity v Plzni 2013, 2, p. 44.

⁶⁴ BERTSCH, Daniel, *Anton Prokesch von Osten 1795–1876. Ein Diplomat Österreichs in Athen und an der Hohen Pforte. Beiträge zur Wahrnehmung des Orients im Europa des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 2005, p. 192.

⁶⁵ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 19 February 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

⁶⁶ Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 9 April 1833. AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

⁶⁷ Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 14 April 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

⁶⁸ Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 9 April 1833. AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

⁶⁹ ANDERSON, *The Eastern Question*, p. 83.

A second factor was trying to calm the situation as quickly as possible before it escalated unnecessarily. The Sultan conceded to Ibrahim Pasha's conditions on 5 May 1833 in Kütahya.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, discussions were ongoing between Prokesch and Campbell on one side and the Egyptian governor on the other.⁷¹ Through joint pressure, they obtained Muhammad Ali's agreement to withdraw his claim on Adana on 14 May 1833. Unfortunately, this was too late, as reports on the agreement between the Sultan and Ibrahim Pasha arrived shortly afterwards in Alexandria.⁷² It was during this period that Palmerston's view on Russia's sincere intentions began to change. It became clear that he had misjudged St Petersburg's policies and intentions. Part of his typical shift in stance included a renewed trust in Paris:

Lord Palmerston told him [Jean Mavroyéni] that if Russia supported Ibrahim in Anatolia, she could very well be exposed to a war against both England and France simultaneously. We would never allow something to happen in Turkey that would be as damaging as what happened to the Pope under Austria.⁷³

During the negotiations on peace terms, Palmerston realised that Mandeville was not enough as Britain's representative in Constantinople. He, therefore, decided to replace him, sending John Ponsonby to the Ottoman capital, where he arrived in his new post in May after peace negotiations had been completed.⁷⁴ His anti-Russian policy had since become quite notorious and caused great concern for Metternich.

The terms of the peace agreement were a harsh blow for the Ottoman Empire. The new order in the East posed future challenges, as Metternich correctly believed. The Austrian Chancellor understood the necessity of finding a joint consensus between the Sultan and his governor, which was essential for the survival of the Ottoman Empire as a whole. Together with the Russians, the Austrians were convinced that French intrigues and secret negotiations with Muhammad Ali were behind the Sultan's consent. As a result, the Sultan was forced to sign the current peace agreement because he feared a joint Franco-Egyptian action. In behind-the-scenes French negotiations, British diplomacy agreed with the Eastern courts, but London regarded the permanent presence of the Russian navy in the

⁷⁰ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 19 May 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

⁷¹ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 14 May 1833, TNA, FO 120/136; Campbell to Palmerston, Alexandria, 25 June 1833, TNA, FO 78/227.

⁷² ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, p. 519.

⁷³ Neumann to Metternich, London, 21 May 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

⁷⁴ BOLSOVER, George Henry, *Lord Ponsonby and the Eastern Question 1833–1839*. In: *Slavonic and East European Review* 13, 1934, 94, p. 99.

Bosporus as the greater evil. These ideas were also supported by John Duncan Bligh, the ambassador to St Petersburg. Bligh observed the growing speculation, writing:

I need hardly tell your Lordship that various speculations explanatory of this fresh instance of the weakness of the Turkish government are hazarded here, some persons supposing that a sudden panic must have seized the Divan, others that they had been prevailed upon by Egyptian gold, or by a secret French influence at variance with that which has been ostensibly striving to uphold the Turkish Power. The causes that brought about this concession to the Egyptians, and the effect it may eventually lead to, may very well be considered by His Majesty's Government of little importance, compared with the evils that will inevitably and immediately result from a prolonged occupation of the Bosporus by the Russians.⁷⁵

He also recommended that the British government cooperate with Austria to improve conditions for the Sultan and maintain the balance of power.

All the Tsar's assurances of his peaceful intentions regarding the Ottoman Empire did little to ease British and French concerns about the presence of Russian soldiers in the Bosporus.⁷⁶ Palmerston accused Nicholas I of attempting to occupy part of the Ottoman Empire under the guise of protecting the Sultan from Ibrahim Pasha.⁷⁷ British diplomacy's main objective was to secure the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces. Metternich did not understand London and Paris's position: the Sultan had asked another ruler for help against his vassal, which was a legitimate means of resolving the situation.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Great Britain could have given the Porte its means when Mahmud II had officially requested it. Metternich also failed to comprehend Britain's support for French policy, which directly conflicted with its interests. Both Austria and Great Britain wanted the Sultan's regime to continue.⁷⁹ Despite various attempts at joint action, such as co-operation between Campbell and Prokesch, Vienna and London did not come to an agreement.⁸⁰

This more ideological conflict over power between representatives of the Quadruple Alliance and conservative powers disrupted the natural balance of power regarding the Eastern Question. Austria found its main partner in Russia,

⁷⁵ Bligh to Palmerston, St Petersburg, 22 May 1833, TNA, FO 65/207.

⁷⁶ Neumann to Metternich, London, 28 June 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

⁷⁷ Neumann to Metternich, London, 21 May 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

⁷⁸ RODKEY, *The Views*, p. 628.

⁷⁹ ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, p. 554.

⁸⁰ Lamb to Palmerston, London, 18 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137; PROKESCH-OSTEN, Anton Graf, *Aus dem Nachlasse des Grafen Prokesch-Osten. Briefwechsel mit Herrn von Gentz und Fürsten Metternich*, Wien 1881, p. 145.

while Great Britain aligned itself with France, hindering deeper cooperation.⁸¹ A conflict between Metternich and Palmerston also arose over international prestige, as both statesmen sought to establish their capital as the diplomatic centre of Europe.⁸² This mutual antagonism in Western Europe was logically reflected in London and Vienna's approach to the Eastern Question.⁸³

Austria's Chancellor urged the British Foreign Secretary to reassess his position regarding France and support the Eastern Powers in their Near East policy.⁸⁴ With this in mind, he welcomed the dispatch of a British squadron as a counterbalance to Russia's presence in the Sea of Marmara.⁸⁵ He also assured Palmerston of the Tsar's good intentions.⁸⁶ If the Russians were to annexe any of the Ottoman territories, Austria would go to war, he assured London.⁸⁷ However, reports arrived in the British capital from France about Austria's support for Russia's ulterior motives. Broglie was well aware of Palmerston's opinions on Russia, so he sent letters to London that were strongly anti-Russian. Nevertheless, British diplomacy did not trust France either, closely monitoring its activities in the Mediterranean Sea with disapproval, and thus rejected its request for joint mediation between the Sultan and his vassal.⁸⁸ At the same time, the British Foreign Secretary did not support Metternich's proposal for a joint approach with the Eastern Powers either.⁸⁹

Metternich was bitter about this diplomatic defeat, and in the dispatches to Neumann, he sharply criticised not only the British government but also Palmerston himself.⁹⁰ He was unsparing in his criticism of the Foreign Secretary as early as April 1833, and of the overall approach of diplomacy in London:

How to explain, in this case, the conduct he has kept [Palmerston], the abandonment in which he has left the affairs of the Orient, and the superiority he has ceded to a rival Power, both over Egypt and over the Ottoman Porte. This minister is not among the number of men

81 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 8 May 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

82 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 17 January 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

83 SCHULZ, Matthias, *Normen und Praxis. Das Europäische Konzert der Großmächte als Sicherheitsrat 1815–1860*, München 2009, p. 115.

84 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 9 April 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

85 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 17 January 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

86 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 3 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

87 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 22 March 1833, TNA, FO 120/136.

88 KRAUS, Karl, *Politisches Gleichgewicht und Europagadanke bei Metternich*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 95.

89 RODKEY, *The Views*, p. 629.

90 Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 3 May 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

of state for whom impassibility is appropriate; on the contrary, he belongs to those who easily receive and follow an impression of solidarity.⁹¹

Even Lamb did not hold back his criticism of his own government, emphasising that his country's diplomacy behaved towards Austria as: "Hostile [. . .] by trying to create embarrassment on all other questions that might arise."⁹² For Vienna, the only resolution to the situation was to rely on Russian policy rather than its traditional ally of Great Britain.⁹³ A few days later, Neumann defended the sincerity of his British counterpart with surprise at how open he was in his reports: "Sir Frederic Lamb, through his excessive frankness, had, more than once, displeased Lord Palmerston himself as well as the English Cabinet."⁹⁴ He shared Metternich's concerns over France's plans and warned against Anglo-French cooperation.⁹⁵ Neumann's opinions were similar and aimed to draw attention to Paris's insincere policies.⁹⁶

The continuing presence of Russian troops provoked the short-tempered Rousin to demand their immediate withdrawal. In an atmosphere of apparent cooperation between Maritime Powers, Ponsonby supported this demand and threatened that a British fleet would be sent to the shores of the Sea of Marmara.⁹⁷ His next step was to get Austrian support for a rapid assessment.⁹⁸ Metternich did not see any reason to pressure St Petersburg, and he considered London's and Paris's threats to be an unnecessary provocation.⁹⁹ His poor relations with Princess Lieven shaped Palmerston's view of Russian policy. In the summer of 1833, Anglo-Russian relations were extremely fraught, which was reflected in London's suspicious approach towards the Tsar regarding the Eastern Question.¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 9 April 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

⁹² Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 3 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137; Neumann to Metternich, London, 14 June 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

⁹³ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 9 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

⁹⁴ Neumann to Metternich, London, 22 June 1833 (first dispatch), AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

⁹⁵ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 2 July 1833, enclosed in a letter: Metternich to Neumann, Vienna, 9 July 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

⁹⁶ BERESFORD, Chancellor, Edwin, (ed.), *The Diary of Philipp von Neumann, 1819–1850*, London 1928, vol. I, p. 284.

⁹⁷ Ponsonby to Palmerston, Therapia, 12 July 1833, TNA, FO 120/139.

⁹⁸ RENDALL, Matthew, *Restraint or Self-Restraint of Russia. Nicholas I. The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi and the Vienna System 1832–1841*. In: *The International History Review* 24, 2002, 1, p. 49.

⁹⁹ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 3 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

¹⁰⁰ Neumann to Metternich, London, 22 June 1833 (second dispatch), AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

A conference of the Powers was to be convened for this purpose, with its objective being to decide upon a joint approach and the future of the Sultan's Empire. However, due to insurmountable disputes within the Concert of Europe, the plan fell through. The first issue that emerged was between Palmerston and Metternich, with the question once again arising of which city should be the main centre of discussions. Louis Philippe's government surprisingly supported Vienna, and similarly, Russia's confidence in London's diplomatic role was also weaker. For Metternich, France's policy in Constantinople was a significant obstacle.¹⁰¹ Palmerston's plan for an agreement between the four Powers and the Sultan's empire based on maintaining the status quo and rejecting the claim to exercise influence in Constantinople was dismissed by Russia and Austria.¹⁰² The rejection of the proposal deepened Palmerston's mistrust of Metternich and Nesselrode. He blamed St Petersburg for much of the breakdown of the Concert, and, with Austria aligned with Russia, he saw it as complicit in this "crime."¹⁰³

Distrustful of the other Powers, the British Prime Minister and his government began to chart their own course. Despite heavy opposition, a plan to construct new warships was pushed through during the summer of 1833.¹⁰⁴ Faith in the Concert of Europe's Congress System began to progressively weaken in the British Isles. The disunity over negotiations about Belgium and reforms in the Papal States and Greece only reinforced this perception. There were also tensions between Neumann and Palmerston.¹⁰⁵ The former criticised London's approach to international issues and its attempts to make the capital the centre of all diplomatic negotiations. In contrast, reports from Ponsonby in Constantinople warned of Russian efforts to dismantle the Ottoman Empire and the fact that Mahmud II was essentially the Tsar's prisoner.¹⁰⁶ Ponsonby, however, worked diligently to curtail Russian influence at the Sultan's court.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the British government was not the only one trying to take firm control of the situation. The Tsar was also trying to exploit the circumstances of his relationship with the Sultan to begin negotiations on a mutual cooperation agreement.¹⁰⁸ To this end, he sent the seasoned diplomat Count Orlov to the Bo-

101 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 9 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

102 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 7 September 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

103 WEBSTER, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston*, vol. I, p. 113.

104 BARLETT, p. 111.

105 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 28 June 1833, TNA, FO 120/137; Neumann to Metternich, London, 22 June 1833 (first dispatch), AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

106 BOLSOVER, *Lord Ponsonby*, p. 105.

107 Ponsonby to Palmerston, Constantinople, 21 May 1833, TNA, FO 78/220.

108 The initiative, however, was based on the Ottoman Empire's need to secure rapid and effective support in the event of a further attack by Muhammad Ali.

sporus to assess the diplomatic terrain.¹⁰⁹ The Sultan welcomed discussions on security guarantees, and by 8 July 1833, a defensive treaty was signed on the outskirts of the Ottoman capital in Hünkâr Iskelesi. Two days later, the Russian fleet sailed out of the Bosphorus.¹¹⁰ The public articles outlined the mutual need to preserve peace and friendly relations and the provision of aid in the event of an attack from a third party.¹¹¹ The secret clause relieved the Sultan of the obligation to provide military support to Russia, instead instructing him to close the Dardanelles to all warships belonging to other states. This would create a defence barrier in the event of an attack from Great Britain or France in the Black Sea.¹¹² The treaty was signed for eight years.¹¹³

Ponsonby discovered the conclusion of the convention, including its secret article, just four days after its signature. Palmerston condemned the treaty as a whole and not just because of the secret article. In reports to Bligh in St Petersburg, he wrote:

The engagements which the Sultan has entered with Russia alter most remarkably the position of Turkey concerning the other Powers of Europe. This treaty, as far as His Majesty's Government are aware of its stipulations, though styled defensive, is in its essence offensive also; and it bears therefore a hostile character as it regards other Powers. It seems intended, moreover, to give Russia a claim to constant interference using her military force in the internal affairs of Turkey and thus to constitute Russia, as it were, umpire between the Sultan and his subjects and to confer upon her a kind of protectorate over Turkey.¹¹⁴

The British Foreign Secretary believed that the treaty effectively subordinated the Ottoman Empire to Russia, with its future and existence now dependent upon the political interests and sentiments of St Petersburg.

Great Britain became equally suspicious of Austria. Palmerston could not forgive Metternich for consistently supporting Russian policy and for the fact that all actions had been prearranged long in advance:

I [Palmerston] see that the Vienna Cabinet is politically married to that of St Petersburg, and as its religion does not allow divorce, it is henceforth pointless to approach Austria as soon

¹⁰⁹ Bligh to Palmerston, St Petersburg 8 June 1833, TNA, FO 65/207; Neumann to Metternich, London, 28 June 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

¹¹⁰ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 18 July 1833, TNA, FO 10/137; The treaty itself comprised seven articles, six of which were public, and one was secret. ANDERSON, Matthew Smith (ed.), *The Great Powers and the Near East 1774–1923*, London 1970, p. 43.

¹¹¹ TULASOĞLU, p. 240.

¹¹² Neumann to Metternich, London, 10 August, 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

¹¹³ KARPEYEV, p. 438.

¹¹⁴ Palmerston to Bligh, London, 13 October 1833, TNA, FO 65/206.

as it concerns Russia, even if the interests of the former might ever appear to us compromised.¹¹⁵

The prospect of cooperation from early 1833 was definitively buried, and the rift between London and Vienna became more than evident. Crucially, what seemed at first to be inconsistent policies on various European issues were, in fact, interconnected, as differing views mutually clashed over individual international political matters. The Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi marked the culmination of the first act, which began in 1830.

Palmerston also addressed the new Eastern policy course in the British Parliament.¹¹⁶ In one of his major speeches, which was to define Great Britain's foreign policy for decades, he declared:

Undoubtedly, then, his Majesty's Ministers would feel it to be their duty to resist any attempt on the part of Russia to partition the Turkish Empire; and they would equally have felt themselves at liberty to interfere and prevent the Pasha of Egypt from dismembering any portion of the dominions of the Sultan. The integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire were necessary for maintaining tranquillity, liberty, and the balance of power in the rest of Europe. At the same time, he had great doubts that any intention to partition that Empire at all entered into the policy of the Russian government . . . Such an event, too, would lead to a general war in Europe . . . He could assure the hon. Gentleman, that the British government felt that maintaining the peace of Europe was an object of the greatest importance . . . they would do their utmost to preserve the peace of Europe.¹¹⁷

For Palmerston, the vital point was that the Ottoman administration should launch significant reforms. He saw this as the only way out of Ottoman decline and a precondition for maintaining peace and stability in Europe.¹¹⁸

Following the announcement of the convention, the Foreign Secretary sought to prevent its subsequent ratification. He hoped to achieve success by proceeding jointly with France.¹¹⁹ Ponsonby lodged an official protest in Constantinople and expected the other Powers' representatives to join him.¹²⁰ Both actions failed from the outset. Palmerston even considered using Muhammad Ali's army and

115 Neumann to Metternich, London, 31 August 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 202.

116 CLAYTON, p. 71.

117 Palmerston's speech at the British House of Commons, London, 11 July 1833, *Russia and Turkey HC Deb 11 July 1833 vol 19 cc570–83* [online], [quoted 2019-03-01]. Available on: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1833/jul/11/russia-and-turkey#S3V0019P0_18330711_HOC_26.

118 SUBAŞI, Turgut, *British Support for Mustafa Resid Pasha and his Reforms*. In: ÇİÇEK, Kemal (ed.), *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilisation. Philosophy, Science and Institutions*, Ankara 2000, p. 427.

119 RODKEY, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 574.

120 Campbell to Palmerston, Cairo, 20 November 1833, TNA, FO 78/228.

Britain's navy to try to thwart Ottoman-Russian cooperation. He also proposed cooperation regarding the protection of Christian believers in Syria.¹²¹ The British government was nonetheless against such proposals and considered cooperation with the Egyptian governor to be highly risky. A crucial factor was that Palmerston had completely ignored Metternich's position in his actions. The Austrian Chancellor was not informed of the treaty's signing and did not find out about it until the end of July 1833. He was naturally upset by Russia's secrecy, especially when, as the greatest defender of the Tsar's policies, he was last to discover such a fundamental act, and only indirectly. Lamb immediately conveyed his impression of Metternich's reaction to London:

It is hardly reconcilable with the fact of the negotiations of the Treaty having escaped him, and if Pr[ince] Mett[eternich] has been left in ignorance by the Court of St Petersburg of its intention to conclude it, this concealment coupled with the appearance of common action in the affairs of Turkey, which he professes to have received, amounts to the grossest treachery.¹²²

The situation was even more absurd in that Orlov was having dinner with Stürmer when the convention was signed but did not inform the internuncio about the treaty. As such, to the last minute, Metternich denied the existence of the treaty, as he assumed that he would have been informed of the matter in advance.¹²³ Despite all this, he did not condemn the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi and supported Russian policy.¹²⁴ He even welcomed the secret article, believing it secured the neutralisation of the Ottoman Empire and peace on Austria's south-eastern borders.¹²⁵

Anti-Russian propaganda grew in strength in Great Britain, fuelled by constant reports from Paris. Palmerston developed an erroneous impression of St Petersburg's unlimited influence in Constantinople.¹²⁶ For these reasons, Nicholas I needed Austria on his side to avoid isolation. The rulers of the two Eastern Powers were supposed to meet in 1830, but the outbreak of the November Uprising forced a postponement. They finally met in September 1833, when the Russian Tsar travelled to Münchengrätz (Mnichovo Hradiště) in North Bohemia. The goal

¹²¹ Palmerston to Campbell, London, 1 August 1833, TNA, FO 78/226.

¹²² Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 25 July, TNA, FO 120/137.

¹²³ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 8, 23 July 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

¹²⁴ RENDALL, Matthew, *Cosmopolitanism and Russian Near East Policy, 1821–1841*. In: PYTA, Wolfram, *Das europäische Mächtekoncert. Friedens- und Sicherheitspolitik vom Wiener Kongress 1815 bis zum Krimkrieg 1853*, Wien 2009, p. 245.

¹²⁵ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 1 October 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

¹²⁶ Bligh to Palmerston, St Petersburg, 13 October 1833, TNA, FO 65/206.

of the meeting was to secure cooperation in the Eastern Question.¹²⁷ In addition to Metternich and Francis I, Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg and Prokesch also participated in the discussions for Austria. Russia was represented by Tsar Nicholas I, accompanied by Nesselrode and Dmitrii Pavlovich Tatishchev.¹²⁸ The main issue for both states was the need to keep the Ottoman Empire in its current form. Both Powers committed to maintaining the Sultan's dynasty and ensuring it was not overthrown:

They concentrate all their efforts on making their action as effective as possible, aiming primarily at maintaining the European balance. Without any ambition for territorial expansion, nor for extending their influence, the two Emperors will find in all the vows they have made, a means to preserve the Ottoman Empire by maintaining its integrity.¹²⁹

Should the Empire be threatened with collapse, Austria and Russia would act in mutual accord with the shared intention of preserving the balance of power in Europe. The two Powers would consult each other prior to undertaking specific actions. The agreement was signed on 18 September, with Prussia joining in October 1833 in Berlin.¹³⁰

The Münchengrätz meeting represented the culmination of the shared foreign policy direction of two, and eventually three, Constitutional Powers. Metternich secured the goodwill of Russian diplomacy and also guaranteed that Austria would not be excluded from future discussions on the Ottoman Empire.¹³¹ He expressed his views in a report to Esterházy: "Our policy is in accordance with Russian opinions, and the confidence the Emperor has placed in the Tsar's hand is entirely justified."¹³² Meanwhile, the Austrian ambassador attempted to mediate a meeting between Palmerston and Lieven in London to improve mutual relations, although it yielded no results.¹³³ When the British Foreign Secretary learned of the Münchengrätz meeting, his concerns about Austria's credibility deepened.¹³⁴ He viewed the Austro-Russian "marriage" as a betrayal of British interests, believing the two Powers were conspiring to carve up the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁵ However, he was unaware of the actual nature of the meeting. Esterházy

¹²⁷ SEAMAN, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Nesselrode, Münchengrätz, 14 September 1833, NESSELRODE, vol. VII, p. 252.

¹²⁹ Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 27 September 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

¹³⁰ MARTENS, Friedrich, *Die Russische Politik in der Orientalischen Frage*, St Petersburg 1877, p. 31.

¹³¹ SAUVIGNY, p. 466.

¹³² Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 27 September 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 204.

¹³³ ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, p. 555.

¹³⁴ Palmerston to William Tempel, London, 3 September 1833, BULWER, vol. II, p. 143.

¹³⁵ WEBSTER, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston*, vol. I, p. 312.

attempted to clarify Austria's stance on the Near East to Palmerston, reassuring him that Austria remained committed to the Sultan's empire. He noted that Austria's policy towards the Eastern Question had been more consistent than Britain's since the 1820s.¹³⁶ While both acknowledged the threat Muhammad Ali posed to Constantinople, Palmerston saw Russia as the ultimate adversary, unlike Esterházy.

Metternich and Lamb held a similar discussion in Vienna, with the British ambassador sending reports about cooperation with Russia to London and raising the issue with the Austrian Chancellor.¹³⁷ He wrote to London: "At Münchengrätz P.[rin]ce Metternich threw Austria entirely into the arms of Russia, passing over all that has been done in Poland and Turkey to consolidate their union against the West of Europe."¹³⁸ He defended British policy, which aimed to prevent the Russian army from marching into Constantinople.

At the same time, he mistakenly believed that the Münchengrätz meeting was deliberately intended to weaken the alliance between Britain and France.¹³⁹ Metternich instead attempted to explain Austria's Near East position and genuine intentions to Lamb, emphasising the importance of preserving the Ottoman Empire and maintaining Europe's balance of power. However, he could not dispel British suspicions of a hidden agenda behind Austro-Russian cooperation in the Near East. Crucially, Nicholas I's insistence on keeping the Berlin agreement secret only reinforced Anglo-French beliefs that Vienna was involved in dividing the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁰ Metternich reassured Lamb of the Tsar's friendly stance towards the Sultan, but Roussin continued to believe the unfounded rumours that St Petersburg and Vienna planned to annexe the Danubian principalities or dismantle the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴¹ The Münchengrätz agreement had a detrimental impact, further deepening the rift between Austria and Britain. Despite this, both powers agreed on the necessity of reforming the Ottoman Empire, with Palmer-

136 Ibid, p. 312.

137 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 6 December 1833, TNA, FO 120/138.

138 Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 30 October 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

139 "It seems to me to be in the nature of things that the three Powers, having failed in their endeavour to weaken the connection between England and France, will now turn their efforts to the strengthening of their own position, in which they will be less restrained than heretofore by the hope of conciliating the British government." Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 7 September 1833, TNA, FO 120/137.

140 Esterházy to Metternich, London, 24 November 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 203.

141 RENDALL, *Restraint or Self-Restraint*, p. 45.

ston urging Metternich to leverage Austria's influence over the Sultan as much as possible.¹⁴²

Hostility towards Russia grew across British society.¹⁴³ Palmerston urged Bligh to maintain good diplomatic relations but privately wrote to him about Russia's hidden intentions.¹⁴⁴ The main anti-Russian campaign played out in Constantinople. In an effort to reduce Russian influence at the Porte, Ponsonby objected to the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi, claiming it breached the Anglo-Ottoman treaty of 1809.¹⁴⁵ However, this assertion was inaccurate. The 1833 treaty did not permit Russia to freely send warships through the Straits and, in fact, only confirmed the resolutions of the 1809 treaty.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the Porte had no difficulty in refuting Britain's accusations. When this failed, Ponsonby redirected his efforts towards the Russian Embassy and convinced the Sultan that Russia was plotting at his court.¹⁴⁷

In reality, Mahmud II was more displeased by the presence of the Anglo-French squadron in the Archipelago. He found support from Metternich, who believed Britain's response was both delayed and unnecessary at this stage.¹⁴⁸ In reaction to British policies, Metternich sent a strongly worded dispatch, signalling Austria's desire to end any further polemics with the British cabinet regarding the Eastern Question. This shift in the Chancellor's stance between 1830 and 1833 was evident, with Austrian diplomacy losing all trust in British intentions. His dissatisfaction was not directed solely at Palmerston, but at the entire British cabinet. He stated: "It is not just with this Minister alone that we no longer wish to debate questions . . . but with England in its entirety, and I will say even more, with any other Power whatsoever." He reiterated that Austria made "no difference between the Principal Secretary of State and the Cabinet he represents," and that any change in tone or conduct from Palmerston would require him to approach Austria, not the other way around.¹⁴⁹ He further explained that the Eastern Question was fundamentally simple, involving a weakening Ottoman author-

142 TODOROVA, Maria, *Aspects of the Eastern Question*. In: TODOROVA, Maria (ed.), *Essays from the First Bulgarian-Dutch Symposium of Historians*. Sofia 6–7. June 1984, Sofia 1984, p. 27.

143 Esterházy to Metternich, London, 24 November 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 203; Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 10 January 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208.

144 Palmerston to Bligh, London, 6. November 1833, TNA, FO 65/206.

145 BOLSOVER, *Lord Ponsonby*, p. 106; CUNNINGHAM, Allan, INGRAM, Edward (ed.), *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution*, London 1993, p. 118.

146 This agreement banned warships from sailing in peacetime. ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, p. 551.

147 Ponsonby to Palmerston, Therapia, 17 November 1833, TNA, FO 120/139.

148 Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 17 January 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208.

149 Metternich to Hummelauer, Vienna, 31 October 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208.

ity and Mehemet Ali, who sought to establish an Arab Empire. Metternich criticised the British cabinet, especially under Palmerston, for attempting to sow discord among the Powers, a strategy Austria found incomprehensible.

Similar to Palmerston's approach with Ponsonby, the Austrian Chancellor also engaged in diplomatic efforts by appointing Anton von Laurin as Consul General in Alexandria. The newly appointed diplomat proved to be more effective than his predecessor, Acerbi. Upon arriving in Alexandria, Laurin quickly established stronger relations with Muhammad Ali and his advisors. Metternich underscored the significance of Laurin's role in his instructions:

The Viceroy of Egypt [sic] is not, like other Pashas, a simple administrator of regions entrusted to his care. He is a very powerful vassal and all the more formidable for his sovereign . . . It is thus of the utmost interest for us to observe and anticipate his initiatives, like those other Great Powers who would aspire to exert influence over his designs and resolutions and predict or eliminate everything in them that could compromise the preservation of the Ottoman Empire and, therefore, the general peace of Europe. The theatre of these actions is not in Constantinople, it is where Mohammed Ali resides.¹⁵⁰

The situation eased somewhat at the turn of 1833/34 once the joint fleet had sailed to winter ports in Malta and Poros.¹⁵¹ In contrast, Russian naval manoeuvres raised concerns in Sweden, which contacted London and asked for guarantees in the event of an attack by its neighbour. Palmerston assured Sweden unofficially that Britain would support them in a conflict with the Tsar. Sweden, in contrast, declared it would be strictly neutral during an Anglo-Russian war. A crucial aspect of this fact is that Palmerston considered the idea of a war with St Petersburg.¹⁵²

The anti-Russian mood in the British Isles could not be diminished. This was due to criticism of St Petersburg by the public and also because of the Lievens' activities in attempting to undermine Palmerston's authority as much as possible, both with Grey and with other cabinet members.¹⁵³ As noted in the previous chapter, a dispute over the nomination of Stratford Canning as ambassador to St Petersburg dominated the background during these events. After the Lievens were removed from their post in London, both states were represented diplomati-

¹⁵⁰ ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, p. 522.

¹⁵¹ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 4 January 1834, TNA, FO 120/145.

¹⁵² Esterházy to Metternich, London, 13 December 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 203.

¹⁵³ Esterházy to Metternich, London, 3 December 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 203; Dorothea Lieven to Alexander Lieven, London, 12 January 1834, ROBINSON, Lionel George (ed.), *Letters of Dorothea Princess Lieven. During her Residence in London 1812–1834*, New York, London, Bombay 1902, p. 363.

cally only by *chargés d'affaires* for a certain period, which naturally did not improve relations either.¹⁵⁴

Regarding Anglo-Russian relations, the question arises as to what extent the meeting in Münchengrätz influenced cooperation between London and Vienna. For Palmerston, Austria became an “accomplice to crime” in the East. As St Petersburg’s main ally, it became the target of continuous suspicion from the Maritime Power. Metternich asserted and assured that Russia accepted the Austrian policy, emphasising the necessity of preserving the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁵ The Austrian Chancellor was well informed of Broglie’s negative impact on politics in the British Isles. He had endeavoured to exploit his influence on Louis Philippe to take a broader initiative and remove his Foreign Minister from the post. Nicholas I took a similar approach and sent a report to London on 18 December 1833 about his peaceful intentions and desire to maintain the Sultan’s regime. During January and February 1834, the mutual antagonism between West and East waned.¹⁵⁶ This was not changed even when Palmerston secretly called on Vice-Admiral Charles Rowley to steer a course for the Bosphorus in the event of a Russian invasion. This partial transformation in Britain’s policy resulted from stalling for time. The British Foreign Secretary publicly admitted that as long as Metternich supported Nicholas I, it would be impossible for London to take action against Russia. He hoped that Austria would change policy, allowing him to “extract” the Tsar from the Near East.¹⁵⁷ One such change was to occur after Francis I’s death and the arrival of a new emperor, who would not be so under the Chancellor’s influence and who would strengthen relations with Great Britain.¹⁵⁸

In March 1834, Nicholas I and Mahmud II signed another agreement. Part of this arrangement was reducing the Ottoman debt from six to four million ducats and agreeing on Russo-Ottoman borders in Asia. The Tsar’s steps in the first half of 1834 were designed to assure the Western Powers of his peaceful intentions.¹⁵⁹ But Palmerston did not believe them. The convention guaranteed the Asian borders but was also favourable to St Petersburg, with the Russian Empire, from Brit-

154 Russia was represented in London by Count Pavel Ivanovich Medem in 1834–1835. Britain was represented by John Duncan Bligh in St Petersburg. Esterházy to Metternich, London, 13 December 1833, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 203.

155 Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 27 October 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208; BOLSOVER, George Henry, *Palmerston and Metternich on the Eastern Question 1834*. In: *English Historical Review* 51, 1936, 202, p. 240.

156 Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 22 February 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208.

157 BULWER, vol. II, p. 179.

158 BOLSOVER, George Henry, *David Urquhart and the Eastern Question 1833–1837. A Study in Publicity and Diplomacy*. In: *Journals of Modern History* 8, 1936, 4, p. 447.

159 Esterházy to Metternich, London, 6 June 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 206.

ain's perspective, moving dangerously close to the crucial fortress of Kars and trade routes to Persia. The Foreign Office instructed Rowley's fleet to sail on the open sea again. Nicholas I determined it would be pointless to assure London again of St Petersburg's intentions as long as Palmerston was in post.¹⁶⁰

Metternich attempted to exploit the cooling of relations and again proposed a conference to be convened in Vienna. Lamb assured Palmerston of Austria's upright intentions and the effort to bridge current conflicts between East and West. Austria's chargé d'affaires in London, Karl von Hummelauer, conveyed Metternich's stance on the Near East and Russia to Britain's new Prime Minister, Melbourne. Britain's apparent indifference toward Vienna's concerns confirmed to Metternich that the nation was not interested in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶¹ In September 1834, he wrote a report to the British capital on Austrian confidence in Russian policy and its tolerance for relations between the Sultan and the Tsar.¹⁶² This information upset the London government. Melbourne attempted to restore relations and led a government debate on improving access to Continental Power.¹⁶³ He concluded that Palmerston's policy had been "more daring than skilful" until the mid-1830s.¹⁶⁴ Circumstances indeed indicated this. Metternich also noted that if there were to be any rapprochement, it would be up to Palmerston to take that step, as the rift between them was caused by him, not by the cabinet in Vienna: "If Lord Palmerston were ever to change his tone and conduct, it would be up to him to come to us, but it will never be us who will turn to him, especially when it comes to pursuing interests that are as much those of his Court as they are ours and of all the Powers."¹⁶⁵ In 1834, Hummelauer was the only Austrian diplomat in London. Talleyrand advocated for the traditional Vienna System and strongly opposed Palmerston's policy after he departed from London. Vienna, like Russia, was represented in London only by a chargé d'affaires.

Melbourne strongly encouraged Palmerston to reassess his positions on Austria.¹⁶⁶ In October 1834, the Foreign Secretary sent Lamb a note explaining the various perspectives of both Powers on the Eastern Question. The overall wording of the report bore a moderate, even friendly, tone.¹⁶⁷ Ultimately, domestic politics

¹⁶⁰ BOLSOVER, *Lord Ponsonby*, p. 107.

¹⁶¹ Metternich to Esterházy, Vienna, 10 April 1835, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 214.

¹⁶² Metternich to Hummelauer, Vienna, 31 October 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 208.

¹⁶³ Hummelauer to Metternich, London, 17 October 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 206.

¹⁶⁴ BOLSOVER, *Palmerston*, p. 247.

¹⁶⁵ Metternich to Hummelauer, Vienna, 31 October 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 206.

¹⁶⁶ Hummelauer to Metternich, London, 17 October 1834, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StAbt, England 206.

¹⁶⁷ Lamb to Palmerston, Vienna, 21 October 1834, TNA, FO 120/147.

led to the collapse of the London government, and for some time, Palmerston was forced to leave the role of Foreign Secretary. He told to Vienna of this in a sarcastic message: "I feel sure that it will have been the happiest moment in his life when he [Metternich] reads it and that I shall never have given him greater satisfaction than when going out."¹⁶⁸ Metternich responded that he did not feel satisfaction but rather hope. For the Austrian Chancellor, this change represented the hope of reassessing Britain's approach to cooperation with Austria and the prospects of joint foreign policy coordination.

¹⁶⁸ BOLSOVER, *Palmerston*, p. 248.