

THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE YEARS 1774-1787

A Master's Thesis

by

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

August 2008

To my beloved sister,

THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE YEARS 1774-1787

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

August 2008

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ABSTRACT

THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE YEARS 1774-1787

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August 2008

In this work, the diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia during the late 18th century will be analyzed. This study will cover the period from 1774 to 1787, starting with the signing of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, ending with the declaration of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1787-1792.

During this thirteen years period, there was an intense rivalry between the two empires, most importantly over Crimea and also over the Caucasus and the Balkans. There were many instances during which the two empires came to the brink of a new war. As a consequence of the international politics of the period, Russia and the Porte were remained relatively alone in their struggle and the Great Powers of Europe isolated from the collision of these two empires because of their hostilities among each other.

This period witnessed the beginning of Russia's superiority over the Ottoman Empire and the conflicts between these two Empires paved the way to a new war in 1787.

Key words: The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Ottoman-Russian relations in the 18th century, Greek Project, the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Balkans.

ÖZET

1774-1787 OSMANLI – RUS MÜNASEBETLERİ

Özer, Abdurrahim

Master tezi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Hakan Kırımlı

Ağustos 2008

Bu çalışmada, 1774 yılında Küçük Kaynarca antlaşmasının imzalanması ile başlayıp, 1787 yılında ikinci Osmanlı-Rus harbinin ilanına kadar geçen onuç yıllık sürede, Osmanlı Devleti ve Rusya İmparatorluğu arasındaki diplomatik ilişkiler açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bahsi geçen dönemde iki imparatorluk Kafkasya, Balkanlar ve bilhassa Kırım üzerinde ciddi bir nüfuz mücadeleşine girişmişler ve yeni bir savaşın başlaması ihtimali sürekli canlı kalmıştır. Dönemin uluslararası politikasının bir sonucu olarak Avrupa'nın büyük devletleri kendi aralarındaki husumetlerden dolayı Osmanlı ve Rusya arasındaki rekabete uzak kalmışlardır. Sonuç olarak, Osmanlı Devleti ve Rusya, aralarındaki mücadelede, başka dönemlere nazaran, yalnız kalmışlardır.

Bu dönem, Rusya'nın Osmanlı Devleti'ne karşı üstünlüğünü ele geçirmesine tanıklık etmiş ve iki imparatorluk arasındaki sorunlar 1787 yılında yeni bir savaşın başlamasına sebebiyet vermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küçük Kaynarca Andlaşması, 18. yüzyıl Osmanlı-Rus İlişkileri, Kırım, Kafkasya, Balkanlar

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and most of all, I wish to express my gratitude to Associate Prof. Hakan Kırımlı, who supervised me throughout the preparation of my thesis with great patience and diligence. Without his encouragements and assistance I would not dare to write on such a difficult topic.

I am grateful to Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) for funding me through my graduate education. Thanks to the scholarship provided for me, I had no difficulty in searching and retrieving the necessary sources for my study.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the support of Dr. Hasan Ali Karasar and Assistant Prof. Oktay Özel for spending their valuable time to read my thesis and kindly participating in my thesis committee. Without their comments, this work could not take its final form. I am also thankful to Prof. Mark Gingerich who read the very first version of a part of my thesis and gave me quality feedbacks.

I am indebted to Veysel Şimşek, Esra Doğramacı, Berat Yıldız, and Elif Bayraktar for helping me through the writing of my thesis and providing all kinds of support to find the necessary sources. I am also grateful to İbrahim Köremezli, Emre Bingüler, Özlem Mert, Ahmet Sadık Doğan, and Özhan Kapıcı for their generous help in providing me with some of the books I desperately needed.

My friends and colleagues Esin, Çağatay, Pınar, Valeri, Durukan, Berivan, Arda, Melih, Berke, Gizem, and Hilal deserve my special thanks for their friendship and support throughout my graduate education.

Taylan and Burçin deserve my very special thanks for being there whenever I needed, as my second family. I am also grateful to Ali İhsan, Çağlar, and Seza for their precious friendship.

Last but not the least; I owe my family more than a general acknowledgement. Their support, patience and boundless faith in me made the completion this work possible. They are the reason why I am here today. They are all my reasons.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, the Ottoman-Russian diplomatic relations from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca on 21 July 1774 to the declaration of the second Ottoman-Russian war in August 1787 will be analyzed. The significance of this thirteen year period in the mutual histories of these two Empires and its place in the international context will be highlighted.

Russia of the 18th century was a constantly rising power on the eastern borders of Europe. Reform-minded and energetic rulers, together with the help of European specialists, transformed the Empire of Ivan the Terrible into a Great Power of Europe. Catherine the Great, though she also had a great place in all Russian History, was one of the most important figures among the Tsars and Tsaritsas of the 18th century. She had recognized the ideas of enlightenment and for 34 years struggled for both to improve the internal well-being of Russia and increase its the role in European politics. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire

had been transformed from a mighty Empire into an obsolete one, which needed urgent reform and modernization.

This inter-war period, which lasted for thirteen years from 1774 to 1787, was one of the interesting episodes in the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations. One of the most important achievements of Catherine the Great was the annexation of the Crimea into the Russian Empire which greatly strengthened Russia's position against the Porte and paved the way for the future Russian domination of the Black Sea via certain cities and ports like Sebastopol, Kherson and Odessa. Russian trade in the Black Sea visibly flourished following this period. Russian penetration into the Balkans and the Caucasus also took a new shape during her reign. The establishment of the Russian protection over the Georgian Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti aimed to protect the Russian interests and at the same time to increase the Russian role in the region. For the first time, the local reaction to Russia's militaristic advance gained a united form in 1785 under the leadership of Imam Mansur.

Situation of the Balkans had differed from the Crimea or the Caucasus since it was heavily Christian populated and the Russians applied the strategy of provoking these people against the Sultan to increase their influence further. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca allowed Russia to open consulates in the 'necessary' places. These consulates were supposed to regulate the Russian trade relations with the Porte and to protect the Russian merchants in the Ottoman territories. In reality however, the Russian consuls engaged in igniting the feelings of discontent among the Christian subjects of the Sultan in every corner of the Empire and especially in the Balkans.

Although the Ottomans tried to balance the activities of Russia, in all these three regions the efforts of the Porte did not bring fruitful results. Despite all the efforts of the Porte, Crimea was lost in 1783 while at the same time Russia established its suzerainty over the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia were being chosen from among the loyal Phanariots of the Constantinople to balance the presence of the Russian agents. They were frequently deposed which resulted in instability in the region, paving the way for further Russian intervention. An exception to the failed Ottoman efforts could be the Ferah Ali Pasha mission to Soğucak. He was commissioned to Western Caucasus to improve the relations between Constantinople and the local tribes, namely Circassians, and partly succeeded in doing so.

Over the Balkans, this period had witnessed one of the grandiose projects of expansion and conquest, namely the Greek Project. Although it could not be realized due to a number of reasons, the mere anxiety it caused was enough to concern the Porte and the other countries of Europe.

Last but not the least, the international politics of this period allowed Russia to expand at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. The Great Powers of Europe were in conflict among each other and in some cases they even needed Russian support which gave Russia an advantageous position and eased Russia's hand against the Ottoman Empire.

In such a period, on the one hand, the Ottoman Empire struggled for its integrity by preserving the status quo, and on the other, the Russian Empire followed aggressive and expansionist policies. Although these thirteen years were relatively peaceful for Russia and the Porte, the roots of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1787-1792 was embedded in the unresolved conflicts of this period.

CHAPTER II

THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE TREATY OF KÜÇÜK KAYNARCA

2.1 A Brief Introduction to the Russo-Ottoman Relations

The beginning of Ottoman-Russian relations is usually related to the first official document sent through the Crimean Khanate to Constantinople in 1492; however, the enmity between the two empires intensified with the conquests of the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan by Ivan the Terrible (1546-1584) in the mid-sixteenth century.¹ Although until the beginning of the eighteenth century, the balance of power was still in favor of the Ottoman Empire, as a result of a series

¹ For detailed information on the roots of Ottoman-Russian relations and rivalry see Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei ve Don-Volga Kanalı Teşebbüsü (1569),” *Belleten*, vol. 8, no. 46 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1948), pp. 350-401. Also see Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve İdil Boyu: 1569 Astarhan Seferi, Ten-İdil Kanalı ve XVI-XVII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetleri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1966).

of military setbacks in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire lost considerable strength. Simultaneously, Peter the Great (1682-1725) initiated a period of daring reforms and increased the importance of his country as a regional power.² The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of Russia as a great power, a process which had a major impact on European power politics.³ There were three major obstacles in the way of Russia before it could claim some sort of regional hegemony. These were the Ottoman Empire (together with the Crimean Khanate), Poland and Sweden. From the beginning of the 18th century, the Russian Empire was frequently at war with these states, and towards the end of the century, the balance of power gradually shifted in the favor of the former. It would be accurate to say that while the decisive defeat of Sweden in the Great Northern War, which ended in 1721 with the treaty of Nystadt, secured the northern front of Russia, the process of the partition of Poland after more than half-a-century greatly contributed to Russia's expansion towards the west and involvement in European affairs. Lastly, the annexation of the Crimean Khanate provided the Russia's southern advance and gave the Russian Empire the upper hand regarding its relations with the Ottoman

² For a general overview of the rise of the Russian Empire from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century see, Carol. B. Stevens, *Russia's Wars of Emergence 1460-1730* (London: Pearson, 2007).

³ For general information about European politics and international relations in this period see, Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Europe 1700-1789* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp.276-327, Matthew Smith Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century 1715-1783* (New York: Longman, 1987), pp. 210-379, Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime 1768-1776: The First Crisis* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) trans. Burr Litchfield, Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime 1776-1789 I: The Great States of the West* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991) trans. Burr Litchfield, Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime 1776-1789 II: Republican Patriotism and the Empires of the East* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991) trans. Burr Litchfield, F.C. Schlosser, *History of the Eighteenth Century and of the Nineteenth Century till the Overthrow of the French Empire* vols. 3-5 (London, 1844-1845) trans. D. Davison. The issues of *Annual Register* also contain invaluable information about this period. The chronicle was started by Edmund Burke and it was first published in 1758. Among the various chapters of the chronicle, there is an important section devoted to the history of European and World politics of that year. See, *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, For the Year(s) 1768-1787* (London, 1788-1805).

Empire. After almost two centuries, the dominance of the Ottomans in the Black Sea ended in favor of Russia.

2.2 The Russian Empire during the 18th century⁴ till the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-1774

The Russian Empire entered the 18th century under the rule of an energetic and reform-minded Tsar, Peter the Great. He initiated a series of military and bureaucratic reforms to strengthen and westernize the country. To this effect, he invited a number of German and other European experts to modernize Russia, which also served as a background to the later German influence in the Russian Empire during the reign of the Empresses⁵. The benefits of these reforms were felt shortly after.

The Russian expansion during the 18th century was a result of practical political concerns. Protection against hostile states, expanding Russian hold over natural resources, and extending its agricultural plains were some of the motivations for Russia's expansion. In any case territorial expansion at the expense of neighboring states was perceived as something that strengthens the expansionist power.⁶ In fact, another motivation for Russian expansion, first towards the east and then towards the south, was to control the river ways. Since

⁴ For detailed information on the Russian Empire in this period see, Aleksandr B. Kamenskii, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Searching For a Place in the World* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) trans. and ed. David Griffiths, Isabel de Madariaga, *Politics and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (New York: Longman, 1998), John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵ Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740), Elizabeth (1741-1762), and Catherine the Great (1762-1796).

⁶ Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 22.

Russia's prosperity was mostly dependent on the rivers, it has been a primary objective of the Russian foreign policy, to control these river ways and their connections to the sea.⁷ While Russia managed to control Volga and its exit to the Caspian Sea during the 16th century, access to the Baltic and the Black Sea can be achieved only during the 18th century. "Nevertheless, all three seas were either landlocked (the Caspian) or approached the ocean through narrow exits (in the Baltic the Sound, in the Black Sea the Straits of Constantinople) easily blocked by foreign fleets. Russia's position as a maritime and commercial power was always under threat because of this basic geographical fact."⁸

As a reward of joining the anti-Ottoman alliance at the turn of the century, Russia signed a separate peace, the treaty of Istanbul in 1700 with the Porte. Important terms of this treaty included the Russian annexation of the fortress of Azov and the right to have a permanent consulate in Constantinople.⁹ Besides, Russia was no longer going to pay the annual tribute to the Crimean Khanate, which can be understood as the formal ending of the Tatar supremacy over Russia.

Sweden and Poland allied themselves against Russia but were defeated in 1709, in the famous Battle of Poltava. Ivan Mazepa, *Hetman* of the Cossacks, was also involved in this anti-Russian coalition. As a result of Russian victory, the Cossacks were deprived of their autonomy to choose their own leaders, since Peter the Great did not want to take any further risks in the future. After defeating Poland and Sweden, Russia was draft into a new war against the Ottoman Empire.

⁷ "The account of inland navigations in Russia is astonishing. According to Cox's tour, a water carriage is completed for four thousand five hundred miles, three times the length of Great Britain, extending from Petersburgh to the Chinese frontiers." *The Times*, Thursday, Sep. 20, 1787; pg.2; Issue 854; col. D.

⁸ Dominic Lieven, *Empire: Russia and its Rivals* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 206.

⁹ Pyotr A. Tolstoy was to become the first permanent Russian Ambassador to Constantinople between the years 1701–1714.

The main cause of this war was the provocation of Charles XII of Sweden, who fled to the Ottoman Empire after the defeat he suffered at the hands of Peter the Great. Additionally the ruling class of the Crimean Khanate was frustrated, since they had not received their annual tribute for over ten years. This was also perceived as a chance by the Porte to compensate for the loss of Azov (1700).

Consequently, the Ottoman Empire declared war upon Russia on 21 November 1710. Peter the Great did not summon a great army for this campaign, for he relied on the promises of the Hospodars of both Wallachia and Moldavia.¹⁰ In June 1711, both armies reached the banks of the Prut River. Since the Ottoman army, approximately 130,000 men strong, crossed the Danube and entered Wallachia before the Russians, Constantin Brâncoveanu immediately switched his allegiance and remained neutral during the campaign.¹¹ This was a major blow to the Russian war plans. Although Peter the Great attempted to retreat, the Russian army was cornered by the armies of Grand Vizier Baltacı Mehmed Pasha and the Crimean Khan Devlet Geray II. The situation was hopeless for Peter the Great and he had no chance but to accept the terms of the Porte. "In a letter dated 10 July, Peter instructed the Senate that he expected to die or be taken prisoner, in which case he was not to be treated as their sovereign."¹² However, Baltacı Mehmed Pasha could not fully benefit from this fragile situation of the Tsar. As a result of the negotiations, the fortress of Azak was to be returned to the Ottoman Empire, Russia's southern fleet was to be destroyed and Russia had to pull its Ambassador

¹⁰ The Russian army in this campaign was composed of 40,000 infantry and 14,000 cavalry. This number was going to be multiplied when joined with the armies of the Principalities. While Dimitrie Cantemir had promised 10,000 men, Constantin Brâncoveanu of Walachia promised a force of 30,000. As a result, total strength of the Russian army was planned to be 94,000 in total. See Robert K. Massie, *Peter the Great: His Life and World* (New York: History Book Club, 1999), pp.550-551.

¹¹ Stevens, p. 267.

¹² Ibid, p. 268.

back from Constantinople.¹³ Peter the Great, once he safely returned to St. Petersburg, was reluctant to comply with the terms of the treaty. However, when the Ottomans once again declared war on Russia, both sides came to agree on a new peace treaty and Treaty of Edirne was signed on 18 October 1713.

Although Prut seemed like a setback for Russia, it was a minor one when compared to the achievements of Peter the Great. After a long lasting campaign, in 1721, Peter the Great defeated Sweden in the Great Northern War and established Russia's supremacy in the Baltic Sea, which was vital for the trade with northern Europe and England. In addition, Peter the Great led a campaign toward the Caucasus and Persia in 1720s, during which he invaded the western shores of the Caspian. Russian armies advanced through the Derbend Pass down to Persia, where they reached the city of Resht, located on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. However, these latter conquests did not endure.

Russia and the Ottoman Empire fought another major war during the first half of the 18th century, during the years 1735-1739.¹⁴ In 1736, a Russian army under the command of General Burkhard Christoph von Münnich, after breaking the defenses at Orkapı (Perekop), captured Bahçesaray, destroyed Hansaray (the palace of the Khans) and burnt the city to the ground. Once again in 1737, General Peter Lacy entered the Crimea. The spread of disease and lack of provisions forced the Russian army to retreat "having lost 30,000 men of whom only 2,000 were killed by the enemy."¹⁵ However, this was a clear sign of what

¹³ For detailed information on the Battle of Prut see, Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Prut Seferi ve Barış 1123 (1711)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1953), Hakan Yıldız, *Haydi Osmanlı Sefere! Prut Seferinde Organizasyon ve Lojistik* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), Yeniçeri Katibi Hasan, *Prut Seferini Beyânumdır* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008).

¹⁴ For a detailed account of Ottoman Empire in this period see, Lavender Cassels, *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire 1717-1740* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967).

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 110, L.S.Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961) p.184.

was to come half a century later. During the last year of the campaign, Russian armies captured Yaşı (Jassy), the capital of Moldavia. However, the war was concluded when Austria decided to make a separate peace with the Ottoman Empire in September 1739. Russia could not continue the fight under these circumstances. The treaty of Niş (Nissa) was signed on 3 October 1739. This treaty was not a decisive victory or defeat for either side. The fortress of Azak was returned to Russia only with the condition that it was to be demolished.

After the peace was concluded with the Porte, Russia chose to follow an active foreign policy in Europe.¹⁶ During the war of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), Russia, allied with Austria and Great Britain, fought against France and Prussia. Simultaneously, Russia fought a new war against Sweden during the years 1741-1743 which was won thanks to the military brilliance of General Lacy. This victory helped Russia maintain its dominance in the Baltic Sea. Later, in the Seven Years War (1756-1763)¹⁷, Russia entered into an alliance with France and fought against Britain and Prussia of Frederick the Great (1740-1786). During the campaign of 1762, Russian armies were about to invade Berlin, if only Peter III (1762) who just succeeded Elizabeth (1741-1762), had not decided to make peace with Prussia.¹⁸ This fateful event was to be remembered as the “Miracle of the House of Brandenburg”.

As an admirer of Frederick's policies, Peter III tried to regulate the army according to the Prussian style. He also initiated some reforms which disturbed the status quo of the nobility. Catherine took the opportunity to depose her

¹⁶ For an account of the wars in eighteenth century Europe see; Edward Cust, *Annals of the Wars of the Eighteenth Century* vols.1-3 (London, 1862). The first three volumes of this series comprise the dates between 1700-1788.

¹⁷ For a detailed account of the European scene of the Seven Years War see, Franz A. J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe 1756-1763* (London: Pearson, 2008).

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 382-383.

husband and with the help of the Orlov brothers,¹⁹ she attempted a coup d'etat and succeeded in seizing the throne.²⁰

The very first years of Catherine the Great²¹ demonstrated her eagerness for power and unwillingness to leave any contenders to the throne. Her husband died after a few weeks of the coup, possibly murdered by Aleksey Orlov with orders from the Tsarina. She did not leave the throne to its actual heir, her son Paul (1754-1801), and also have Ivan (1740-1764). He was imprisoned by Elizabeth as an infant, murdered after a failed rescue attempt by Vasiliy Mirovich, who was a low-ranking army officer.

Catherine II “had a superficial knowledge of the state of affairs in the empire, of her own governmental resources, and of the difficulties that awaited her.”²² As a result, “the weak position of Catherine resulted with the people who helped her achieve the crown trying to abuse their support. She was in a helpless position in which she had to give all sorts of concessions to the nobles.”²³

Catherine the Great, who posed herself as an “enlightened autocrat” in the initial years of her reign regarding domestic affairs, continued to follow an active

¹⁹ Grigory Orlov (favourite of Catherine II), Aleksey Orlov (Chesmensky), Ivan Orlov, Fyodor Orlov, Vladimir Orlov.

²⁰ Yekaterina Romanovna Vorontsova-Dashkova, *Memoirs of the Princess Dashkow, Lady of Honour to Catherine II: Empress of All the Russias* vol. 1 (London, 1840), ed. Mrs. W. Bradford, pp.75-80. Princess Dashkova's memoirs, published in two volumes, is one of the important sources to understand this period since she was one of the prominent actors of the period and, although she was the little sister of Peter III's mistress Elizabeth, she was very close to Catherine the Great.

²¹ For detailed information on the history of the Russian Empire in this period and the personality of Catherine the Great see, Vasili Osipovich Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History: The Time of Catherine the Great* (London: M.E.Sharpe, 1997) trans. and ed. Marshall S. Shatz, Aleksandr Gustavovic Brickner, *Istoria Ekateriny Vtoroi* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Astrel, 2005), Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix, 2003), John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), Marc Raeff (ed.), *Catherine the Great: A Profile* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), Jean Castera, *The Life of Catharine II: Empress of Russia* 3 vols. (London, 1800), William Tooke, *View of the Russian Empire During the Reign of Catharine the Second, and to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* 3 vols. (London, 1800), Brenda Meehan-Water, “Catherine the Great and the Problem of Female Rule,” *Russian Review*, vol. 34, no. 3 (July, 1975).

²² Kliuchevsky, pp. 58-60.

²³ Ibid.

foreign policy in Europe. She interfered with the elections of the King of Poland and succeeded to impose her candidate, Stanisław August Poniatowski (1732–1798) on the throne, who was one of her old favourites. She also continued her husband's Prussian policy and, with the initiatives of Count Panin, an alliance was formed between Russia and Prussia in 1764. Later in 1766, tension rose in Poland when Russia tried to enforce certain regulations regarding the rights and equality of the Orthodox subjects of Poland. On 9 July 1766, letter of Poniatowski to the Sultan arrived in Constantinople, in which he was asking for the friendship of the Porte and trying to get Ottoman support against Russia.²⁴ This conflict over Poland was to become a cause of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774.²⁵

2.3 The Ottoman Empire during the 18th century²⁶ till the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-1774

After the treaty of Karlowitz (1699), which was a major blow to the Ottoman power in Central Europe, there was still an optimistic mood among the

²⁴ Mustafa Kesbî, *İbretnüümâ-yı Devlet* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), pp. 305-306.

²⁵ For an account of Russian policies towards Poland in this period see, Jerry T. Lukowski, "Towards Partition: Polish Magnates and Russian Intervention in Poland during the Early Reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3 (Sep., 1985), pp. 557-574.

²⁶ For detailed information on the history of the Ottoman Empire in this period see, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* vol. 4, 2 parts (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995-2003), Nicolae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol. 4 (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005), trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, pp. 235-415, Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), pp. 321-412, Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume I: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 223-258, *Mufassal Osmanlı Tarihi* vol. 5 (İstanbul: Güven Yayınevi, 1962). For the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire see, Yücel Özkaya, *18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Toplumu* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi 1500-1914* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) pp. 131-177, Bruce McGowan, "Âyanlar Çağı, 1699-1812," in Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi* vol. 2 (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2006), pp. 761-865.

Ottoman dignitaries and chroniclers of the time, who contended that the Ottoman Empire would be victorious once again once it recovered its former strength. This peace treaty gave breathing space for the Ottomans, albeit a temporary one.²⁷ However, the defeats suffered against Austria, at the hands of Prince Eugene of Savoy, during the 1716-1718 campaign resulted in the capture of Oltenia (Little Wallachia) by the Habsburg Empire. On the other hand, the Porte managed to recover Morea from Venice in 1715 and also re-captured Belgrade and Oltenia from the Habsburgs with the Treaty of Belgrade, signed on 18 September 1739. The Ottomans were once again victorious and self-confident. This was evident “during the negotiations that issued in the Belgrade treaty, [when] Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha was able to boast, as well as threaten, that the road to Vienna was open and he knew the way”.²⁸

After 1739, excluding the wars against Nadir Shah of Persia during the beginning of 1740s, Ottoman Empire experienced a considerably long period of peace. This was “one of the longest periods of peace for the Ottoman Empire in its entire history.”²⁹ Until 1768, no major wars were fought and the Ottomans had chosen to remain neutral during the European conflicts of this period.

Relieved of the huge military expenses of wars, the Ottoman Empire also managed to recover economically during this period. According to Faroqhi, the false confidence of the Ottomans before the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-74, was not only a result of long-lasting period of peace but also the developments in production and economy. Ironically, it was the war which caused the end of this progress. The Porte was satisfying its military needs by purchasing supplies in

²⁷ Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote (eds. and trans.), *Mübadele: An Ottoman-Russian Exchange of Ambassadors* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp.1-2.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁹ Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson, 2007), p. 130.

cheap prices from wholesalers instead of from the small-sized manufacturers. As a result, neither wholesalers nor small manufacturers were able to develop themselves and contribute to general progress.³⁰

The Ottoman Empire began to lose control of its periphery during the 18th century, as local landlords and warlords (*the âyâns and derebeys*) increased their authority. In many cases, these influential and wealthy people were able to please the local governors and *kadis*, further increased their wealth and managed to leave their position to someone from their line.³¹ One of the reasons of this loosening was the Porte's fiscal policy. Unable to collect taxes from its subjects, Ottoman administrators preferred to sell the farming of the annual taxes of the provinces to individuals, who were called *mültezim*.³² Both as a result of this fiscal policy and lack of communications and poor transportation, in the far corners of the Balkans, such as Bosnia and Montenegro, and especially the North African shores, became almost independent of the central rule.³³

During this long period of peace, the Grand Vizier Koca Mehmed Ragip Pasha (1757-1763), who was also the architect of this pacific policy, can be regarded as one of the few talented statesmen of the Porte. Ragip Pasha tried to strengthen the army in spite of the state of peace. He used to encourage soldiers to drill, not only in Constantinople but also in the other provinces, and wanted to

³⁰ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 70-71.

³¹ Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayic ül-Vukuat: Kurumlariyla ve Örgütleriyle Osmanlı Tarihi* vol.3-4 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), p.283. For further information on the *âyâns* during the eighteenth century see, Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Âyânlık* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), Yuzo Nagata, *Muhsin-zade Mehmed Paşa ve Ayanlık Müessesesi* (İstanbul: Akademi Kitabevi Yayınları, 1999), Deena R. Sadat "Rumeli Ayanları: The Eighteenth Century," in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 44, no. 3 (1972), Canay Şahin, "The Rise and Fall of an *Ayân* Family in Eighteenth Century Anatolia: The Caniklizâdes (1737-1808)," Ph.D Dissertation, Bilkent University (Ankara, 2003), Robert W. Zens, "The Ayanlık and Pasvanoglu Osman Paşa of Vidin in the Age of Ottoman Social Change, 1791-1815," PhD. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison (Madison, 2004).

³² Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, p.130.

³³ Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: MacMillan, 1966), pp. xiii-xxi.

keep them in shape for a possible outbreak of war.³⁴ During this period, there were still no major efforts for reform because of the faith in the classical ways of statehood and the belief in the golden age of the Empire would flourish once again. It was exactly this kind of attitude of the Ottomans which resulted in a state that could not be modernized and remained obsolete until 1774. Thus, its chances of survival seemed to be very unlikely in the eyes of its European rivals.³⁵

There is an important factor, which should be kept in mind while trying to understand the policies and attitudes of the Ottoman Empire towards Russia especially during this period. The Ottoman Court was separated between the conservatives and the reformists.³⁶ People such as Ahmed Resmî Efendi³⁷ or the new Grand-vizier Halil Hamid Pasha were on the reformist wing. Starting with the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774, and especially after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, they defended the idea that Ottoman Empire urgently needed military and administrative reforms. There was almost no possibility of winning victory against Russia. On the other hand, the conservatives were very much offended by the humiliation of the Porte against Russia and the diminishing prestige of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. They argued that the Ottoman Empire could not tolerate the loss of a Muslim inhabited territory, in this case the Crimea. As it will be presented, the periods during which the debate ended in favour of the reformists, the Porte chose the way of diplomacy and mediation of the European powers. However, when the conservatives got to hold the power, they

³⁴ Joseph Von Hammer Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* vol. 16 (1757–1774) (Paris: 1829), trans. J. Hellert, pp.52-53.

³⁵ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp.xiii-xxi.

³⁶ Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publication, 1978), p.58.

³⁷ Ahmed Resmi Giridi is an important diplomat of this period. He was sent to Austria and Prussia by Mustafa III as an envoy, participated in the talks and signing of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty. He is the author of *Hülasatü'l-İtibar* which is a primary source for the Ottoman-Russian war 1768-1774. For detailed information on the career of Ahmed Resmi, see Virginia H. Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi 1700-1783* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1995).

immediately promoted military action against Russia and followed an aggressive policy.

2.4 The Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774

It was the First Ottoman-Russian War,³⁸ which had started in 1768 and lasted for six years that seriously weakened and challenged the regional power of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 18th century. The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca which ended this war is frequently remarked as one of the turning points in the course of the history of the Ottoman Empire and it is also referred as the initiation of the infamous “Eastern Question”.

When a small Russian force (the Zaporozhian Cossacks) chased the Polish confederates into the town of Balta, which belonged to the Crimean Khanate, they slaughtered the subjects of the Porte and set the village on fire. Though this was the instant cause of the declaration of war on 8 October 1768, there was a much broader background of this struggle.

Catherine II was admitted as the follower of an old tradition regarding her foreign policy decisions which was inherited from Peter the Great.³⁹ The general aim was to reach the Black Sea through the Crimea and establishing Russian influence over the Christian subjects of the Sultan.⁴⁰ While there were some

³⁸ To distinguish between the two Ottoman-Russian wars during the reign of the Catherine the Great, there is a common usage in the English literature to call the 1768-1774 war as the First Ottoman-Russian War, and 1787-1792 War as the Second Ottoman-Russian War.

³⁹ For a detailed analysis of the connection between Peter I and Catherine II see, Karen Rasmussen, “Catherine II and the Image of Peter I,” *Slavic Review*, vol.37, no.1 (Mar., 1978), pp.51-69.

⁴⁰ Itzkowitz and Mote, pp. 36-37.

economic interpretations of Catherine's motivations, such as securing free navigation for Russian ships on the Black Sea, this war was also an effort on Catherine's side to prove herself to her nobles and subjects.⁴¹ In addition to these long term plans, an immediate concern of Catherine was to 'secure' the Polish frontier.⁴²

On the Ottoman's side, the feckless policies of the high officials are one of the causes of outbreak of the war.⁴³ Certain dignitaries, who knew about the attitude of Mustafa III toward Russia, supported the idea of declaring war to gain the favour of the Sultan.⁴⁴ The efforts of the French Ambassador at Constantinople, Saint-Priest (1763-1784), should also not be overlooked since France was trying to divert Russia's attention by encouraging the Porte to declare war against Russia although it was well aware of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire⁴⁵. As well as French diplomatic pressure and the Polish question, the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire and the Principalities also played a major role at the declaration of the war.⁴⁶

Although, Frederick the Great remarked that this was a war in which "one-eyed men who have given blind men a through beating"⁴⁷, the Russian armies inflicted heavy defeats on the Ottomans on a number of occasions.⁴⁸ There are

⁴¹ Kliuchevsky, p.69-70.

⁴² Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p. 206.

⁴³ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire* vol.1, p.247.

⁴⁴ Mustafa Nuri Paşa, pp. 56-57.

⁴⁵ Castera, pp. 422-423.

⁴⁶ Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870*, pp.138-139.

⁴⁷ Albert Sorel, *The Eastern Question in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1898), quoted in Virginia Aksan, "The One-Eyed Fighting the Blind: Mobilization, Supply, and Command in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774," *The International History Review*, vol. 15, no.2 (May, 1993), p.224.

⁴⁸ For a detailed account of the course of the war see, A.N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtseii i pol'skimi konfederatami s 1769-1774 god.* 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1866-1874), Elena Ioasafovna Druzhinina, *Kiuchuk Kainardzhiiskii Mir 1774 goda: Ego podgotovka i zakliuchenie* (Moscow: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955), Sadullah Enverî, *Târih-i Enverî* vol.1, transcribed by Muhamrem Saffet Çalışkan, "Vekâyi'nüvis Enverî Sadullah Efendi ve Tarihinin I. Cildi'nin Metin ve Tahlili (1182-1188 / 1768-1774)," PhD. Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi (İstanbul 2000), Ahmed Vasif,

many reasons as to why the Porte performed so badly against the Russians. First of all, the Ottoman Empire did not have the huge army it supposedly had in the records,⁴⁹ mostly because many janissaries, although on the payroll, were not actually in the army service.⁵⁰ The Porte had also pursued a policy of non-interference in European affairs for almost thirty years, which resulted in a certain increase in welfare and prosperity of the Empire. This situation created a sense of false confidence on the side of the Ottomans in regards to their own strength. Consequently, the Sultan and some members of the *Divan* over-estimated the strength of the army against the Russians.⁵¹ On the other hand, Grand Vizier Muhsinzade Mehmed Pasha, who tried to point out the unprepared condition of the army and the border defenses, was ousted from their position.⁵² Another repeated reason of the Ottoman failure in this campaign was that while Russia had brilliant Generals such as Aleksandr V. Suvorov⁵³, Pyotr A. Rumiantsev and Grigorii A. Potemkin⁵⁴, the Ottoman army was directed by the aging and

Vasıf Tarihi 2 vols. (İstanbul, 1804). Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, *Mür'i t-Tevârih* 2 vols. (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1978). For the situation of the Ottoman administration during the war see, Metin Bezikoğlu, "The Deterioration of Ottoman Administration in the Light of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774" Master's Thesis, Bilkent University (Ankara, 2001).

⁴⁹ According to some sources, the Porte was able to place 600,000 men on the field. Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p. 207.

⁵⁰ McGowan, "Ayanlar Çağı 1699-1812", p.839.

⁵¹ Mustafa Nuri Paşa, p.57.

⁵² Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 112-113.

⁵³ Suvorov was one of the main actors of the Russian army during the second half of the eighteenth century. As a result of his achievements, mainly against the Turks and Poles, he earned the title of Generalissimo of the Russian armies. He had also written a valuable military handbook, *Nauka Pobezhdat (The Art of Victory)*. There are several biographies of Suvorov, and some of these works date to a few years after his death; see Aleksandr Fomich Petrushevskii, *Generalissimus Knyaz Suvorov* (St. Petersburg: Russkaia Simfoniia, 2005) this is a reprint of the original version published in 1900, Sergei Tsvetkov, *Aleksandr Suvorov 1730-1800* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2005), Oleg Mikhailov, *Suvorov* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1973), Frederic Anthing, *History of the Campaigns of Count Alexander Suworow-Rymnikski* (London: W. Green and T. Chaplin, 1813), Leger Marie Philippe Laverne, *The Life of Field Marshall Souvarof* (Baltimore: 1814), trans. from French, W. Lyon Blease, *Suvorov* (London: Constable and Company, Limited, 1920), K. Osipov, *Suvorov* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1945), Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory* (London: Constable, 1965).

⁵⁴ After 1776, Potemkin became the most important statesman of Russia until his death in 1791. There are numerous accounts of Potemkin; see, Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Potemkin: Catherine the Great's Imperial Partner* [Previously published as *Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin*] (New

incapable Grand Viziers, many of whom had little or no military experience.⁵⁵

During the reign of Catherine the Great, open-minded and progressive generals helped to improve the army by introducing principles such as the humane treatment of the soldiers by Potemkin.⁵⁶ In addition to the effects of leadership, levying was a cheaper method of conscription and a Russian soldier had no excessive expenditures. Most of the services a soldier was offered, such as regular food, uniform and accommodation had been perceived as a privilege instead of a right. Thus, the cost of maintaining the Russian army was considerably less than the European armies.⁵⁷

During 1769, the Crimean Khan Kırım Geray led an expedition against the Russian armies, commanding the Tatars of Bucak and the Crimean army. 15,000 Russians were captured and Kırım Geray victoriously returned to Kavşan in Bessarabia. However, with the unexpected death of Kırım Geray,⁵⁸ the tide of war also reversed.⁵⁹ In late 1769, Ottoman forces were defeated and forced to retreat, while the Russian army captured the fortress of Hotin and invaded Moldavia and Wallachia.⁶⁰

York: Vintage Books, 2005), Olga Eliseeva, *Grigorii Potemkin* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 2006), George Soloveytschik, *Potemkin: A Picture of Catherine's Russia* (London: Percival Marshall, 1949).

⁵⁵ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), p.25. After Muhsinzade Mehmed Pasha was deposed, five Grand Viziers had served in a period of almost three years. Constant changes are a reflection of the incompetence and failure of these figures.

⁵⁶ William Tooke, p. 253.

⁵⁷ John Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.170, 175. For further details on the Russian army of this period see, Keep, pp.143-227, Tooke, pp.235-286.

⁵⁸ According to the account of Baron de Tott, Kırım Geray was poisoned by a physician named Siropolo, who was a Greek and the agent of Prince of Wallachia in Crimea. Baron de Tott, *Memoirs of Baron de Tott: Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea During the Late War with Russia* vol. 1 part. 2 (London, 1785) trans. from French, pp. 207-210.

⁵⁹ Halim Giray Sultan, *Gülbüñ-i Hanan Yahud Kırım Tarihi* (Aqmescit: Dolya, 2004), p.268, Theodore Mundt, *Krim-Girai: Khan of the Crimea* (London: John Murray, 1856), pp. 137-192.

⁶⁰ Müellifi Mechul Bir Rûznâme: Osmanlı-Rus Harbi Esnâsında Bir Şâhidin Kaleminden İstanbul (1769-1774) (İstanbul: Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2007), p.9. This entry in the diary gives the date of 31 October for the mentioned events.

The Battle of Kagul and Larga were instances in which the ineffective organization of the Ottoman army can be clearly observed. Fought in 1 August 1770, Battle of Kagul was one of the turning points of the war. Numerically superior but poorly mastered Ottoman forces were routed by the much smaller but disciplined forces of Field-Marshall Rumiantsev.⁶¹ When the army of the Grand Vizier Halil Pasha cornered Rumiantsev's forces, instead of attacking the numerically inferior enemy at once, he ordered the army to make defensive preparations which gave the Russians sufficient time to regroup and attack with heavy artillery support. As a result, Ottoman forces were utterly defeated, leaving 30,000 casualties on the battlefield.⁶²

Simultaneously, another major blow came from the sea, when the Russian navy under command of the Aleksei Orlov, reached the Aegean and destroyed the Ottoman navy at the bay of Çeşme in October 1770. This was the first time a Russian navy fought in the Mediterranean.⁶³ While “a protest to the Doge for allowing ships from the Baltic to enter the Adriatic at Venice suggests a basic ignorance of Europe’s geography”⁶⁴ of the Ottoman bureaucrats; this episode was a clear sign of Russia’s future intentions in this region. It is important to note however that this expedition could be realized only with the cooperation of

⁶¹ According to some accounts, the Russian army under the command of Rumiantsev was 25,000 men strong, while the Grand Viziers army was 150,000. Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p. 208, John P. LeDonne, p.96.

⁶² Osman Köse, *1774 Küçük Kaynarca Andlaşması: Oluşumu-Tahlili-Tatbiki* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), pp.30-34.

⁶³ For a detailed account of the Battle of Çeşme see, Evgeni Victorovich Tarle, “Chesmenskii boi i pervaia russkaia ekspeditsia v Arkhipelag (1769-1774),” in Evgeni Victorovich Tarle, *Sochinenia* vol. 10 (Moscow: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1959), pp. 11-91, *An Authentic Narrative of the Russian Expedition against the Turks by sea and land* (compiled...by an officer on board the Russian Fleet) (London: S.Hooper, 1772) trans. from English by Ali Rıza Seyfi, *Çeşme Deniz muharebesi faciası ve Akdenizde ilk Rus donanması* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, 1943), Ali Rıza İşipek and Oğuz Aydemir, *1770 Çeşme Deniz Savaşı: 1768-1774 Osmanlı Rus Savaşları* (İstanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 2006).

⁶⁴ Alan Palmer, *Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1992), p.44.

Britain.⁶⁵ There were fractions in England whether this was a threat to the English dominance over the open waters however more significant view was that development of Russian navy did not pose a threat to England. It was in the benefit of Her Majesty as long as the French interests were disturbed because of this expedition.⁶⁶ Russian navy's expedition in the Mediterranean did not end with the Battle of Çeşme.⁶⁷ Although Russian attempts to break the Dardanelles defenses failed, thanks to the dexterity of Baron de Tott and Gazi Hasan Pasha, operations of the Russian navy continued until 1774 without any fruitful results.⁶⁸

During this naval episode, a small force also dispatched to Morea to encourage the Greeks to rise against their “infidel” masters. Although they succeeded in flaming the uprising, sufficient support could not be sent to the Greeks and they became the victims of Ottoman reprisal later.

In 1771, Russian armies had already invaded Yaşı (Jassy) (capital of Moldavia), Bucharest (capital of Wallachia) and most importantly the Crimea; but it was not an easy year for Russia either. There was an epidemic which killed 1,000 people daily in Moscow.⁶⁹ It lasted from August until December 1771, killing 55,000 people in Moscow and 120,000 people in total. During an uprising

⁶⁵ For a detailed account of the role of Britain in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774 see, Matthew Smith Anderson, “Great Britain and the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-74,” *The English Historical Review*, vol. 69, no. 270 (Jan., 1954), pp. 39-58, Matthew Smith Anderson, “Great Britain and the Russian Fleet, 1769-1770,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol.31, no.76 (Dec., 1952), pp. 148-163.

⁶⁶ Matthew Smith Anderson, *Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815* (London: MacMillan, 1958), pp. 129-131.

⁶⁷ For the general account of the Russian naval operations during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774 see, Fevzi Kurdoğlu, *1768-1774 Türk-Rus harbinde Akdeniz Harekâti ve Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Paşa* (İstanbul: Deniz Matbaası, 1942).

⁶⁸ The Ottomans sent a note to Field-Marshall Rumiantsev in 13 March 1774, complaining about the hostile activities of the Russian navy in the Mediterranean. During this period Russia and the Porte temporarily ended hostilities to find a common ground to end the war. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives of Prime Ministry of Turkey, hereafter *cited as*; BOA), *HAT*, Dosya No: 1360, Gömlek No: 53555.

⁶⁹ Michael Florinsky, *A History of Russia* vol.1 (New York: MacMillan, 1970), p.523, Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Rusya Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), p.283.

in Moscow in October, the Archbishop was murdered by an angry mob.⁷⁰ “Peace was indeed beginning to seem desirable.”⁷¹

Furthermore, Russia was facing a growing international criticism. In the case of Prussia, although it needed Russian support against Austria and financed the Russian war effort as a necessity of 1764 alliance, Frederick the Great did not want to see the Russians capturing Constantinople and wanted to preserve the Ottoman Empire as it had been.⁷² France was also alarmed because of the Ottoman weakness and Russian military victories. Although England remained indifferent, since there was no danger for India and it had established good trade relations with Russia, the trade in the Levant was very important for the French.⁷³ On 6 July 1771, fearing of the Russian advance for the expense of the Ottoman Empire in the Principalities, Austria concluded a defensive alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Frederick of Prussia, perceiving the possibility of a war between Austria and Russia, tried to lure both Empresses with the offer of the participation of Poland between the three.⁷⁴ Once the Ottoman-Russian war had started, after a short while, Prussia offered the participation, but it was rejected by Catherine the Great. This time, Austro-Ottoman rapprochement was a major factor in Russia’s acceptance of the project.⁷⁵ As a result, the first partition of Poland occurred on 2

⁷⁰ Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), p.47. According another account, “Russian troops operating in the Balkans during the 1768-1774 war with Turkey spread typhus in Russia... Rumours spread that doctors, secretly in alliance with the nobility, were spreading the disease instead of fighting it.” Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Europe*, pp. 4,6.

⁷¹ Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p.213.

⁷² Gladys Scott Thomson, *Catherine the Great and Expansion of Russia* (London: The English Universities Press, 1966), p. 140-141. Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1985), p.97-98. For a general account for Prussia in this period see; Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.183-283, George James Welbore Agar-Ellis Dover, *The Life of Frederic the Second, King of Prussia* 2 vols. (London, 1832).

⁷³ Thomson, *Catherine the Great*, p.139.

⁷⁴ Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar*, p.100.

⁷⁵ Marc Raeff, “On the Imperial Manner,” in Raeff (ed.), *Catherine the Great: A Profile*, pp. 187-188.

August 1772. Thus, Poland was sacrificed to stabilize Eastern European power politics and to prevent a major war between the Great Powers.⁷⁶ Commenting on the partition of Poland, English traveler Cox wrote;

“it is extremely worthy of remark, that one of the partitioning powers, Prussia was formerly in a state of vassalage to the republic; Russia once saw its capital and throne possessed by the Poles; and Austria, scarcely a century ago, was indebted to a sovereign of this country for the preservation of its metropolis, and almost for its very existence.”⁷⁷

Altough there were rumours of a possible armistice, the Ottoman Empire was anxious about the Russian intentions and orders were sent to Grand Vizier to remain prepared for the possibility of a fresh start of hostilities.⁷⁸ In 1772, after the armistice of Yergöğu (Giurgiu) on 30 May 1772, with the mediations of Prussia and Austria, belligerents met first in Focșani, on the borders of Wallachia and Moldavia, in 19 August and later in Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, 29 October. Both sides decided to cease hostilities until the spring of 1773.⁷⁹ However, because of Russia’s unbearable demands these negotiations did not result with a peace treaty.⁸⁰ Catherine the Great insisted on having an Aegean island as a military base in the Mediterranean, and she would continue to try until March 1774, to impose the Porte the right to free passage for Russia’s man-of-war through the straits.⁸¹ The main point of disagreement, however, was over the

⁷⁶ “Austria annexed 83,000 sq. km. with a population of 2,650,000; Prussia annexed 36,000 sq. km. with a population of 580,000; and Russia annexed 92,000 sq. km. with a population of 1,300,000...Poland thus lost about one third of its population of about 12 million.” Iwo Syprian Pogonowski, *Poland: An Illustrated History* (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 2003). For further details on the partition of Poland, see James Breck Perkins, “The Partition of Poland,” in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Oct., 1986), pp.76-92.

⁷⁷ Dover, vol.2, pp.252-253.

⁷⁸ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 276.

⁷⁹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 284. The armistice was signed by *Reisülküttab* Abdürrezzak Bahir Efendi and Obreskov. It was ratified by the Porte on 17 November 1772. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 285. For the text of the Russian draft for peace which was compiled of 27 articles see, Druzhinina, pp. 338-347.

⁸⁰ Beydilli, pp.100-101.

⁸¹ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p.xii.

independence of the Crimean Khanate.⁸² The Russian argument was that as long as the Crimean Khanate was not an independent state separate from the Porte, Russia would not feel safe regarding its southern borders, as the Tatar raids would continue to disturb the local population of that area.⁸³

As negotiations failed, military conflict started once again during 1773, without any decisive victory for either side. Although Russian officers were against the continuation of hostilities, Russian armies were saved from disaster thanks to the inability of the Ottoman Grand Viziers. Russians crossed Danube on 25 March 1773 and separately from the advance of the Russian army in the Balkans, Russian navy was continuing its operations and Sakız Island was also besieged on 23 June 1774.⁸⁴

Both belligerent parties were finally exhausted by the summer of 1774. There was a poor harvest in 1774 in Russia. There was also a peasant rebellion in the Volga basin of Russia, led by a Don Cossack named Yemelyan Pugachev, an imposter of the late Peter III.⁸⁵ Despite Russia's apparent strength on the

⁸² Catherine, fearing the possibility of war with Sweden after the coup of Gustavus III, sent her instructions to the Russian plenipotaries in Focşani to forsake the Crimean independence to agree with the Porte. However it was too late and the Ottomans already cut off all further negotiations. Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p.227. During the negotiations in Bucharest, when the Porte rejected to cede Kerch and Yenikale to the Russians, Obreskov was writing to Zegelin, Prussian Ambassador at Constantinople, to persuade the Ottomans on these terms. Although Zegelin tried to convince the *Reisülküttab*, Ottomans were afraid of a possible Russian attack on Constantinople, which would be based from Kerch and Yenikale with the ships built on anywhere on the river Don. Thus, they did not make any concessions regarding Yenikale and Kerch. S. M. Solovev, *Istoriia Rossii s Drevneishikh Vremen* vol. 29, part 1 (St. Petersburg, 1859-1871), pp. 1-2.

⁸³ Halim Giray Sultan, p.271.

⁸⁴ Ruznâme, pp. 41, 64.

⁸⁵ According to Thomson, there are four major pretenders, while Paul Avrich gives the total number of outbreaks between the years 1762-1772, which were triggered as a result of false manifestos or a pretender, as forty. Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels 1600-1800* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), p.186, Thomson p.157. In fact, even his followers knew that Pugachev was not deceased Tsar Peter III, but still, peasants needed a figure to express their protests of Catherine and her policies. "Certainly one of the causes... [the rebellion] was the strain that conscription and constant warfare in the south had begun to put on the populace at large."⁸⁵ Although this rebellion started during the winter of 1773 and expanded rapidly during the first months of 1774, the magnitude of it was realized in St. Petersburg months later and Catherine II sent General Bibikov to deal with this issue. Although Bibikov was very successful in suppressing

battlefield, a peace was preferred to continuing hostilities.⁸⁶ The Ottoman Empire was also in a difficult situation both in economic and military terms. Ottoman forces were in dissolution, most of the soldiers were exhausted from continuous fighting, and a considerable number of them deserted the army.⁸⁷ According Sofroni, who lived in a Bulgarian village during these years, some officers were entrusted with protecting the village from the army deserters and an Albanian Pasha was sent to cover a mountain pass to prevent further deserters.⁸⁸ Moreover, because of the significant military expenditures, Ottoman finances had collapsed.

Sultan Mustafa III had died in late 1773 and was succeeded by Sultan Abdulhamid I.⁸⁹ The inexperienced Sultan mistakenly attributed the peace offer of the Russians as their weakness and ordered the army to break the Russian defenses on the Danubian front. When this last assault was broken by the military brilliance of Suvorov, the Ottoman Empire had no choice left but to return to the negotiation table and agree to the terms demanded by Russia.

the rebellion, he died unexpectedly on May 1774, before he could capture Pugachev. Avrich, *Russian Rebels*, pp. 180-216.

⁸⁶ Itzkowitz and Mote, p. 37-38.

⁸⁷ For further details see, Virginia Aksan, "Mutiny and the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Army," *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, vol.22, no.1 (Spring 1998), pp. 116-125, Virginia Aksan, "Feeding the Ottoman Troops on the Danube, 1768-1774," *War & Society*, vol.13, no.1 (May, 1995), pp.1-14.

⁸⁸ Vraçalı Sofroni, *Osmancı'da Bir Papaz: Günahkar Sofroni'nin Çileli Hayat Hikayesi 1739-1813* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003), pp.15-16.

⁸⁹ For a detailed account of the character and policies of Abdulhamid I see, Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padışahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul: Tatav, 2001).

2.5 The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, its ratification and implications

The place where the treaty was signed (in today's Bulgaria, south of the Danube River) is a good indicator of how far the Russian forces advanced into Ottoman territories when the Ottomans had to ask for peace negotiations. Ahmed Resmi Efendi and *Reisülküttab*⁹⁰ İbrahim Mühib Efendi were representing the Porte, while Prince Rumiantsev was Catherine's delegate. The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, with its 28 clauses, was signed on 21 July 1774.⁹¹ The news of the peace treaty reached Istanbul on 30 July 1774.⁹²

This treaty was a turning point in Ottoman-Russian relations. It shook the Ottoman power in the region. It was also accepted as the beginning of the so-called "Eastern Question". On the signing of the Küçük Kaynarca treaty Catherine expressed that "I consider this day one of the most fortunate in my life, when the Empire has obtained the peace it so badly needed." A grandiose Roman-style triumphal arch greeted Field Marshall Rumiantsev outside Moscow.⁹³

It would not be mistaken to say that the most important article of the treaty was regarding the independence of the Crimea. Ottoman suzerainty over the

⁹⁰ *Reisülküttab* (or *Reis Efendi*) was responsible for the managing of the Porte's foreign relations. "As the Grand Vizir gradually assumed the greater part of the Sultan's responsibilities in the affairs of state, he in turn delegated to the *Reis* greater responsibilities in foreign affairs, which, owing to their growing complexities, demanded constant attention." Thomas Naff, "Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789–1807, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 83, no. 3 (Aug.-Sep., 1963), pp. 296. For further details on *Reisülküttab* see, Recep Ahışlı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Reisülküttâblik (XVIII. Yüzyıl)* (İstanbul: TATAV, 2001).

⁹¹ For the Turkish version of the treaty see, Nihat Erim, *Devletlerarası Hukuku ve Siyasi Tarih Metinleri* vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1953), pp. 121-137. For the Russian version of the treaty see, Druzhinina, pp. 349-360.

⁹² *Rûzname*, p. 69. There is a slight problem with the date of the treaty. Enverî, the official Ottoman chronicler of the period, gives the date 8 Cumâdelula 1188 which is 17 July 1774. [...mâh-1 cemâziye'l-evvelî'nin sekizinci ve temmuzun altinci [on yedinci] günü..."]. Sadullah Enverî, *Târih-i Enverî* vol.1, p.484. However, Mahmut Sabit, who was also present in the signing of the treaty, gives the date 12 Cumâdelula 1188. Sarıcaoğlu, p.201. It is apparent that though both sides agreed on the terms of the treaty on 17 July, to have the revenge of Prut, Russians delayed the signing of the treaty for four days. Hammer, p.392.

⁹³ Alexander, *Catherine the Great*, pp. 140-142.

Crimean Khanate was terminated and the security of the Black sea, the Caucasus, and the Balkans were seriously threatened. The Ottomans were concerned about the attempts of Catherine the Great to manipulate the Nogay tribes and the *mirzas* in the Khanate for the benefit of Russian interests and to further Russian influence in the Black Sea.⁹⁴ Another major setback for the Ottomans was to let the Russians have the right to free access to the straits and free trade in both Black Sea and the Mediterranean. In addition to these; Russia gained (a) the right to intervene in the Ottoman policies on behalf of the Principalities, (b) the right to open consulates in anywhere of the Ottoman Empire, (c) a foothold on the Black Sea, between the rivers Dnyepr and Bug, and (d) Kerch and Yenikale, allegedly, to protect the independence of the Crimean Khanate.

The details of the treaty, especially those regarding the rights of Russia over the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, caused many debates. This interpretation can be observed in the later accounts of the Küçük Kaynarca treaty, and one of the main comments on the issue was that this treaty was a result of the Ottoman folly.⁹⁵ The Russians also wanted to abuse the articles of the treaty with a political tactic, which aimed to increase their influence over the Christian subjects of the Sultan. However, as Roderic H. Davison clarified, this misunderstanding was a result of false translation and the Russian Empire did not gain extensive rights over the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in general, but only the protection of a single church, which was to be built in Galata, Constantinople. In addition to this, although the Khanate would become

⁹⁴ Halim Giray Sultan, p.279.

⁹⁵ William Miller, "Europe and the Ottoman Power before the Nineteenth Century", *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 16, No. 63 (July, 1901), p.457.

politically independent, the Ottoman Empire would have the spiritual allegiance of the Crimean Khanate and its Muslim population.⁹⁶

Before the negotiations, Ottoman delegates were given permission by the Sultan to offer at most 40,000 *keses*⁹⁷ to meet the Russian demands for war reparations. However, they were expected to make an arrangement of around 20.000 *keses*.⁹⁸ According to the treaty, the amount of war reparations was set on 4.500.000 rubles (7.500.000 *kuruş* or 15.000 *keses*).⁹⁹ This amount covered almost all the expenses of the Mediterranean expedition of Russia.¹⁰⁰ From the Ottoman point of view, it was almost equal to the half of the annual income of the Empire, which was recorded as 14.539.938.5 *kuruş* in 1762 and 14.742.715¹⁰¹ *kuruş* in 1785. This huge amount of payment was planned to be paid to Russia in three equal installments, of which the first was due on 1 January 1775.¹⁰² The Russians were aided once more by the English and an English banker George Abbot helped Russia to prevent losing almost twenty percent of this amount in transactions until they reached the banks in Amsterdam.¹⁰³

In spite of these favourable terms to Russia, Kliuchevsky harshly criticizes the war and its consequences. While both the Greek and Romanian independence from the Porte were about to be accomplished with the help of Russia, both were abandoned, since the former could not be supported any further and the latter

⁹⁶ Roderic H. Davison, “‘Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility’: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered,” *Slavic Review*, vol.35, no.3 (Sept., 1976), pp.463-483, Roderic H. Davison, “The ‘Dosografa’ Church in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* vol. 42, no. 1 (1979), pp. 46-52.

⁹⁷ 1 *kese* equals to 500 *kuruş* or 300 *rubles*.

⁹⁸ Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Hülasatü'l-İ'tibar* (İstanbul: Mühendisihan Matbaası, 1869), p.79.

⁹⁹ Florinsky, p.523, Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p.xi. For a simple comparison; an estimation of total Ottoman expenditure during this campaign was 26.682.884 *kuruş*. Sarıcaoğlu, p. 163.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander, *Catherine the Great*, p.140.

¹⁰¹ In his journal dated 8 September 1786, General Miranda had give an estimate amount of 4,000,000 English Pounds. Francisco de Miranda, *Venezuelali Genenal Miranda'nın Türkiye Anıları* (Ankara: Türkiye'deki Venezuela Bolivar Cumhuriyeti Büyükelçiliği Yayımları, 2004), p.101.

¹⁰² Sarıcaoğlu, pp.163-164.

¹⁰³ Itzkowitz and Mote, p.40.

would antagonize Austria. “The end result was a third, the liberation of Moslems from Moslems, of Tatars from Turks, which had not been contemplated when the war began and which absolutely no one needed, even those who were being liberated.”¹⁰⁴ Kliuchevsky further commented that the Crimea, which was once occupied by the armies of Empress Anna, “was not worth [sic] even a single war but had been fought over twice.”¹⁰⁵ This criticism however is highly motivated with sentiments of religious idealism, which became relatively irrelevant in Russia’s foreign policy. Furthermore it would be a gross oversight to ignore the significance of the independence of the Crimea which prepared the ground for the Russian annexation of the Khanate. Direct access to the Black Sea and to prevent the Tatar raids in the southern Russia was one of the main goals of the Russian Tsars and the independence of the Crimean Khanate was a major step forward for the realization of this policy.

2.5.1 Ratification of the Treaty (1774-1775)

Since the peace treaty was signed on the battlefield and under heavy military threats, the Ottomans did not want to ratify it and would have liked to moderate the clauses which were unfavorable to the Porte.¹⁰⁶ When the *Seyhüllislam* commented on the inevitability of the treaty he was deposed. During July 1774, an Ottoman force under the command of Canikli Ali Pasha, the Governor of Trabzon, was still in active duty in the Crimea. Considering this threat, Rumiantsev refused to pull back his forces from Wallachia.

¹⁰⁴ Kliuchevsky, p.72.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.73.

¹⁰⁶ Druzhinina, p.312.

Although the Crimeans agreed on a separate peace with Russia in 1772, one year later they asked for Ottoman support to relieve them off the Russian forces. In 1773, The Porte commissioned Canikli Ali Pasha, with 20,000 men at his command to sail from Sinop to Crimea.¹⁰⁷ Devlet Geray IV with some *mirzas* under his command had arrived in Taman where he gathered Nogay and Circassian tribes and landed in Aluṣta in the Crimea. Together they fought against the Russian forces that were already stationed in the Crimea. Although the joint Ottoman-Crimean forces had achieved some successes in the Crimea against the Russians, news of the peace treaty had arrived. Thus, Ali Pasha and the Khan had to retire to Kefe. Consequently, this expedition did not bring a fruitful result because of the lack of cooperation between the Sultan and the Khan.¹⁰⁸

The treaty arrived in St. Petersburg in August 1774 and Catherine immediately ratified it. In Constantinople, the French Ambassador St. Priest was trying to convince the Porte to delay the ratification. There was a major disappointment in Paris about the situation. The French expected that Russia would be forced into a very moderate treaty since it needed peace to suppress the Pugachev rebellion, which reached its climax during the summer of 1774.¹⁰⁹ After the treaty was signed in July, the Ottomans attempted to convince Frederick the Great through his Ambassador Zegelin, to express their wish to Catherine the

¹⁰⁷ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, vol. 2, part 2, p.102.

¹⁰⁸ Halim Giray Sultan, p.274, Nicolae Jorga, *Osmalı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol.5 (1774–1912) (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005) trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, p. 24–25.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp. 1-2. Although Pugachev could not capture major cities, he was terrorizing the urban areas with the guns and provisions he managed to gather from minor strongholds. Kazan was burnt to the ground by the rebels though it could not be captured. In Pushkin's words, Pugachev was fleeing but at the same time it was an invasion. Catherine was aware of the fact that this was a war between "haves" and "have-nots", namely nobles and peasants. Her regulation which favored the nobility and granted them absolute authority over their serfs was also a reason of this rebellion. After the death of General Bibikov, Bashkirs also joined the rebellion and during this period almost one third of the rebels were Bashkirs under the command of Salavat Yulay. In August, Suvorov was also commissioned to this task under command of Pyotr I. Panin who was coordinating the Russian forces. Relieved of the war against the Porte, Russian armies could finally concentrate on this matter and in November 1774 Pugachev was captured and executed by quartering. Avrich, pp. 216–245.

Great with regard to amending some clauses of the treaty. The Ottomans wanted to have religious suzerainty over the lost territories besides the Crimea, to reduce the amount of war reparations, the return of Kerch and Yenikale in exchange for Kılburun (Kinburn). However, these demands were rejected by Russia and Frederick was kindly requested to convince the Porte to comply with the terms of the treaty.¹¹⁰ England was still indifferent to the Russo-Ottoman relations. Since there was no threat perceived to its navy and maritime dominance, it was not significant how major a land power Russia had become. As a result, London did not “care whether some thousand acres of Tartary, more or less, belong to the Grand Signior, or the Czarina.”¹¹¹ Consequently, deprived of any further hopes of modifying its terms, the Ottoman Empire had to ratify the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in January 1775. After the treaty was ratified, prisoners of war, who were kept in Constantinople, were also sent to their countries. The total number of the Russian captives that were released on 13 March 1775 was 513.¹¹²

According to the 27th clause of the treaty, both empires sent emissaries to deliver the ratified copies of the treaty. Again, as a condition of this clause, both sides had to present gifts of which amounted 102,400 *kuruş* in the case of Ottoman’s gift to Catherine the Great.¹¹³ On behalf of the Ottomans, Abdülkerim Pasha¹¹⁴, a career bureaucrat, was commissioned with this task on 3 October 1774,¹¹⁵ while Catherine the Great sent Prince Repnin to represent her interests in Constantinople as her Ambassador extraordinary on 18 November 1774.¹¹⁶ Since the treaty has not been ratified by the Sultan until January 1775, Abdülkerim

¹¹⁰ Beydilli, pp. 101–102.

¹¹¹ Anderson, *England’s Discovery of Russia*, p. 132.

¹¹² *Rûzname*, p.77.

¹¹³ Itzkowitz and Mote, p.18, 21.

¹¹⁴ The report of his embassy is the first *sefaretname*, written after the rude awakening provoked by the defeat at the hands of the Russians. Ibid, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *Rûzname*, p.73.

¹¹⁶ Itzkowitz and Mote, p.33.

Pasha could have left Constantinople for Russia on 2 February 1775. On 13 July 1775, there was an exchange ceremony on the Dnyestr River, near Hotin.¹¹⁷ Abdülkerim Pasha could finally reach Russia on 18 October 1775 while Prince Repnin also arrived in Constantinople on 18 November 1775 and presented Catherine's letter to the Grand Vizier.¹¹⁸ During their return journey, on 30 June 1776, Abdülkerim Pasha and Prince Repnin affected a ceremonial exchange on the Dnyestr River.¹¹⁹ Abdülkerim Pasha returned to Constantinople on 17 August 1776 after almost one and a half year.¹²⁰ Both of them left behind a detailed description of their journeys and missions to Moscow and Constantinople.¹²¹

2.5.2 Austrian annexation of Bukovina (1775-1776)

Another major aspect of this war and the treaty is, as Jorga states, that it was not only the loss of Crimea and its surroundings but fighting against the Ottoman Empire and annexing its territories no longer needed proper justification, just as it was in the case of Poland. Later, von Kaunitz, the Austrian Foreign Minister, stated that although it was important for Austria that the Ottoman Empire survived, it did not seem very likely at the end of the 18th century.¹²²

According to Faroqhi, Austria offered to have the Ottoman Empire as a member of the European Society in 1774. As a custom of the 18th century

¹¹⁷ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 17, Gömlek No: 770.

¹¹⁸ BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sıra No: 430. Ahmet Cavid Bey, *Müntehabat-i Cavid Bey* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2004), p. 494.

¹¹⁹ Itzkowitz and Mote, pp.115-116, 197-198.

¹²⁰ Ibid, pp.116-117.

¹²¹ For the translation of The *Sefaretnâme* of Abdulkerim Pasha see, ibid, pp. 53–122, and for the translation of The Russian Embassy to Constantinople see, ibid, pp. 25–203.

¹²² Jorga, vol.5, p.21.

international relations, this would require compensation for the territory of the Ottoman Empire which was occupied by Russia. However, Russia declined this offer with the reservation that the Balkan Christians could not be left to the mercy of the Sultan.¹²³ Although Austria signed a defensive alliance with the Ottoman Empire in June 1771, it had deserted the Ottomans during the partition of Poland. Later, in spite of this initiation in 1774, Austria once again turned against the Porte and annexed Bukovina in September 1774 claiming that it was for improving connection between Transylvania and the recently annexed Galicia. When the Ottomans protested this *fait accompli*, Austria responded by threatening the Porte with 60,000 Habsburg troops stationed in Hungary.¹²⁴ Since the Ottomans had to conclude the peace with Russia in July, they could not resist the Austrian annexation of Bukovina, which was planned and prepared two years before the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty was signed. Russia and Prussia chose to remain silent about the annexation, while Austria sent an official note to the Porte in December 1774, declaring that the Austro-Ottoman border had reached its neutral status. A treaty was signed on 7 May 1775 in Palnmuk by Tahir Aga, who was accused of accepting bribes from the Austrians.¹²⁵ *Reisülküttab* İsmail Efendi, confessed that this concession had to be made to please Austria to have a better chance against Russian demands.¹²⁶ Finally, this treaty and the loss of territory was ratified by the Sultan on 17 May 1776.

¹²³ Faroqhi, pp.68-69.

¹²⁴ Itkowitz and Mote, p.42.

¹²⁵ Jorga, vol.5, pp. 22-24.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp. 4-5.

2.5.3 Long-term implications of the treaty

To compensate the huge economic burden on the Empire, which was a result of the long-lasting war against Russia and the peace treaty afterwards, The Ottoman Empire had to make regulations regarding its fiscal policy. This policy mainly aimed to satisfy the need for cash deposits. Thus, *Esham* (meaning shares) policy was introduced. In this system, a *mukataa* was sold to someone for a price five times more than its actual value. As a result, while the state had a great amount of cash income, the person who bought this *Esham* had a five year guaranteed annual income.¹²⁷ The territorial losses were also of serious nature for the Ottoman economy which depended mainly on the tax incomes. During the mid-1770s, the Ottoman treasury was in such a miserable condition, since there was no support from the local wealthy aristocrats; the Porte had to look for foreign lending. Although this was a common practice in Europe in this period, this was the first time for the Ottoman Empire. In 1775, a loan was offered from Morocco.¹²⁸

In accordance with the terms of the treaty, Russia desired to have consulates in cities such as Sinop and Symrna, which was interpreted by the Sultan as an effort to interfere with the affairs of Anatolia. In another case, the Russians had to agree the Ottoman demands regarding their wish to open a consulate in Mikenos,

¹²⁷ Baki Çakır, *Osmancı Mukataa Sistemi (XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıl)* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2003), pp. 61-63. Before Esham was introduced, there was *Malikane* system, which produced the wealthy families in Anatolia and the other parts of the Empire. However, this system also protected the central rule of the Empire, because Malikane system was working on a lifetime basis, which resulted with the loyalty of the notable families of the provinces to preserve their *Malikanes*. Although this was the case until the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, provincial ties to the center weakened significantly. Çakır, pp. 58-61, Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 48-49.

¹²⁸ Finkel, pp.387-388.

which was a Greek populated island. The Ottomans had referred to another island for the Russian ships to anchor.¹²⁹

The right of free-trade in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean had both commercial and political motivations. Although in 18th century, men-of-war were constructed in a different way from the commercial ships, the latter could be reverted into the former with some modifications. Russian delegates refused these kinds of plans for the future. Russian trade ships, however, always posed a military threat for the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ During 1775, some Russian merchant ships were not allowed free passage through the straits because the Ottomans regarded these as man-of-war. Russian Ambassador at Constantinople threatened the Porte with declaration of war; however this was prevented by the “reformist” wing of the Ottoman statesmen.¹³¹ In fact, Russia was also exhausted after fighting for years against Poland, Ottoman Empire, and lastly Pugachev. So it was also not in a position strong enough to renew hostilities.

The deficiencies of the Ottoman Empire, especially against Russia, became obvious with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. Russia consolidated its power from the beginning of the 18th century vis-à-vis the Porte. The course of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774 together with the treaty signed afterwards was a clear indication of this progress. After 1774, the Ottoman-Russian relations entered into a new phase during which the Porte remained defensive and struggled to preserve the status quo while Russia followed an aggressive policy to expand its territories and influence further at the expense of the former.

¹²⁹ Sarıcaoğlu, p.205

¹³⁰ Faroqhi, p. 67.

¹³¹ Jorga, vol.5, pp.27.

CHAPTER III

THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RIVALRY OVER THE CRIMEAN KHANATE: INDEPENDENCE AND ANNEXATION INTO RUSSIA

3.1. The Crimean Khanate in the Eastern European Politics

The Crimean Khanate was the last successor of the Golden Horde.¹ Although Russia conquered the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan in mid-16th century, the Crimean Khanate remained to be one of the major rivals of the Russian Empire until the 18th century. This is evident from the fact that until 1700, when the Istanbul Treaty was signed between Russia and the Porte, the

¹ For the early history of the Crimea and the Crimean Khanate see, Abdülgaffar Kirimî, *Umdatü'l-Ahbar* (1747), recently transcribed by Derya Erin, “Abdülgaffar Kirimî'nin Umdatü'l-Ahbar'ına (Umdat'üt-Tevarih) Göre Kirim Tarihi,” Master’s Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi (Ankara, 2003), Vasiliy D. Smirnov, *Krymskoe Khanstvo pod verkhovenstvom Otomanskoi Porty do nachala XVII veka* (St. Petersburg, 1887), Vasiliy D. Smirnov, *Krymskoe Khanstvo pod verkhovenstvom Otomanskoi Porty v XVIII stoletii* (Odessa, 1889), Halim Geray Sultan, *Gülbün-i Hânâñ Yahud Qurum Tarihi* (Aqmescit: Dolya, 2004), Anthony Grant, *An Historical Sketch of the Crimea* (London, 1855), W. Burckhardt Barker, *A Short Historical Account of the Crimea, From the Earliest Ages and During the Russian Occupation* (London, 1855).

Russian Empire continued to pay annual tribute to the Crimean Khanate.² Nevertheless as an inescapable consequence of the distance between St. Petersburg and Bahçesaray, the region where continuous conflicts had occurred remained isolated from the center of the Russian Empire.³ In the 18th century, the pivotal role of the Crimean Khanate gradually diminished as a consequence of both evolving international politics of the Eastern Europe and the internal reasons such as the weakening of the economy.⁴

The first attempt of the Russians to invade the Crimea was put into action by Prince Vasily Golitsyn in the late 17th century. He marched on the Crimea twice in 1687 and 1689, but failed in both campaigns.⁵ The Russian campaign of 1736 proved to be successful in penetrating the defenses of the Peninsula. Although this was a destructive episode, the Khanate was soon able to recover its former strength.

Although the nature of the Ottoman-Crimean relations is a problematic one, it is clear that the Crimean Khanate had never become a part of the Ottoman Empire. Rather, the Sultan only had the authority to confirm (*tasdik*) the Khan

² For the detailed account of the evolution of the relations between Russia, the Porte and the Crimean Khanate until 1700 see, Halil İnalcık, "Power Relationships Between Russia, The Crimea and the Ottoman Empire as Reflected in Titulature," *Turco-Tatar Past Soviet Present: Studies presented to Alexandre Bennigsen*, eds. Lemercier-Quelquejay, G. Veinstein, S. E. Wimbush (Paris: Peeters, 1986), pp. 175-211.

³ For a brief evaluation of the Crimean Khanate and its role as a regional power see, D. Kolodzeichik, "Krymskoe Khanstvo Kak Faktor Stabilizatsii na Geopoliticheskoi Karte Vostochnoi Evropy," *Ukrania i sosednie gosudarstva v XVII veke Materialy Mezhdunarodnoi Konferentsii* (St. Petersburg, 2004), pp. 83-89. Later, the Ottoman Sultan also had the authority to dismiss the Khans of the Crimea. This was later manipulated by the Russians to convince the Crimean Tatars to be separated from the Porte. Alan W. Fisher, "Şahin Girey, the Reformer Khan, and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (Wiesbaden: Osteropa-Institut München, 1967), p. 343.

⁴ Edward Lazzerini, "The Crimea Under Russian Rule 1783 to the Great Reforms," in Michael Rywkin (ed.), *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1988), pp.123-124.

⁵ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives of Prime Ministry of Turkey, hereafter cited as; BOA), *Name-i Hümayün Defteri*, no.5, pp.19-22, 25-28, 83-84.

who was chosen by a committee of nobles.⁶ There were four major noble families who can be regarded as the actual rulers of the khanate,⁷ and they used to elect a member of the Geray⁸ family to rule as the khan. Their struggles among each other to install a khan favorable for themselves continued until the annexation of the Khanate into Russia. This struggle is one of the central issues that should be taken into account to understand the annexation of the Crimea into Russia. Another aspect of the power politics in the Khanate was the Nogay tribes, the nomadic subjects of the Khan, living in the northern step areas and the Kuban region of the Khanate. Allegiance of these tribes to the Khan had a fragile nature and they frequently caused unrest by playing between the Porte and the Khanate. They were to be one of the key assets for the Russians to dissolve the Crimean Khanate during the last quarter of the 18th century.

3.2. The Crimea during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774 and the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca

Although there was not any apparent Russian preparation or activity to attack the Crimea until the autumn of 1769,⁹ later in December of the same year, a dispatch from the Crimean Khan to Constantinople reveals the concern for a possible Russian offensive during the spring of 1770. There was already an

⁶ For detailed information see Halil İnalçık, “Yeni Vesikalara Göre Kırım Hanlığının Osmanlı Tabiliğine Girmesi ve Ahidname Meselesi”, *Belleten*, vol. 8, no. 31 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1944), 185-229.

⁷ These four families were namely Şirin, Argın, Bargın, and Kıpçak. Especially Şirin family was the most prominent one among them. Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, *Kırım'dan Kalan Miras: Hansaray* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2005), p. 18.

⁸ For a brief description of the Geray family see, Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publication, 1978), pp. 17-20.

⁹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 288.

Ottoman garrison stationed in the Crimea during 1769;¹⁰ however The Khan was pointing out the Russian reinforcements in the border asking for more reinforcements.¹¹ The plans of a Russian invasion of the Crimea had come to surface in the third year of the war, since the invasion of the peninsula would give Russia a strong hand at the negotiation table. In 1770, Selim Geray Khan III, together with all the sultans¹² residing in Rumeli, joined the main the Ottoman army in Babadag. Thus, while Selim Geray Khan III and his army was pre-occupied assisting the Ottoman army in Wallachia, the Crimea was left defenseless and a Russian army under the command of Prince Vasiliy Dolgorukii commenced their attack during the spring of 1771. Initially, *Serasker* İbrahim Pasha was able to defend the isthmus of Orkapı. However during the autumn of the same year, after a heavy defeat, during which *Serasker* was captured, Russian armies managed to invade the peninsula. Vezir Abaza Mehmed Pasha fled to Sinop with the remaining of his soldiers and The Khan had to leave the Crimea for Constantinople to reside in his estate.¹³ In 1772, Sahip Geray became the new Khan and his brother, Şahin Geray, who became *kalgay*¹⁴ of his brother, was sent to St. Petersburg on a diplomatic mission to negotiate with the Russians. Consequently, in an occupied Crimea, the Russians dictated a separate agreement

¹⁰ The Khan sent a complaint to the Grand Vizier in May 1769, about the janissary corps which was sent to Crimea earlier since they harassed the local population and caused trouble in the Crimea. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 273.

¹¹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 272. Once again in 13 January 1770, *defterdar* Abdürrahim Ağa was sent to the Porte to ask for further reinforcements to be stationed in Kefe, Kırım, Özü, and Bender. BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sira No: 432. During 1771, 30,000 soldiers were gathered in the port cities of Sinop, Samsun and Trabzon. Osman Köse, “18. Yüzyılın İlkinci Yarısı Osmanlı-Rus Savaşlarında Liman Kenti Samsun,” *Geçmişten Geleceğe Samsun* vol.1 (2006), p.275.

¹² The Crimean dynastical princes.

¹³ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 8, Gömlek No: 262 and 262-A, Halim Geray Sultan, p.270. For a detailed account of the Crimean front of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-1774 see, Necati Efendi, *Tarih-i Kırım* (1776), transcribed by Erhan Afyoncu see, Erhan Afyoncu, “Necati Efendi: Târih-i Kırım (Rusya Sefâretnâmesi),” Master’s Thesis, Marmara University (İstanbul, 1990).

¹⁴ In the Crimean state structure, *kalgay* was the person who comes next after the Khan. Usually *Kalgay* is a brother of the ruling Khan. *Nureddin* was only second to the *Kalgay*.

to the Crimean Khanate regarding its independence from the Ottoman Empire, and signed the Karasubazar Treaty on 1 November 1772. In the second half of 1772, while the Crimea was already under the Russian military control, the Ottoman Empire and Russia tried to negotiate and come to an agreement to end hostilities. However, the Ottomans did not comply with the Russian demands regarding the Crimean independence and hostilities continued until the summer of 1774.¹⁵

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the most important clauses of the Küçük Kaynarca treaty was the independence of the Crimea. The Ottoman Sultan maintained a religious suzerainty over the Muslims of the Khanate; however a politically independent Crimea, deprived of “sultanic protection”¹⁶, would inevitably result with a Crimea under Russian political influence. Considering this outcome, the Ottomans were reluctant to obey the terms of the treaty, especially regarding the independence of the Khanate.

3.3. The Crimea during the first years of its independence (1774-1777)

The end of the Ottoman-Russian war did not bring peace to the Crimean Khanate. “[The] years between 1775 and 1779 can be perceived as an extended negotiating period between Russia and the Ottoman Empire to resolve the

¹⁵ Matthew Smith Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century 1713-1789* (New York: Longman, 1987), p. 276, Akdes Nihat Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), p.27.

¹⁶ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.40.

ultimately irresolvable.”¹⁷ For almost nine years, a continuous period of turmoil had begun for the local population of the Crimea, since “neither Russia nor the Porte believed in or intended to respect the complete independence of the Khanate of Crimea, and the ink was no sooner dry on the treaty than a struggle for influence began.”¹⁸

In the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca it was agreed that the Khan should be elected independently by the Crimean nobility, and Sahib Geray became the first Khan of the new state.¹⁹ However, the public opinion in the Crimea was against the separation from the Porte and they asked from the Sultan to reverse the situation. Although the Porte was also not content with the independence of the Crimea and regarded it as illegitimate,²⁰ however the Ottomans did not dare to risk a new war with Russia by violating the newly signed treaty.²¹ To justify their reluctance to comply with the terms of the Küçük Kaynarca, the Ottoman bureaucrats made the example of Peter the Great and his attitude after Prut. They made it clear that since the Crimean Tatars were not easy with their own independence they also would not respect the terms of the treaty and look for French assistance in this matter.²²

After a year from being elected legally as the Khan, Sahib Geray had to escape from the Crimea as a result of an uprising, which was led by Devlet Geray IV, who was pursuing policies contrary to the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty.²³

¹⁷ Virginia Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace, Ahmed Resmi Efendi 1700-1783* (Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1995), p.172.

¹⁸ Isabel de Madariaga, *Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 6.

¹⁹ BOA, *A.DVN.KRM*, 1/9.

²⁰ BOA, *A.DVN.KRM*, 1/19.

²¹ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* vol.1 (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1983), p.299.

²² Nicolae Jorga, *Osmancı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol.5 (1774–1912) (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005) trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, pp.26-27.

²³ Alan Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea 1772-1783* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.59-60. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol.1, p.313.

Although Catherine II recognized Devlet Geray as the legitimate Khan, she was waiting for the opportunity to act, which occurred a year later in November 1776. The Ottoman Empire was at war with Persia, while Russia had suppressed the Pugachev revolt and found the opportunity to focus its attention on the Crimean affairs.

After becoming the state secretary in 1775, Aleksandr Bezborodko drafted a report on the history of the Russo-Tatar relations and recommended an offensive policy towards the Crimea. He stated that “it is abundantly clear, how necessary it is to adopt the right measures against these our eternal enemies, so as to lead ourselves into security from them once and for all, and thereby to obtain for our fatherland a reliable peace forever.”²⁴

On 21 November 1776, army of General Aleksandr Prozorovskii, 14,500 men strong, had captured Orkapı without facing any serious resistance.²⁵ Although the pretext of this intervention was to protect the position of Devlet Geray, Catherine II decided to interfere with the elections of the Khan, wishing to place her own candidate, Şahin Geray, on the Crimean throne.²⁶ The Ottomans threatened Russia with sending forces to Taman, which was evacuated after Küçük Kaynarca, unless Russian forces did not evacuate the Crimea. As a response, Catherine asked from the Sultan to recognize the full independence of the Khanate.²⁷ At the end of 1776, the British Ambassador at the Porte, Sir Robert Ainslie, advised *Reisülküttab* Atıfzade Ömer and Gazi Hasan Pasha that they

²⁴ John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.237.

²⁵ Nikolay Dubrovin, *Prisoedinenie Kryma k Rossii* vol.1 (St.Petersburg, 1885), pp. 150-154.

²⁶ Ahmet Cevdet Pasa, vol.1, p.364.

²⁷ Jorga, vol.5, pp.27, 29.

should avoid disputes with Russia or else their situation would get only worse and Russia would make further demands.²⁸

3.4. The first period of Şahin Geray's rule (1777-1778)

Previously, while the war was going on with the Porte, in 1773, Catherine wanted to install Şahin Geray as the Khan of the Crimea. However, when she came to realize the unstable condition in the Khanate, she sent Şahin Geray to Poltava to keep him safe.²⁹ After the Küçük Kaynarca, Catherine II financed Şahin Geray with an amount of 150,000 ruble, to gain the support of the Nogays.³⁰ Şahin Geray's subsequent attempt to seize the throne also failed when he was defeated in 1775 by the forces of Devlet Geray.

Learning from these experiences, Catherine II did not want to take the last step until enough support had been achieved for Şahin Geray to be elected legitimately as the Khan. During late 1776, once again the Nogays were convinced and agreed to give their support. However, Devlet Geray was still in the Crimea expecting Ottoman support against Russia. In 1777, "three years after the peace treaty, matters had come to such a pass that a fresh outbreak of hostilities was both feared and expected."³¹ Suvorov was able to disperse Devlet Geray's forces near Karasubazar without any heavy fighting and afterwards in February 1777, he was sent to meet with Şahin Geray to bring him to

²⁸ Ali İhsan Bağış, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire: Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy to Istanbul 1776-1794* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1984), p.6.

²⁹ Fisher, "Şahin Girey..", p.345.

³⁰ Alexander, p.239. According to another source this amount this 100,000 roubles. Fisher, "Şahin Girey..", p.346.

³¹ Madariaga, *Armed Neutrality*, p.6.

Bahçesaray.³² In April 1777, Devlet Geray had to leave the Crimea for Constantinople, and the first reign of Şahin Geray had begun.³³ Şahin Geray sent his envoys, four Crimean Tatars and a Russian with them, to ask for the recognition of the Porte of his legitimacy but to no avail.³⁴ Upon hearing the news of Şahin's accession, Abdulhamid I commented that Şahin Geray was only a tool at the hands of the Russians whose ultimate aim was to annex the Crimea.³⁵ As it is apparent from the Sultan's words, while the Porte was already aware of the Russian intentions, it was powerless to prevent the coming of the inevitable.

At this point, understanding the personality of Şahin Geray is crucial to further comprehend the remaining years of the independent Crimean Khanate.³⁶ Şahin Geray was a young, mild-natured person who received his education in Venice. He was a reform-minded man who actually wanted to realize in the Crimea what Peter the Great had achieved for Russia. Şahin Geray met Catherine the Great for the first time during his mission to St. Petersburg in 1772. He instantly gained the favor and trust of the Tsarina with his manners and ideas. In her correspondence to Voltaire, she was praising Şahin Geray. Catherine II saw the potential of the young *kalgay*, and began to depend on him to rule the newly-independent khanate. However, things did not go as planned for Catherine and Şahin Geray.

³² Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory* (London: Constable, 1965), p.107.

³³ There are two master's theses written on this period in Turkey, Şüre Akay, "Şahin Giray Döneminde Kırım (1774–1783)," Master's Thesis, Selçuk University (Konya, 2005), Seher Karakuş Özvar, "Kırım Hanlığı'nın Çöküşü ve Kırım Topraklarının Rus İşgali Altına Girmesi," Master's Thesis, İnönü University (Malatya, 2001).

³⁴ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.365.

³⁵ Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmancı Tarihi* vol.4, part 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), p.446.

³⁶ For further information on Şahin Geray and his reign see, F.F. Lashkov, *Shagin Girei: Posledniy Krymskiy Khan* (Akmescit, 1991), V.A. Alekseev, "Shagin Girei, Posledniy Khan Krymskiy," *Nasha Starina* vol. 1, no. 5 (May, 1914), pp. 440-453.

Since Şahin believed that the only way to regain the important position of the Khanate was possible by modernization, after he became the Khan in 1777, he wanted to put his reform program into effect immediately. These reforms included building of a new army,³⁷ centralizing state authority by abolishing feudal system, and introducing certain tax regulations. In a way, Şahin Geray tried to adopt the ways of St. Petersburg to his Palace. Thus, he tried to initiate some new methods regarding casual habits, ideals, attitude and actions, and even regarding the administrative issues. These included eating meals on table, dressing like a Russian officer and trying to form a new guards division imitating the Russian army. Besides, he shifted the ownership of *vakif* from the *ulema* and left it at the hands of new administrative assembly. These reforms and regulations were destructive instead of constructive, and also they were mere imitations of the Russian model rather than authentic and suitable for the dynamics of the Khanate.³⁸

Şahin Geray's westernized and reformist ideas were not welcomed in the Muslim and Tatar tradition of the Crimean people and elite. What Şahin Geray could not calculate was the reaction of the nobles, the *ulema* and the ordinary people who were guided by them. While the nobility and *ulema* opposed these reforms to preserve their influence and power, common people were not ready for such radical changes in their way of living. In addition to these, Khan's attitudes

³⁷ Although Şahin Geray wanted to establish a regular army of 20,000 men strong, Prozorovskii had commented that it would not be sufficient anyway against such neighbours like the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Dubrovin, vol. 1, p. 637.

³⁸ Halim Geray Sultan, p.277, Theo Maarten Van Lint, "The Prophecy of Liberation: Margar Xōčenc' Erewanc'i and Catherine the Great's conquest of the Crimea (1783): A paragraph in the history of the Armenian Church in Russia," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, vol.53, no.3-4 (2000), p.281.

which are not conformable with the Islamic way of life caused great disturbance.³⁹

Consequently, disturbances started to arise within the Khanate.

The first revolts began in late 1777, as a result of the settlement of Christian Greeks into Russian controlled areas of the Crimea. Some of these were the Greeks who were afraid of Ottoman reprisals since they rebelled against the Porte during the Mediterranean expedition of Aleksei Orlov.⁴⁰ Although there was fear among the locals that these new colonists were to be used for political purposes, Potemkin and Catherine had in their mind domestic and economic reasons in the first place. Their goal was to flourish trade and profit from this flow of income. However Russia would not hesitate to use these colonists for political purposes as soon as the opportunity arrived.⁴¹

The local population of these areas sent petitions to the Russian commander, stating that these settlers attacked them.⁴² The disturbances spread and a popular uprising started against Şahin Geray. In the initial phase, Rumiantsev did not want to use Russian forces, and leave the matter to be solved by Şahin and his newly built army.⁴³ However Şahin Geray's army also joined the rebels.⁴⁴ Powerless to suppress the revolt, Şahin Geray abandoned his palace and asked the Russians for help to secure him in Yenikale. The Russian army, under the command of Prozorovskii once more invaded the peninsula, and subdued the rebellious population. In December 1777, Selim Geray was sent to the Crimea but he had to flee after he was refused to be recognized as the legitimate khan by the

³⁹ Lashkov, p.26.

⁴⁰ Marc Raeff, "On the Imperial Manner," in Marc Raeff (ed.), *Catherine the Great: A Profile* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), p.216.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.216.

⁴² Osman Köse, *1774 Küçük Kaynarca Andlaşması: Oluşumu-Tahlili-Tatbiki* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), p.254.

⁴³ Dubrovin, vol.1, pp. 791-792.

⁴⁴ Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, p.94.

Russians because of the apparent Ottoman support.⁴⁵ At the same time, Şahin Geray traveled the shores of the peninsula and with the help of Russian navy and his personal bodyguards, coercively collected declarations from the people of the Crimea stating that they desired him as their Khan.⁴⁶ The Russians manipulated popular support in this way to legitimize their invasion. They argued that this was a necessary move to protect the legitimate Khan who was popularly supported. As a result, Şahin Geray was once more re-instated as the Khan in February 1778.⁴⁷

3.5. The Canikli Ali Pasha and Gazi Hasan Pasha Mission (1778)

After this period, beginning from 1778, for all practical purposes the Crimea lost its independence. Russian armies were staying ready to intervene in the case of any possible uprising and Şahin Geray was almost reduced to a puppet of Russia and Catherine the Great.

In late 1777, the Ottoman Empire attempted to support the rebellious Crimean Tatars against Russia and Şahin Geray.⁴⁸ However, the Sultan's Black Sea fleet proved to be incapable of any kind of logistic or military help. It took so long for the admirals to prepare, that they could not even land on the Peninsula, and arrived there only to return to the port of Sinop because of the weather conditions.⁴⁹ The Ottomans also hesitated to intervene directly on the affairs of

⁴⁵ Jorga, vol.5, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁶ BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sira No: 5853.

⁴⁷ Halim Geray Sultan, p.278.

⁴⁸ BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sira No: 3977.

⁴⁹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 17, Gömlek No:743. Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Barnes&Noble Book, 1994), pp.48-49.

the Crimea, since they could not face a fresh start of hostilities against Russia.⁵⁰

Thus, the Russians repulsed the Ottoman fleet while the revolt was already suppressed and Şahin Geray was re-instated in February.⁵¹ After the first failed attempt of the Porte, Catherine sent a letter to Potemkin on the plan of actions in the Crimea against the Porte.⁵² Suvorov was entrusted with the command of the Crimean army briefly for this period. Abdürrezzak Pasha, tried to achieve the mediation of Prussia against Russia and informed Gaffron, Prussian Ambassador at Constantinople, of the anxiety of the Porte about the Russian backing of Şahin Geray. However his efforts resulted in vain.⁵³

The conservatives were not satisfied with the results and demanded another campaign in August, which proved to be as unsuccessful as the previous one.⁵⁴ Canikli Ali Pasha⁵⁵ and Gazi Hasan Pasha were ordered to make a major offensive to the Crimea in the summer of 1778. The Ottoman navy, 15,000⁵⁶ men strong, reached Kefe during August, after having anchored in Soğucak for a few days.⁵⁷ Suvorov was able to disperse this expedition, just like the first one during the early 1778. He erected redoubts around possible landing locations and installed batteries which endangered the position of the Ottoman navy.⁵⁸ Although the Ottomans regarded these activities contrary to the independence of the

⁵⁰ Jorga, vol. 5, p.30.

⁵¹ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 20, Gömlek no: 935.

⁵² Douglas Smith (ed. and trans.), *Love and Conquest: Personal Correspondence of Catherine the Great ad Prince Grigory Potemkin* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), p.97 (letter 221- dated 25 May 1778).

⁵³ . Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayımları, 1985), p.104.

⁵⁴ Aksan, *Ottoman Statesman*, pp.174-176, Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, pp.106, 107.

⁵⁵ For a detailed account of Canikli Ali Paşa see, Rıza Karagöz, *Canikli Ali Paşa* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003).

⁵⁶ According to Cevdet Paşa, this force was approximately 8,000 men strong. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol.1, p.368.

⁵⁷ Canay Şahin, "The Rise and Fall of an *Ayân* Family in Eighteenth Century Anatolia: The Caniklizâdes (1737-1808)," Ph.D Dissertation, Bilkent University (Ankara, 2003), p.53

⁵⁸ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 797-C.

Crimea, Russians did not respond to Ottoman accusations.⁵⁹ Suvorov legitimized these precautions with the excuse of protecting the integrity of the Crimea. During September, although the Ottoman navy appeared before the shores of Kefe with over 100 ships, Suvorov appointed patrols to guard the shores and did not let the Ottomans to go ashore even for fresh water.⁶⁰ Suvorov presented the quarantine regulations as an excuse, but still the plague that was seen in Constantinople during the same year spread to the Crimea.⁶¹

After these failed attempts of the Porte to remove Şahin Geray from power, he sent an envoy to Constantinople and requested that the Sultan recognize him as the legitimate Khan. Instead of recognizing Şahin, the Ottomans arrested his envoys. Şahin protested this attitude of the Porte, claiming that it was not appropriate to behave the emissary of an independent state in such a way.⁶² Actually, this was not a strategic move on behalf of either side. As a result of his attitude, Şahin Geray lost potential Ottoman support, while the Ottomans isolated themselves from the Crimea and left it to the hands of Russia.

⁵⁹ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 797-E.

⁶⁰ Canikli Ali Pasha lost confidence in Constantinople and he was accused of allying with Şahin Geray who was already at the hands of the Russians. Failure of Canikli Ali Pasha can be attributed partly to the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire. While Ali Pasha was desperately in need of men and provisions for the campaign, another prominent *âyân* family, Çapanoğlu, was trying to undermine Ali Pasha's reputation by depriving him of the necessary support and forcing him to retire to Sinop. Şahin, Canay Şahin, "The Caniklizâdes..", p.53-56. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.386.

⁶¹ Longworth, p.113.

⁶² Müstecib Ülküsal, *Kırım Türk-Tatarları: Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1980), pp. 111-112.

3.6. The exodus of the Christians (1778)

After Şahin Geray was re-installed as the Khan in February 1778, he did not change his internal policies and radical reform program at all. He was confident that Russia would back his khanate and his reforms in the Crimea with their military presence. During the period following the first rebellion, although Catherine II did not lose her hope in Şahin Geray; she was planning with Potemkin and Rumiantsev to evacuate the Christian population of the peninsula. One reason for the evacuation was the role of these minorities in slaughtering the local Tatar population when the Russian army had invaded the Crimea. They were afraid of possible retrIBUTions after the departure of the Russian army.⁶³ Catherine II, unaware of the Tatar opposition to the Khan, also thought that removing the Christian population would reduce the tension within the Crimea. Lastly, this was an attempt both to colonize the empty steps on the Northern shores of the Black Sea and to deprive the Crimea of its prosperous subjects. Prozorovskii, did not support this exodus for he believed that Russia should annex the peninsula immediately and he considered the Christian population a necessary component after the annexation.⁶⁴ Potemkin and Rumiantsev had something different in their minds. The Christians of the Crimea were the wealthy portion of the population. These people were also mostly craftsmen or merchants, and paid large amount of taxes. As a result, an exodus of the Christians would not only leave Şahin Geray with the Tatar element of his subjects, who were antagonistic towards his policies, but it would also be a major blow to the economy of the Khanate.⁶⁵ So, while Catherine II thought that she was supporting her protégé, Potemkin and

⁶³ Van Lint, p.282, Fisher, “Şahin Girey..”, p. 355.

⁶⁴ Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, pp. 101, Dubrovin, vol. 2, pp.97-98.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp.100-102.

Rumiantsev were trying to force the position of Şahin Geray, with the expectation that he would act more rationally and less radically to avoid popular opposition.

In her order to Potemkin dated 9 March 1778, Catherine II agreed with the plan of the exodus of the Christians from the Crimea.⁶⁶ Suvorov was once again appointed to the Crimea in April 1778 in place of Prozorovskii. The exodus was completed on 29 September and 31.386 people had been transported, leaving only 288 behind with their own consent.⁶⁷ These people were settled “to the districts between the rivers Berda and Kalmyus, around the Sea of Azof, and along the banks of the Don.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, this was a difficult situation not just for the Crimean population and the Khan but the deported Christians also experienced all sorts of hardships after being relocated to a *tabula rasa* without enough financial assistance while the winter was coming.⁶⁹

To compensate the exodus of this population Şahin Geray was well-paid by the Russians. However, after considering the negligent policies initiated by Catherine II, he decided to step down believing that Catherine was no longer on his side.⁷⁰ As a protest, he left Bahçesaray and resided in somewhere near Akmescit. Suvorov was reporting to Catherine II the uneasiness of the Khan. He even recommended that since Şahin Geray was no longer a use for Russia and it would be better to replace him with Gazi Geray.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Dubrovin, vol. 2, p.318-319.

⁶⁷ Ibid, vol. 2, p.710. There is a detailed table of the people who were forced to migrate see, ibid, vol.2, pp.711-714.

⁶⁸ W. Lyon Bleasance, *Suvorov* (London: Constable and Company, Limited, 1920), p.71. Of this total number, 12.598 were Armenians from Kefe, Karasubazar and Bahçesaray, who were resettled in Nor-Nakhichevan near Rostov. Van Lint, p.279.

⁶⁹ Bleasance, pp.71-72.

⁷⁰ Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, pp.104-105.

⁷¹ Longworth, p.112.

3.7. Aynalıkavak Convention (1779)

As a result of the naval expeditions undertook during 1778, a declaration of war was imminent on both sides. Still in January 1779, there was tension between the Ottoman navy and the Russians. Abdulhamid I had ordered the necessary provisions to be sent immediately to Crimea while the Ottomans were still arguing that the Russian activity in the Crimea was not conformable with the peace treaty of 1774.⁷²

Although, according to the treaty, Russian merchant ships had the right to pass through the straits, Ottoman sailors were highly disturbed by the Russian presence in the straits and the Black Sea. As a reaction to this situation, during early 1779, two sailors had tried but failed to assassinate the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople. At the same time, intervention of Russia to the internal affairs of Wallachia and Moldavia increased the tension between the two empires. When the Porte perceived that a new breakout of hostilities was not a distant possibility, all the Russian ships, which were still anchored at the ports of the Ottoman Empire, were detained as a precaution.⁷³ Although this was a *casus belli*, Russia also did not have the necessary strength and energy to fight another war.

During this period, international politics was also in favour of Russia. England and France were engaged in a war against each other over the colonies and all Louis XVI wanted was to prevent an outbreak of hostilities in the continent which would directly or indirectly include France. Vergennes (French Foreign Minister 1774-1787) sent instructions to his Ambassador St. Priest at Constantinople to persuade the Turks to accept the independence of the Crimea

⁷² BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 797-D and 817.

⁷³ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol.1, p.387.

for he knew that a new war against Russia would be nothing but disastrous for the Porte.⁷⁴ Frederick the Great had chosen to renew his alliance with Russia in 1777. Since Maximilian Joseph died on 30 December 1777, Prussia needed Russian support against Austria in the forthcoming war of Bavarian Succession.⁷⁵

In 1779, the reformists were once again in power in the Ottoman Empire. France became the benefactor of this conflict and tried to gain the support of Russia against England by mediating between the two empires to prevent a possible war, which the Ottomans were also reluctant to fight.⁷⁶ Thus, to find a common ground about the Crimea without resorting to war the two empires signed the Convention of Aynalıkavak on 10 March 1779.⁷⁷ This convention was ratified by the Porte on 5 July 1779 and letters of confirmations were exchanged through their envoys.⁷⁸ According to the convention, the Ottoman Empire was going to recognize Şahin Geray as the legitimate Khan for the rest of his life, and in return, Russia would evacuate its army from the Crimean peninsula and Kuban.⁷⁹

After the signing of the convention, Suvorov left the peninsula leaving behind a small force of 6,000 men in Yenikale and Kerç.⁸⁰ On the other hand, while Russia had the right to send its consul to the Crimea, the Ottomans were deprived of this right. Russia had gained the right to trade with its own ships in

⁷⁴ Bağış, p.9.

⁷⁵ As a result of this policy Russia would be the mediator and protector of the treaty of Teschen which was signed on 13 May 1779, shortly after the Aynalıkavak convention. Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix, 2003), pp. 378-380, Beydilli, p.105.

⁷⁶ Köse, p.283.

⁷⁷ Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, p.108.

⁷⁸ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 13, Gömlek No: 450.

⁷⁹ Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi, *Mehasinü'l-Âsâr ve Hakâikü'l-Ahbâr* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), p.11. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol.1, pp. 394-395. For the Turkish version of the Aynalıkavak Convention see, Nihat Erim, *Devletlerarası Hukuku ve Siyasi Tarih Metinleri* vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1953), p.151. For the Russian version of the Aynalıkavak Convention see, Elena Ioasafovna Druzhinina, *Kiuchuk Kainardzhiiskii Mir 1774 goda: Ego podgotovka i zakluchenie* (Moscow: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955), pp.361-365.

⁸⁰ Aleksandr Fomich Petrushevskii, *Generalissimus Knyaz Suvorov* (St. Petersburg: Russkaia Simfoniiia, 2005), p.73.

the Mediterranean under the same regulations with other European powers, with the condition that Ottoman subjects (mostly Greeks from the Aegean islands) were not to be employed in these ships. The Crimea remained under the spiritual leadership of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, Özi Kırı was left to the Ottoman Empire, which strengthened its relative position against Russia by fortifying these areas.⁸¹ The Ottoman Empire was relieved of the possibility of a new war against Russia, for which preparations were being made since 1777, and Russia had given up its excessive rights over the Principalities.⁸² Although Russia had complied with this territorial concession, it was clear that this convention was a sign of increasing Russian political control over the Crimea.

Şahin Geray did not recognize the article which seeded Özi Kırı to the Porte. Later he even claimed rights over the lands to the Danube, comprising Bessarabia, Wallachia, and Moldavia, claiming that these were the traditional territories of the Crimean Khanate. Even the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, Stakhiev, reported to Catherine II that the Khan must be persuaded to back down on this issue.⁸³ In response, the Ottomans reinforced Özi Kırı and rejected Şahin Geray's demand after accusing him of cooperating with the infidels and causing trouble on the Muslims.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Jorga, vol.5, p.33.

⁸² Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.395.

⁸³ Fisher, "Şahin Girey..", p.357.

⁸⁴ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 10, Gömlek No: 346-B.

3.8. The last years of independence in the Crimea (1781-1782)

After his position was secured politically, Şahin Geray claimed sovereignty over the lands of the Kuban and the North Caucasus in addition to the Crimean peninsula itself. The Porte did not welcome this kind of attitude. As a result, both states gradually isolated from each other. Although he was recognized as legitimate khan by both Russia and the Ottomans, there was a significant opposition to his rule inside the Crimea and that is why he was anxious about the departure of the Russian army. He felt considerably insecure against his own subjects without the military support of the Russian Empire. Şahin Geray continued his efforts to build a stronger Crimean Khanate and once again tried to initiate a series of reforms. He bypassed the *nureddin* and the *kalgay* and attempted to build a new army, approximately 6,000 men strong, with the help of two adventurers, Robinson and Walpergen. These efforts were a heavy burden on the state budget and he was heavily indebted to Russia.⁸⁵

As a combination of these reasons, in the middle of 1781, a new uprising began in the Kuban region when a group of Nogays attacked the Don Cossacks and killed a great number of them. Şahin Geray tried to reconcile the Nogays; however, his attempts to calm the uprising failed. Ironically, the Nogays were the first to accept him as their Khan and their attitude actually proved to Şahin and Russia that any policy built on the loyalty of the Nogays would be a fragile one. When he understood that there was no other choice, he asked for the Russians to

⁸⁵ Jorga, vol.5, p36.

help to suppress the revolt. Although the Russians answered his plea for help, another uprising occurred later in 1781.⁸⁶

In the Ottoman Empire, once again, the hawks were in control of the administration. They tried to use this uprising to divert the attention of the people of Constantinople who were having problems with the Armenians. As a result, Bahadır Geray, who was then living among the Circassians, was sent to the Crimea with his brother to claim their own legitimacy. Bahadir Geray was elected the khan while his brother Arslan Geray became his *kalgay*.⁸⁷ Şahin Geray had to flee to Kerch, which was under Russian control.⁸⁸ He had no supporters within the Khanate and once again his newly-built army joined the enemy and left Şahin utterly defenseless.⁸⁹

When the Ottomans faced Russian protest for their efforts on behalf of Bahadır Geray, they claimed that this was an internal issue of the Khanate and the Porte had nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, Catherine perceived the situation as a personal insult and decided to re-install Şahin Geray as Khan by taking the risk of war against the Porte.⁹⁰ She still supported Şahin Geray and could not see how Şahin lost the particular support he had in the first part of his reign both from the Crimea and Russia. Catherine wrote to Potemkin to protect the Khan as they promised to him earlier and entrusted him to solve this conflict.⁹¹ In his response to Catherine, Potemkin was defending the idea that the Ottomans were concealing the truth that they were provoking the Crimean Tatars on the one hand and also sending one of their high-ranking pashas to Taman. Although Potemkin heard

⁸⁶ Fisher, “Şahin Girey..”, p.360.

⁸⁷ Lashkov, p.30. Bahadir Geray could not be ratified by the Porte as the legitimate khan since Şahin Geray took some of the twelve *mirzas* with him when he fled to the Russian fortress. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* vol. 4, part II (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), p.35.

⁸⁸ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol.1, pp.466-467.

⁸⁹ Dubrovin, vol. 4, pp. 495-496.

⁹⁰ Jorga, vol. 5, p.37.

⁹¹ Smith, p.120. (letter 256-3 June 1782).

from Yakov Ivanovich Bulgakov, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, the complaints of the Porte, he was claiming that the main inconvenience of the Ottomans was the allegiance of Şahin Geray to Catherine. Thus, he was also in favour of military operations to protect the Khan, who was tried to be killed before. Besides, Potemkin argued that to secure the Khan, Russian armies should stay in the Crimea as long as it needed.⁹²

As the revolt spread through Kuban throughout the spring and summer of 1782, Russian troops once more intervened to restore Şahin Geray.⁹³ In September 1782, Potemkin ordered General de Balmain to enter the Crimea and the Russian forces defeated the rebels, killing 400 people before entering Bahçesaray to restore the Khan.⁹⁴ Bahadır Geray and Arslan Geray were captured.⁹⁵ Russians were aware of the Ottoman efforts to reinforce their fortifications. Although the declaration of war by the Ottomans was not expected, Catherine was still cautious.⁹⁶ After the final invasion of the Russian forces during late 1782, the Ottomans were already suspecting a total annexation of the Crimea.⁹⁷ Fearing the possibility that this conflict might lead to a war with Russia, the Ottomans started to take precautions. The garrisons of Bender and İsmail were reinforced. Certain strongholds in Hotin, Moldavia and Wallachia were repaired

⁹² Smith, p.121 (letter 257-3 August 1782).

⁹³ Madariaga, *Armed Neutrality*, p.428, Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, pp. 128-130.

⁹⁴ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, p.25, Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Potemkin: Catherine the Great's Imperial Partner* [Previously published as *Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin*] (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), p.247, Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p.387.

⁹⁵ Later in March 1783 Bahadir Geray, his son, and Arslan Geray were sent to Kherson and were being kept under Russian custody. After more than a year had passed in Russian captivity, they sent a petition to Constantinople to negotiate with Russia for their release. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 10, Gömlek No: 346-A, Dosya No: 26, Gömlek No: 1254-C, Dosya No: 12, Gömlek No: 449-B.

⁹⁶ Smith, p.122 (Letter 258-30 September 1782).

⁹⁷ "Faraza asakir-i mahzuleleri Kırım'ı ba'de'z-zabt Şahin Giray'ı dahi izale ve Kırım'ı bi'l-külliyye tasarruf eyledikleri takdirde Özi kal'ası ve Bucak taraflarına karadan ve sevahil-i Bahr-i siyah'a deryadan yürütüp sū-be-sū fesadlarını ika etmeleri ihtimalden baid degildir." Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, pp.22-23. The Porte challenged the Russian arguments based on the Aynalıkavak Convention by offering an alternative candidate to Şahin Geray or deposing him on the bases that he was incapable of ruling which is as bad as being physically dead. Ibid, pp. 22-23.

and strengthened. Besides, the fortifications on the Black Sea shores were reinforced together with some new ones built to protect Constantinople from a possible naval attack.⁹⁸

3.9. The annexation of the Crimean Khanate into Russia (1783)

The idea of annexing the Crimea into Russia was not a new idea in 1783. It was first mentioned by an early pan-Slavist, Juraj Križanić, who argued that as long as the “infidel” Khanate existed, Russia and its people would not be free of its threat. When Catherine came to power, her foreign policy advisor, Mikhail Vorontsov, prepared a detailed report on what to do with the Crimea. He suggested building a strong line of defense on the southern borders and then proceeding to the annexation of the Khanate.⁹⁹ Although there were other people, like Potemkin, who also supported the annexation, Nikita Panin, on the other hand, had tried to avoid a possible conflict with Prussia and Austria due to the expansionist southern policies of Russia.

On 15 March 1770, a council was gathered to decide Russia’s policy regarding the fate of the Khanate. It was resolved that the Crimea should be separated from the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian forces should garrison certain strongholds in the peninsula to protect the status quo after the

⁹⁸ Jorga, vol.5, p.38, Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul: Tatav, 2001), p.175.

⁹⁹ Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, p.26.

independence.¹⁰⁰ This plan had been achieved with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774. Following the independence of the Khanate, until its final annexation into Russia, Catherine entrusted Şahin Geray with controlling and managing the affairs in the Crimea, while the Russian armies manned certain strategically important places such as Kerch and Yenikale. However, they did not hesitate to interfere with the internal affairs of the Crimea and the elections of the khan with the pretext of protecting the independence of the Khanate.

The policies of Catherine II were also debated, whether she really wanted the annexation in the first place or ordered it as a last policy choice. The most convenient argument about this policy would be that Russia tried to create a new Crimea which was dependent on Russia and separated from the Porte. The ways and means of creating such a Crimea was one of the major foreign policy questions of Russia during the second half of the 1770s and the initial years of 1780s.¹⁰¹ Consequently, it can be argued that the independence of the Crimea in 1774 was only a stepping stone for the ultimate control of the island which could only be achieved by annexing the Khanate into Russia.

During the eight-year period after the independence of the Khanate until 1782, Russia had to spend more than 7,000,000 rubles to protect the status quo in the island.¹⁰² When it came to the end 1782, Şahin Geray's incapability to govern the Khanate became obvious, and Catherine finally lost her faith in him. In addition, Panin, once "the most skilled, the most intelligent, the most diligent man

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.38. "In 1770 Catherine had argued that the [Crimean] Tatars' "inborn intransigence" would doom any annexation of the Crimea. Andreas Schönle, "Garden of the Empire: Catherine's Appropriation of the Crimea," *Slavic Review*, vol.60, no.1 (Spring, 2001), p.2.

¹⁰¹ There was no united opinion in Russia about the fate of the Crimea. Panin and his Northern alliance was still in effect until late 1770s and he had a major influence over Catherine the Great. On the other hand, Prozorovskii stated his opinion in favour of the annexation in 1778. Bezborodko was another defender of the idea of annexation even in 1777. Fisher, "Şahin Girey...", p.354.

¹⁰² Smith, p.117.

at [Catherine's] court”¹⁰³, was no longer the foreign minister, and Potemkin and Bezborodko, especially the former, were the main foreign policy decision-makers and had great influence over Catherine the Great.

The close circle of Catherine, especially Potemkin, was not supporting the independence of the Khanate and supported the idea of the complete annexation of the Crimea to the Russian Empire.¹⁰⁴ In late 1782, Potemkin advised Catherine II that the time had come for Russia to annex the Khanate completely into the Empire. He argued that the sooner the job was done the easier and less costly it would be. To implement any further plans of expansion towards Kuban, Bug or further south at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, Potemkin argued that it was imperative to annex the Crimea in the first place. Kuban was already protected with the help of Don Cossacks. Since, Russia was to become direct neighbour to the Porte after the annexation of the Crimea, there was not going to be any need to maintain the interior fortifications of the Empire. Lastly, Black Sea was to be come open to Russia like never before.¹⁰⁵

In late December 1782, Catherine secretly ordered Prince Potemkin to annex a certain part of the Crimea.¹⁰⁶ However, this was just the beginning of the final annexation. Disturbances continued throughout the first half of the 1783 both in the Crimean peninsula and Kuban. Some of the Crimean Tatars who fled to Constantinople reported the invasion of the Crimea by the Russian forces and that

¹⁰³ Raeff, “On the Imperial Manner”, p.182.

¹⁰⁴ Lashkov, p.30.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, pp.123-124. (letter 259-before 14 December 1782).

¹⁰⁶ George Soloveytschik, *Potemkin: A Picture of Catherine's Russia* (London: Percival Marshall, 1949), p.121.

Şahin Geray remained passive.¹⁰⁷ Russia had more than 50,000 soldiers in the Crimea during this period and more reinforcements were on their way.¹⁰⁸

After being re-instated in late 1782, Şahin Geray sent an emissary to Taman. However, Ferah Ali Pasha's *kethüda* had him killed and gave an excuse to the Russians to intervene.¹⁰⁹ The Ottomans protested that a single event could not be a pretext for a major intervention.¹¹⁰

At this point, it was Potemkin's task to convince Şahin Geray to step down without any further ado. Thus, he lured the Crimean khan by promising him a new khanate on the Persian/Caucasian lands.¹¹¹ During the spring of 1783 Potemkin spent his efforts on certain military arrangements and measures for a possible reaction of the Ottoman Empire after the declaration of the annexation.¹¹² He advised Catherine II to send the Baltic navy once again to threaten the Porte in the Mediterranean just like she did in 1770. However this proposal was not put into effect.¹¹³

In an intelligence report to the Porte, in March 1783, it was stated that Şahin Geray had virtually no authority over the affairs of the state and, in fact, the Russian General de Balmain was in control. There were plans of settling Russian families from other parts of the Empire into the Crimea.¹¹⁴ During this period, plague spread among the Russian soldiers. Russia stationed 120 battalions from the borders of the Crimea to Hotin. The purpose of this was perceived by the

¹⁰⁷ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 796.

¹⁰⁸ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 10, Gömlek No: 346. 12/440-C.

¹⁰⁹ Halim Geray Sultan, p.279. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp.502-503.

¹¹⁰ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, p.29.

¹¹¹ Smith, p.124.

¹¹² Ibid, p.126-129 (letter 261-March-April 1783).

¹¹³ Ibid, p.131.

¹¹⁴ For a detailed account of the Russian colonization of the Crimea see, Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of foreigners in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), James A. Duran, "Catherine II, Potemkin, and Colonization Policy in Southern Russia," *Russian Review*, vol. 28, no.1 (Jan., 1969) pp.23-36.

Ottomans as to install Şahin Geray to Bucak after the affairs of the Crimea could be put into order.¹¹⁵

Finally, on 19 April 1783, Catherine II signed the manifesto of the annexation of the Crimea, the Kuban, and the Taman into her domains, though it was not made public immediately.¹¹⁶ In May 1783, Potemkin sent a secret order to Veselitsky, the resident of Russia in the Crimea, to persuade the Khan and to prevent any entanglement that would delay the annexation. Simultaneously, a small Russian navy which was built in Kherson blockaded the Akyar port to coerce Şahin Geray.¹¹⁷ However, Potemkin's plans were further delayed when Şahin Geray was not convinced with the Russian offer and decided to wait a reaction either from the Porte or the European powers. Instead of giving up, Şahin Geray demanded economic assistance from Catherine II to improve the situation in the Crimea.¹¹⁸ In June, reports of the Ottoman fortification of Ochakov have reached the Russians and Rumiantsev reminded Catherine about the possibility of war against the Porte.¹¹⁹ Simultaneously, Şahin Geray finally left the Crimea. As a reward, he was bestowed with the order of St. Andrew and various gifts were sent to the Crimea to gain the loyalty of the local *mirzas*. The reason behind Potemkin's patience was to present the annexation like it was done with the consent of the people, which was not possible as long as Şahin Geray remained khan in the Crimea.

The annexation of the Crimea into Russia triggered the migration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire in large numbers. After 1774, until the

¹¹⁵ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 12, Gömlek No: 440-B and 440-C, Montefiore, p.252.

¹¹⁶ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, pp. 25-29, Ahmet Câvid Bey, *Müntehabat-i Câvid Bey* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınlari, 2004), pp. 519-522. For the text of the annexation manifesto see, D. Arapov, *Imperatorskaia Rossiiia i Musulmanskii Mir* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 23-25.

¹¹⁷ Smith, p.132 (letter 265-11 May 1783).

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.133 (letter 266-16 May 1783).

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.135-137 (letter 269-1 June 1783 and letter 270-5 June 1783).

annexation, there were some instances of migration, however usually the numbers of the immigrants were minor and they were mostly from the nobility.¹²⁰ There is report of a major migration, 1,000 families, during late 1782 from Kuban to Bucak.¹²¹ Approximately 10,000 families are suspected to have left their homeland for the Ottoman Empire during this period through Kılburun to Özi.¹²² Ahmet Cevdet Paşa points out the difficulties of migration from the Crimea because of the lack of proper transportation.¹²³ In addition to these, the Sultan sent orders to Anatolia regarding the approaching immigrants to the Black Sea ports and wanted them to be prevented from coming to Constantinople and instead to be looked after properly where they had arrived.¹²⁴

In her correspondence to Potemkin in June, Catherine ordered him to complete the annexation as soon as possible. However, she was also aware of the spreading plague in the Crimea and wanted Potemkin to take necessary precautions to prevent it.¹²⁵ The Tsaritsa was anxious about the reaction of the local population and the preparations of the Ottoman Empire for a possible outbreak of hostilities since she had learnt that the news of the annexation had reached Constantinople.¹²⁶

In late June, a strategy to attack Sinop was being formulated in St. Petersburg in case of a declaration of war by the Ottomans. However, according

¹²⁰ BOA, *Cevdet-Maliye*, Dosya No: 461, Gömlek No: 18746, BOA, *Cevdet-Eyâlât-ı Mümtâze*, Dosya No: 19, Gömlek No: 929, BOA, *Cevdet-Eyalat-ı Mümtaze*, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 866, BOA, *Cevdet-Maliye*, Sira No: 23465. There is a report of 169 *mirzas* who were settled around Edirne in 1777. BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sira No: 4017.

¹²¹ BOA, *Cevdet-Maliye*, Sira No: 30611.

¹²² After the annexation, thirty thousand Crimean Tatars who wanted to migrate towards the Ottoman Empire were claimed to be massacred with the orders of Potemkin. Halim Giray Sultan, p.280. This is rather confusing since there is no mention of such a huge massacre in the other main sources.

¹²³ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.503. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No:10, Gömlek No: 331 and 331-A.

¹²⁴ BOA, *Cevdet-Dahiliye*, Sira No: 11134.

¹²⁵ Smith, p.138 (letter 271-9 June 1783).

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.140 (letter 273-13 June 1783).

to Catherine II, the Ottomans were prevented by their allies from declaring war on Russia.¹²⁷ In July, Potemkin reassured Catherine II that the Porte was fearful of a Russian offensive and all of their garrisons were in stationed in defensive positions. The Crimean Tatar *mirzas* already swore allegiance to Catherine and the process of annexation was almost complete.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the tension did not drop and Russia was still expecting a declaration of war by the Ottomans during October 1783.¹²⁹

In July, it was reported from Özi that Russia heavily reinforced Kherson and Kılburun. He also mentioned the presence of Potemkin and Şahin Geray in Kherson and added that the Russian soldiers were prepared to fight to protect Şahin Geray while Russia assigned one of the major men-of-war to the Khan.¹³⁰

In this period, a certain Tatar *mirza*, Yakup Ağa, deserves special attention. He collaborated with the Russian army, when they first invaded the Crimea in 1771, and helped them convince the Tatar *mirzas* about the Russian proposal regarding their independence. Later, he continued to provide valuable information to the Russian forces in the Crimea. In 1782, he reported to Potemkin that a part of the population was so much exhausted because of the endless conflicts and hostilities that they would not oppose a Russian annexation. He also mentioned the discussions among the other major noble family leaders about the prosperous life of the other Muslim inhabitants of the Russian Empire.¹³¹ After the Russian rule was established in the Crimea, he was converted to Christianity and changed his name to Jan Rudzevich, becoming an important local official of

¹²⁷ Ibid, p.141 (letter 274-29 June 1783).

¹²⁸ Ibid, p.142 (letter 275-10 July 1783).

¹²⁹ Smith, p.152 (letter 288-16 October 1783).

¹³⁰ BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sira No: 8992.

¹³¹ Fisher, *Crimean Tatars*, p.55, 68.

the Russian Empire.¹³² Although no other *mirza* was committed to the new patrons as Yakup Ağa, some of them were willing to cooperate with Russia to preserve their status.¹³³

3.10. The Nogays and Kuban after the annexation of Crimea (1783)

In May of 1783, Pavel Potemkin and Suvorov were sent to Kuban and Taman to persuade the Nogays to accept Russian suzerainty.¹³⁴ Suvorov organized a major festival for the Nogay *mirzas* and declared that Şahin Geray gave up all his rights over the Crimean Khanate and the Crimea has been annexed into the Russia Empire. Suvorov invited the Nogays to be the subjects of the Tsaritsa while at the same time he ordered his forces to be stationed in the Nogay settlements for the next step of action.¹³⁵

After the Nogay *mirzas* accepted Suvorov's proposal, the plan to resettle the Nogays in the steps of the Caspian region, was put into action. While Suvorov was acting on the orders of Potemkin to lead the Nogays to the north, a rumour has spread among the people that Şahin Geray was in Taman.¹³⁶ Some of the Nogays escaped and wanted to join Şahin Geray. Meanwhile, Ferah Ali Pasha

¹³² Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, p.76.

¹³³ For a detailed account of the integration of the Crimea into the Russian Empire see, Kelly Ann O'Neill, "Between subversion and submission: The integration of the Crimean khanate into the Russian empire, 1783-1853," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, (Massachusetts, 2006). For an account of religious policies of Catherine II see, Alan W. Fisher, "Enlightened Despotism and Islam Under Catherine II," *Slavic Review*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Dec., 1968), pp.542-553, Gregory L. Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire: A Greek Archbishop in the Russia of Catherine the Great* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹³⁴ Smith, p.135 (letter 268-30 May 1783).

¹³⁵ Cemal Gökçe, *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kafkasya Siyaseti* (İstanbul: Has-Kurtulmuş Matbaası, 1979), p.116.

¹³⁶ Potemkin was still anxious about Şahin's activities during September and wanted to send him to the inner Russia. Smith, p.151 (letter 286-23 September 1783)

reported that the Russians crossed the river Kuban with more than 500 men and he was asking for necessary provisions to stop the Russians.¹³⁷ In August, Russian's defeated and massacred 3,000 Nogays, who were desperately fighting for their freedom.¹³⁸ Some of them managed to escape towards south and with the aid of the Circassians they were settled in the town of Yeisk.¹³⁹ However, Suvorov managed to defeat them in another major battle on 13 October of the same year.¹⁴⁰ During December 1783, against all odds, almost 4,000 Nogay families were reported to be migrating to the Ottoman territories, fearing further Russian aggression.¹⁴¹ All these massacres and migrations that entailed them practically ended the Nogay presence in the Kuban region.¹⁴²

3.11. The Porte's recognition of the annexation of the Crimea (1784)

After the military invasion of Russia during the end of 1782, Russia and Austria sent a joint note to the Ottoman Empire demanding the non-intervention of the Porte in the Crimean affairs, neutrality of the Black Sea, and treating the Principalities according to the terms of Küçük Kaynarca.¹⁴³ On 28 November

¹³⁷ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 27, Gömlek No: 1302.

¹³⁸ A. Chirg, "Cherkesy v Russko-Osmanskikh Otnosheniakh vtoroy poloviny XVIII v.," in Z. Y. Khuako (ed.), *Rossia i Cherkesia (Vtoraia Polovina XVII-XIX vv.)* (Maikop: Izdatelstvo, 1995), p.51. Jeremy Black, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Cassels, 2002), p.75. There are some dreadful accounts of people killing their own wife and children in desperation for them not to fall into enemy hands as prisoners. Bleasie, p.80.

¹³⁹ Sadık Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya: Osmanlı Varlığı Döneminde Kafkasya'nın Siyasi-Askerî Tarihi ve İdari Taksimâti (1454-1829)* (İstanbul: Eren, 2005), p.140.

¹⁴⁰ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 27, Gömlek No: 1282-A and 1282-B. Longworth, pp.127-128.

¹⁴¹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 23, Gömlek No: 1101.

¹⁴² Fisher, *Annexation of the Crimea*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁴³ Jorga, vol. 5, p.39.

1782, Ainslie advised the Porte, not to enter a new war against Russia over this issue.¹⁴⁴

During the meeting of the *Divan* on 30 July 1783, the idea of annexation of the Crimea was not accepted since it would give Russia such a favourable position even to threaten Constantinople. Halil Hamid Pasha and Ahmed Resmî tried to delay the response, and expected international reaction to the Russian policy while the conservatives were insisting on a declaration of war.¹⁴⁵ As a result, they only agreed to send an official note, to protest the Russian activities in the Crimea.¹⁴⁶ Although the Grand Vizier was reluctant to drag the Empire into a new destruction, he started to make preparations for a possible war any way.

At the end of July, Potemkin recommended Catherine to finalize the annexation towards autumn so that the Ottomans could not declare war and start hostilities immediately even if they were planning to do so, since the holy month of Ramadan was approaching and the Porte had to prepare its navy.¹⁴⁷ Catherine was still anxious about the Ottoman reaction and she told Potemkin that everything would be clear after the *Bayram* (Holiday).¹⁴⁸ However, the Ottomans had neither the strength nor the will to declare war on Russia.

Finally, the news of the official annexation of the Crimea by Russia had reached Constantinople. Moreover rumours were circulating to the effect that the Porte would cede Bucak territory to Russia. These rumours, which were carried by some of the immigrants from the Crimea, were interpreted as the sinister

¹⁴⁴ Bağış, p.11.

¹⁴⁵ *Seyhüllislam* was asking the Grand Vizier that while the Russians had captured the Crimea should the Ottomans be silent and go through with it. “Moskovlu Kırım’ı açıldan açığa zabit etdü sükût mu edelim?” Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, p.34.

¹⁴⁶ Aksan, *Ottoman Statesman*, pp. 179-182.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, p.148 (letter 281-29 July 1783).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.150 (letter 284-13 August 1783).

policies of Russia.¹⁴⁹ British Ambassador Ainslie's instructions, arrived on 18 October 1783, were also clear that he should persuade the Ottomans to preserve peace. On 23 October, at Scutari, *Reis Efendi* Mustafa, *Defterdar*, Feyzi Efendi and a dragoman of the Porte met. Ainslie transmitted the instructions from London in this meeting. Two days later, Halil Hamid Pasha called Pisani, the dragoman of the Ambassador, and thanked him for his friendly intervention.¹⁵⁰

The Hospodar of Wallachia informed the Porte that following the annexation of the Crimea, since this was a *casus belli*, Russia asked for the French mediation. He added that since Russia did not inform Austria previous to the annexation, their alliance was in tatters.¹⁵¹ However, there was no significant opposition to the annexation of the Crimea. Both Austro-Prussian and Anglo-French rivalries neutralized the possibility of intervention of these states on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵² On 3 September 1783, England and France terminated hostilities and signed a peace treaty in Paris. While Catherine was highly uncomfortable about this, the Ottomans perceived these two powers as a potential source of balance against the Russo-Austrian alliance. In addition to the alliance with Spain that was concluded in 1782, the Ottoman Empire finally had a breathing space after the French diplomacy against Russian policies. Potemkin informed Catherine about the preparations of the Porte and advised her not to back down against French protests to the annexation.¹⁵³ The Ottomans, by the

¹⁴⁹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 23, Gömlek No: 1103.

¹⁵⁰ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 22, Gömlek No: 1074, Bağış, p.12-13.

¹⁵¹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 10, Gömlek No: 337-D.

¹⁵² Matthew Smith Anderson, "The Great Powers and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1783-1784," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 37 (1958/1959), p.20.

¹⁵³ Smith, p.143-144 (letter 277-16 July 1783).

way, sent both men and provisions to İsmail, one of the important fortified positions on the Danube.¹⁵⁴

Gaffron, the Prussian Ambassador at Constantinople, who was accused of advising the Porte to delay the submitting of the document that ratified the annexation of the Crimea, was called back and Prussia, denied the claims that it was provoked the Ottomans against Russia.¹⁵⁵ According to Diez, who succeeded Gaffron as the Prussian Ambassador at Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire was in a difficult situation; the reforms were a failure while treasury was experiencing hard times. The only thing that would recover the Empire would be radical reforms and a genius to perform them. Frederick, on the other hand, defended the idea that although France let its ally down against Russia on the annexation of the Crimea, this had prevented a destructive war for the Ottomans and now they still have a chance to recover their strength.¹⁵⁶

France could not make any allies while there were thoughts of invading Austrian-Holland in the case of Austrian intervention into the Principalities.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, as one Russian diplomat reminded, France was out money and army, thus it would take at least 2-3 years to recover its strength. He also commented that if Russia could not accomplish the annexation in this period, then it should never have started it. Even then, in France there were some voices whispering the idea that it was not very rational at all to preserve the Ottoman Empire. Vergennes was the Ambassador at Constantinople during the years 1755-1768 and he knew how hard it would be to modernize the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, Saint-Priest drafted a report and advised his government to take its share, which were

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.146 (letter 280-29 July 1783).

¹⁵⁵ Beydilli, p.132-133.

¹⁵⁶ Beydilli, p.138-139.

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, "The Great Powers..", p.32.

Crete and Egypt, if the Ottoman Empire was partitioned.¹⁵⁸ Charles James Fox, who became the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in England, was conservative regarding foreign affairs and perceived Russia as one of England's indispensable allies against the Bourbons.¹⁵⁹ Although Russia was suspected from a possible French protest; England on the other hand wanted to be on the side of Russia in a probable new Ottoman-Russian war.¹⁶⁰

On 21 November 1783, Bulgakov asked the Ottomans to recognize the annexation, after communicating both with Ainslie and Saint-Priest, who were on the same side regarding this issue.¹⁶¹ The Porte, despite the opposition of the *ulema*, was going to recognize the annexation, especially as a result of the efforts of Halil Hamid Pasha and Gazi Hasan Pasha to avoid war against Russia. For this end, on 14 December 1783, Bulgakov was summoned and he was told that the Porte would pursue a pacific policy. Although the Ottomans wanted the mediation of England and France, Bulgakov did not accept this proposal.¹⁶² During the 18 December 1783 session of the *Divan*, Gazi Hasan and Halil Hamid Pasha convinced the other members of the *Divan* to comply with their decision. On 22 December 1783, Austria declared that in a possible war between Russia and the Porte, it would definitely side with Russia.¹⁶³ Bulgakov and Herbert-Rathkeal of Austria were waiting for the Ottoman response to the annexation. Finally, on 8 January 1784, the Ottomans, "weak, isolated, and bewildered"¹⁶⁴ recognized the

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 21-22.

¹⁵⁹ Bağış, pp.11-12.

¹⁶⁰ Madariaga, *Armed Neutrality*, p.435.

¹⁶¹ Bağış, p.15, Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, pp.79-82, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp. 564-565, 581.

¹⁶² Bağış, p.16.

¹⁶³ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p.10-11.

¹⁶⁴ Anderson, "Great Powers..", p.18.

annexation of the Crimea into Russia. The southern part of the river Kuban was left to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁵

Catherine had to settle for the Crimea only and could not continue her expansionist policies any further. If only she could have persuaded Prussia together with Austria against the Ottoman Empire, she might have pressured the Porte for acquiring more than the Crimea. However, Prussia did not want to side with Catherine this time.¹⁶⁶ Gustavus of Sweden could have invaded Denmark in case of a possible Russo-Ottoman war, but as the war did not occur Sweden also did not offer any help to the Ottomans.¹⁶⁷

This was a result of the “Russian cleverness, greed and ambition of a small portion of the Crimean ruling elite, and growing inability of the Ottoman government to understand the realities of the shifting balance of power.”¹⁶⁸ Aleksandr Bezborodko, who replaced Panin in 1780, was also heavily under the influence of Catherine II, and he was also one of the supporters of the annexation from the beginning. However his note in his diary about the annexation is clear sign of the irony of the perceptions between the Porte and the Russians;

“The Porte has not kept good faith from the very beginning. Their primary goal has been to deprive the Crimeans of independence. They banished the legal khan and replaced him with the thief Devlet Geray. They consistently refused to evacuate Taman. They made numerous perfidious attempts to introduce rebellion in the Crimea against the legitimate khan Şahin Geray. All of these efforts did not bring us to declare war.... The Porte never ceased to drink in each drop of revolt among the Tatars.... Our only wish has been to bring peace to the Crimea....and we were finally forced by the Turks to annex the area.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p.390. Mustafa Kesbî, *İbretnüümâ-yı Devlet* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), p.432-435.

¹⁶⁶ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, p.59.

¹⁶⁷ Smith, p.135 (letter 268-30 May 1783).

¹⁶⁸ Alan Fisher, *Crimean Tatars*, p.53.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in Fisher, *Crimean Tatars*, p.69.

Although the Ottomans were not content with the loss of such an important asset of the Empire, all kinds of efforts were performed not to provoke a new war against Russia over the Crimea. It was the Russians who installed Şahin Geray over and over again although every time he became Khan there was a popular uprising against him. Russian armies never left the Crimea completely and were constantly stationed in the fortresses of Yenikale and Kerch. An army was ready to act through the Orkapı pass anytime it was needed. *The Times* issued an article on the fate of the Crimean Khanate during the last quarter of the 18th century which summarizes the sets of events during those years.

By the peace of Kainardgi, in 1774 Russia made the Crimea “independent” of Turkey, and then plotted against this independence, having debauched its Khan *Şahim Gherai*, whom she pensioned for a short time in Russia, then abandoned to the eleemosynary favours of the Poles, and at last unfeeling saw return to Turkey, ultimately to meet the fate of his apostasy, namely, poison or the bow-string. The Crimea, thus so generously made independent, was soon, by the forced cession of the Turks, converted into a Russian possession; and its native inhabitants were nearly all massacred or expelled by their good brothers the Russians, in order to furnish a clear field, a sort of *tabula rasa*, for the adventurers to settle there, under the Russian auspices.¹⁷⁰

As it can be seen, what happened was a gradual shift from the Ottoman suzerainty towards a Russian one, and unfortunately it was a bloody episode during which the local population of the Crimea suffered the most.

3.12. Şahin Geray’s fate

After he was convinced to give up his rights over the Crimean Khanate, Şahin Geray received a handsome annual income from the Tsaritsa.¹⁷¹ Having

¹⁷⁰ *The Times*, Thursday, Aug. 08, 1793; pg. 3; issue 2747 col. C.

¹⁷¹ It was reported that he would receive 20,000 ruble annually. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 26, Gömlek No: 1254-C.

realized that his role in the Crimea had come to an end, this time Şahin Geray invoked resistance against Russia among the tribes of the Caucasus. He joined the Tamganoğlu tribe and his foster brother Narcu Mehmed Geray in Taman,¹⁷² but only to cause dissension among the other tribes of the Caucasus.¹⁷³ They sent petitions to Ferah Ali Pasha of Soğucak to resolve this issue or else they would enforce the Tamganoğlu tribe to expel Şahin Geray. Although Ferah Ali Pasha acted on this request, in the summer of 1784, Şahin Greay was captured by the Russian commander of Yenikale and sent to the inland Russia.

In January 1787, Şahin Geray was released with his own request and asked for asylum in the Ottoman Empire. His wish was granted and he arrived in Hotin. On 1 May 1787, Şahin Geray left Hotin for Larga.¹⁷⁴ From there, he was brought to Edirne with all his belongings in July 1787 and was granted a large estate.¹⁷⁵ Later, he was arrested and sent to the island of Rhodes as an exile. During his stay in Rhodes, when the order of his execution was received, Şahin Geray escaped to the residence of the Russian¹⁷⁶ consul. However, the residence was raided and Şahin Geray's sentence was executed in the inner fortress of the city.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Gökçe, p.69.

¹⁷³ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 25 Gömlek No: 1250 and 1250-B.

¹⁷⁴ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 28, Gömlek No: 1342.

¹⁷⁵ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 994 and 994-B. Fisher, "Şahin Girey..", p.363.

¹⁷⁶ It was the French consulate according to another source. Uzunçarşılı, vol.4, part 1, p. 497.

¹⁷⁷ Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), p.380, Sarıcaoğlu, p.210, Taylesanizade Hafız Abdullah Efendi, *İstanbul'un Uzun Dört Yılı (1785-1789)* (İstanbul: TATAV, 2003), p.214. For further information on the death of Şahin Geray see, Feridun Emecen, "Son Kırım Hanı Şahin Giray'ın İdamı Meselesi ve Buna Dair Vesikalalar," *Tarih Dergisi*, vol. 34 (1984), pp. 315-344.

3.13. Catherine II's Southern Journey and the Crimea in 1787

The great southern journey of Catherine II was the last, but one of the major provocations of the Ottomans by the Russians. Although it was planned in 1786, it had to be postponed for a year.¹⁷⁸ *The Times* was informing its readers about the possible cancellation of the journey;

The famous Journey of the Imperial Catherine seems to be entirely laid aside. Great preparations were talked of a few months back and now all the Russian letters are as silent upon the subject as if there was no such an expedition in agitation.¹⁷⁹

Finally on 18 January 1787, Catherine left St.Petersburg for her great journey to the south.¹⁸⁰ She had envoys of Britain, France and Austria with her while Stanisław Poniatowski, the King of Poland, and Joseph II of Austria had joined the trip later. During May she arrived at Kherson and later in June the Tsaritsa was in the Crimea, the last stop of her journey. This journey was a triumph for Catherine II but more to Potemkin.¹⁸¹

Having received the news of this journey, Bulgakov was summoned to the *Divan* and he was told that Russia should leave the Crimea for good, together with some other conditions. As it was expected, Bulgakov refused the demands of Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha. Once again, after thirteen years the two empires were about to fight another major and long-lasting war. *The Times* was informing its readers on the fragile situation between the two empires as a result of the Journey of Catherine II to the Crimea and although it was commented that the

¹⁷⁸ Preparations for the arrival of Catherine had started much earlier. A spy of Ferah Ali Pasha reported in 1785 that there were preparations for Catherine's alleged journey but he claimed that in fact this journey was just a pretext for reinforcing the Russian forces in the Crimea. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.749.

¹⁷⁹ *The Times*, Thursday, August 17, 1786; p.3; issue 516; col. A.

¹⁸⁰ For further details on the Southern Journey of Catherine see, Montefiore, pp. 351-379, A.G.Brickner, *Istoria Ekateriny Vtoroi* (Moscow: Astrel, 2005), pp. 347-356.

¹⁸¹ Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, pp. 370-373.

Ottomans appeared to be braver than it was thought, a new war against Russia would be ruinous for the Ottomans.¹⁸²

As it was expressed during these thirteen years of relative peace, the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca started a fierce struggle over the Crimea. It was apparent from the beginning that Russia would triumph in this contest. Although the annexation of the Khanate into Russia in 1783 did not lead immediately to a new war, the Ottomans were aware that the balance of power between the two empires shifted significantly to the benefit of Russia. After the hawks took over the administration in Constantinople, they started to look for a pretext to declare a new war on Russia with the aim of reversing the situation. The opportunity they sought appeared in August 1787 and Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha dragged the Ottoman Empire into a new war against Russia.

¹⁸² *The Times*, Monday, May 28, 1787; pg.1; Issue 758; col. C., Kamenskii, p.257.

CHAPTER IV

BEGINNING OF THE RACE FOR THE CAUCASUS: THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE AND THE ROLE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE LOCAL RESISTANCE

4.1. The Caucasus between the Ottoman Empire and Russia

The Russian involvement in the Caucasian affairs dates back to the time of Ivan the Terrible when one of the notable families of the Kabarday¹ tribe asked protection from Russia. In a traditional way, to form a mutual bond, Ivan married a Circassian princess, daughter of Prince Temriuk.² However, the first major military expedition to the Caucasus was realized by Peter the Great. In 1720s Peter the Great crossed the mountains through the Derbend pass and invaded the

¹ A predominant group among the various Adyge tribes, these people were inhabiting the territories located on the south of the Terek River and comprised most of the central and northeastern part of the North Caucasus. Michael Khodarkovsky, “Of Christianity, Enlightenment and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800,” *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 71, no. 2 (June, 1999), p.400.

² Ibid, p.395.

Persian lands on the shores of the Caspian Sea.³ Although the position of Russia was soon to be disturbed by the conquests of Nadir Shah, Peter I's encroachment anticipated the future Russian penetration into Caucasus. Until the 1768-1774 Ottoman-Russian war, Russia was pre-occupied with European affairs. Consequently, no major effort was spent for new expeditions towards the south. Besides, as long as the Crimean Khanate existed, Russia's way to the north-western part of the Caucasus was blocked.

The Ottomans perceived the Caucasus as a part of the Crimean Khanate and they dealt with the affairs of the local tribes through the Khan.⁴ There was an intense relation between the Crimean Khanate and the Circassian tribes. All the Khans, before they were promoted, were sent to a local tribe to receive their education. This tradition (called *Atalık* or *P'vr*) helped to form a strong connection between the Khanate and the Western Caucasus.⁵

After the treaty of Belgrad in 1739, there was evidence of Russian suzerainty over parts of Kabarday in the correspondence between the Sultan and Tsar Ivan VI.⁶ However, the Russian invasion of this region could not be realized until the last quarter of the 18th century. In 1761, Russia started to build a fortress in Mozdok. In 1763, fortification of Mozdok was finalized, a church was erected and Don Cossacks were settled to protect this new settlement.⁷ In a sense, for the time being it became the jumping stone of Russia in the Caucasus. The commander of Kızlar, Major General Potapov was assigned with the further

³ For detailed information on the Russian involvement in the Caucasus during Peter the Great's reign see, V.A.Potto, *Kavkazskaya Voina* vol.1 (Stavropol: Kavkazskiy Kray, 1994), pp. 23-34,

⁴ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* vol.2 (İstanbul: Üçdal Yayınları, 1983), pp. 705, 707.

⁵ Mustafa Kesbî, *İbretnümâ-yı Devlet* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), p.11-12

⁶ M. Sadık Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya: Osmanlı Varlığı Döneminde Kafkasya'nın Siyasi-Askerî Tarihi ve İdari Taksimâti (1454-1829)* (İstanbul: Eren, 2005), p.120.

⁷ More than 200 men and women were settled in Mozdok during 1764 and a further 500 were settled between Mozdok and Kızlar. H. M. Dumanov (ed.), *Iz dokumentalnoy Istorii Kabardino-Russkikh Otnosheniy: Vtoroia polovina XVIII – Pervaia polovina XIX v.* (Elbruz: Nalchik, 2000), pp. 68-69.

strenghtening of the city.⁸ Although the Porte protested the building of Mozdok, Russia was claiming that the territory where Mozdok was built belonged to the Russian Empire according to the Treaty of Belgrade. However, it was clear that the main purpose of the Russians was to intervene into Kabarday affairs.

In 1767, King Solomon of Imeretia asked for Russian protection from the local tribes. A traveler called Emin, however, notes that in most cases the leaders of these raids were Georgians who lead the Lezgis against their oppressor princes and masters.⁹ In any case, Imeretia was an Ottoman territory in this period and Russian intervention to the Polish affairs had already disturbed the Ottomans. Thus, Catherine the Great rejected Solomon's request not to provoke the Porte. However, on 30 April 1767, she promised to protect Solomon in case of a future war against the Ottoman Empire.

4.2. The Caucasus during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774 and the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca

During the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774, the Caucasus also became a battlefield. A joint Ottoman, Kabarday and Chechen force under the command of Kazbulatoğlu Ali Sultan, captured Kızlar and put the inhabitants to the sword.¹⁰ In 1769, Kabardays besieged Mozdok and although they failed to capture the fortress, they pillaged the outer parts of the city. In July, General Medem

⁸ The establishment of this settlement and fortress is accepted as the official beginning of the Russo-Caucasian war. V.A.Potto, p.138.

⁹ William Edward David Allen, *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning Down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), p.199.

¹⁰ Dumanov, pp.70-71.

assaulted and defeated the Kabardians with the support of Kalmuk forces.¹¹ Consequently, to further develop the defenses of this settlement, Russia settled Volga Cossacks on the banks of the Terek River under the command of General Savailev.¹²

Although, on 25 September 1768, Sultan Mustafa III declared that he forgave Solomon of Imeretia and recognized him as the King, Solomon had already set his mind against the Porte.¹³ Russia entered into alliance with both Solomon and Irakli of Kartli-Kakheti.¹⁴ Catherine II was expecting a total force of 65,000 men from Irakli and Solomon to open a rear front to force the Sultan's position. As Catherine later described her strategy, "I have fallen upon Turkey from four sides; from the Danube, from the Crimea, from Morea (Greece), and even from Georgia."¹⁵ United Russian and Georgian forces achieved some success against the Ottomans, in 1772, however, when Catherine II perceived that no conclusive result could be achieved in the Caucasus front, she pulled her armies back to the Mozdok line.¹⁶ Although the Georgian envoys came to St. Petersburg to ask for support in 1773, by then Catherine II was already trying to finalize the war against the Porte and no further protection was provided to Georgia.¹⁷

"The Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji was merely an armistice in the mighty conflict which was continued between Russia and Turkey during the six decades between 1768 and 1829, and in this conflict the fate of Georgian Kingdoms was

¹¹ Bilge, pp. 132-134.

¹² Tarık Cemal Kutlu, *Çeçen Direniş Tarihi* (İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2005), p.123., John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (Wiltshire: Curzon Press, 1999), p.34.

¹³ Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760-1819* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000), p.30.

¹⁴ Formal alliance was concluded in 16 December 1769. Gvosdev, p.33.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.29.

¹⁶ Allen, p.207.

¹⁷ Gvosdev, p.42.

no more than a minor incident.”¹⁸ The Russians did not care much about the future of the Georgians and forsake all their territorial gains in the region. Catherine II claimed that the pressure on the Georgia was lifted thanks to the Russian intervention and this was the best result that could be achieved for them.¹⁹

The article 21 of the treaty left the fate of the Kabarday region at the hands of the Crimean Khan and the local aristocracy. The Ottoman’s aim was to prevent the Russian influence over this region. A misinterpretation of this treaty resulted with the conclusion that the Ottomans left this region to Russia as if it was its own territory. However, the independence of the Kabardays was already recognized with the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739.²⁰

After the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774 was over, although there was no direct pressure from the Ottomans over Georgia, the Porte was still supporting the local tribes in the region against Solomon and Irakli. Besides, the Persian Shah began to follow an aggressive policy and demanded submission to his sovereignty.²¹ In August 1774, Irakli sent words to Panin, complaining that while he was in fairly good terms with his neighbours, after he was involved in the Ottoman-Russian war, he was isolated in a hostile environment as the Russians deserted him.²² When Irakli’s diplomacy failed to obtain Russian protection, he turned his face towards the Porte and sent an emissary to Constantinople. In 1776, Kerim Khan Zend of Persia, declared war on the Ottomans and the Porte was in

¹⁸ Allen, p.208.

¹⁹ Gvosdev, p.43. There was only an agreement about the release of the Georgian prisoners of war with the rest of the Russians. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives of Prime Ministry of Turkey, hereafter *cited as*; BOA), *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sıra No: 834.

²⁰ Bilge, p.135.

²¹ Baddeley, pp.19-20.

²² Gvosdev, p.44.

need of allies against a common enemy.²³ Simultaneously, in order not to antagonize Kerim Khan, Russians assured him that the presence of the Russian forces in Georgia was a temporary one.²⁴ Various gifts were sent to the Caucasian tribes to keep them away from the conflict between Persia and the Porte. Georgian Kingdoms were also important elements of the balance of power in the region. Consequently, the Porte accepted the offer and assigned Süleyman Pasha, the governor of Çıldır, to assist Irakli when needed. For the last time, Kartli-Kakheti accepted the Ottoman suzerainty in 1776.²⁵

4.3. Russian penetration into the Caucasus (1778-1785)

Before continuing with the Russian penetration into the Caucasus it is important to point out some of the methods and strategies used by the Russian Empire in this process. One of the most usual methods was to buy out the local aristocracy with money and titles. Another way of gaining these local leaders was to take their sons as hostage (*emanet*). This resulted in both the loyalty of these people and the assimilation of the captive to the Russian system. In addition to

²³ Kerim Khan Zend, trying to take advantage of the weakness of the Ottomans after the Küçük Kaynarca, sent his armies towards Eastern Anatolia and Basra in 1775. Basra was captured on 15 April 1776 and parts of Eastern Anatolia were sacked. In May, the Ottomans declared war on Persia and begun their counter-attack. The Ottoman armies advanced through Kars and Kerkük. Persian army was defeated in 1777. Considering his options, Kerim Khan Zend offered Catherine II the partition of the Ottoman territories by a joint attack. However, with the death of Kerim Khan in 1779, this plan could not be realized and the Ottoman armies captured Basra. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, vol.4, part 1, pp-458-463.

²⁴ Russia was involved in a conflict with the local tribes of Eastern Caucasus after Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin was abdicated and killed by the Haytaks in 1774. General Medem, the commander of Kızlar, was sent to Outsmi for reprisal. In March 1775, he raided the Haytak (Karakaytagans) territories and captured Derbend, which was Persian territory. However, a war against Persia would be risky for Russia and the Russian garrison in Derbend was called back in 1776. Baddeley, pp.37-38.

²⁵ Allen, p.208, Gvosdev, pp. 46-47.

these, the Cossacks frequently harrassed these people with expeditions from the fortified lines. The Punitive Expeditions (*karatelnaya ekspeditsiya*) and Punitive Units (*karatelnaya otryad*) were formed to achieve these purposes.²⁶

Since there was a vast ethnic and tribal varicosity in the Caucasus, Russians tried to turn these people on each other and break them one by one.²⁷ In the Western Caucasus, while the Nogays inhabited the steps, the Circassians were living in the forested southern regions and these people were used to quarrel among each other frequently. As a consequence of the Russian harrassment of the Kabarday territories, Russo-Circassian struggle also begun in 1777.²⁸ However, one of the weak aspects of their resistance was that it was not a joint effort against Russia.²⁹ Although these peoples allied among themselves for a short period against the common enemy, when a definite result could not be achieved, once again they turned on each other. By taking advantage of this lack of cooperation, Russia easily increased its influence in the region with the aggressive policies of Potemkin.³⁰

²⁶ Kutlu, pp.125-127.

²⁷ Still in 1784 though, Pavel Potemkin was reporting that by sending the description of the Kabardays, he was actually describing all the peoples of the North Caucasus. This was a clear sign of his incomprehension of the peoples of the region. Khodarkovsky, p.400.

²⁸ For further details on the Russo-Circassian relations see, A. Chirg, "Cherkesy v Russko-Osmanskikh Otnosheniiakh vtoroy poloviny XVIII v.," and T. Feofilaktova, "Politicheskie Otnosheniia Rossii s Narodami Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza v Period Podgotovki vtoroy Russko-Turetskoy Voiny II Pol. XVIII v. (1783-1787 gg.)," in Z. Y. Khuako (ed.), *Rossia i Cherkesia (Vtoraia Polovina XVII-XIX vv.)* (Maikop: Izdatelstvo, 1995), pp. 45-78. There is also a recent study on the Russo-Kabardinian relations which examines in detail the penetration of Russia into North Caucasus, see, Sean Pollock, "Empire by Invitation? Russian Empire-Building in the Caucasus in the Reign of Catherine II," PhD. Dissertation, Harvard University (Massachusetts, 2006).

²⁹ Cemal Gökçe, *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kafkasya Siyaseti* (İstanbul: Has-Kurtulmuş Matbaası, 1979), pp. 41-42.

³⁰ Baddeley, pp. 43-44. See also, Abdullah Temizkan, "Rusya ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kafkas-Ötesinde Nüfuz Mücadelesi," *Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2006), pp.447-462.

4.3.1. Fortifying the Caucasus line and the initial struggles between Russia and the tribes of Western Caucasus

Potemkin established his headquarters in Yekaterinograd as the imperial *namestnik* and he was the director of the Russian advance in the Caucasus.³¹ In the autumn of 1777, the Caucasian army was divided into two and Suvorov was assigned to the Kuban army while General Yakobi became the commander of the Caucasus army. The front line was reinforced and a new line of fortified positions began to be constructed. These areas were also settled with Cossacks from Volga and other regions.³² While General Yakobi was occupied with fortifying the Mozdok-Rostov line, Suvorov was completing the fortified line from Kerç to Kuban River.³³ Suvorov reached Kuban in January 1778 and after having completed the military line built by General Brink, he further continued to erect fortifications between Mozdok and the Caspian Sea.³⁴ These fortified lines pinned the local population and by settling the Cossacks, Russia aimed to change the demographic structure of the region.³⁵

When Russia intervened in the domestic affairs of the local aristocracy with the aim of protecting its gains in the region, disturbances arose. Kabardays argued that since the time of Ivan IV, they were treated as an ally of Russia rather than its subjects.³⁶ In January 1778, 3,000 Kabardays were about to assault the Russian fortress of Petrovsk, but having learnt about their approach the Russian

³¹ Ismail Berkok, *Tarihte Kafkasya* (İstanbul, İstanbul Matbaası, 1958), p.368.

³² Baddeley, p.39.

³³ Potto, p.102

³⁴ Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory* (London: Constable, 1965), p.108.

³⁵ Kutlu, p.124.

³⁶ Khodarkovsky, p.408.

garrison escaped.³⁷ Later in December, Kabardays managed to pillage a Russian fortress. In March 1779, Suvorov threatened the Circassian and Abaza tribes and he stated that unless they stop their raids to the Nogay territory, Russian military intervention would become inevitable.³⁸ In August 1779, Kabardays attacked the Kuban line with an army of 14,000³⁹ men. Although they initially succeeded in capturing some of the fortified positions, General Yakobi arrived in the scene in September 1779 and routed these forces inflicting 3,000 casualties. Russian forces invaded Little and Great Kabarda until the end of the same year.⁴⁰

In 1780, Russians intercepted a dispatch, carried by an Armenian courier, from Kartli-Kakheti to the Great Kabardays promising support against Russia and their freedom. As a result, Russia prohibited all kinds of border transactions with Kartli-Kakheti even for the clergy.⁴¹

4.3.2. Daghestan

Islam was very well established among the people of Daghestan and this fact made it easier for them to cooperate with the Porte in the first place. Russia, taking advantage of its victory over the Crimea, tried to increase its influence over the Caucasus through alliance with Kartli-Kakheti. As a reaction to this strategy, the Ottomans always urged its officials in the region to remain vigilant and spent

³⁷ Dumanov, p.87.

³⁸ Longworth, p. 115.

³⁹ This number has been recorded as 7,000 by another author. Bilge, p.138.

⁴⁰ Dumanov, pp. 88-89.

⁴¹ Kabardays had strong relations with the Georgian Kings. Kabardays, and in some cases other Circassians, used to fight as mercenaries in the Georgian army and a major portion of the Georgian army was composed of these mercenaries. However, when this relation continued after the uprising of the Kabardays, Russia accused Georgians of giving shelter to rebels and helping them to seek asylum in Ottoman territories.Gvosdev, p.47.

efforts to form a joint resistance.⁴² Russia was once again applying the *divide et imperii* strategy. A pro-Russian group was formed and the local conflicts were used as an excuse for intervention. In 1775, the Russians were claiming that it was their intention to help Feth Ali Khan, Khan of Kuba, who called for their support, when the Russian armies entered Daghestan.⁴³

A letter to Süleyman Pasha, the governor of Çıldır, expressed the anxiety of the local tribal leaders of the Russo-Georgian rapprochement in 1775. They invited the Ottomans to join the alliance against Russia and Kartli-Kakheti. One of these leaders, Surhay Khan, pointed out that only a joint attack on Georgia could succeed. However, it was not the intention of the Ottomans to provoke a war against Russia and the Porte considered it suffices to support the local tribes by sending gifts and titles.⁴⁴ In spite of the fact that these local khanates were trying to form an alliance against Russia, they were also having troubles among each other. In 1778, Süleyman Pasha reported the tension between Feth Ali Khan and the other khans, and wanted the Porte to intervene. The Porte was concerned that Russia would benefit from this conflict. The news from Daghestan in 1778 confirmed this fear. It was mentioned that Russia intended to send soldiers to this region.⁴⁵

In 1782, Russia tried but failed to invade Baku. The Russians appeared on the shores of Baku with twelve ships but could not break the resistance and had to retire. Simultaneously, a Russian force was on its way to Tiflis and the idea of a joint attack on Georgia by the Porte and the local khanates resurfaced. The locals were claiming that if a capable Ottoman officer was sent to Daghestan, Feth Ali

⁴² BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 4, Gömlek No: 94 A-J.

⁴³ Gökçe, pp. 106-107.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.108.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.109-110.

Khan and Usumi Khan would lead a 30,000 men army against Georgia through Kars, thus making it impossible for Russia to stay in the region.⁴⁶

The Russian advance into the Caucasus entered into a new phase after the annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783. Russia acquired not only the Crimean peninsula, but also the lands of Kuban located on the north of the Kuban River. The road that connects Mozdok and Tiflis was being improved and the fortress of Vladikavkaz “Master of the Caucasus” was built near the Daryal Pass in 1784.⁴⁷ As a result, the struggle of the local population against the Russian advance had intensified.

4.3.3. Treaty of Georgievsk with the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (1783)

In 1774, a European eye-witness to the events of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774 had commented that Russia would not return to the Caucasus in the near future.⁴⁸ Of course, he was grossly mistaken. However, penetration into the Caucasus and Georgia required first the dismemberment of the Crimea. Furthermore, conquering Caucasus required “the bases on the Black Sea, secure river communications back to central Russia, and a settled agricultural population in New Russia from which to draw supplies.”⁴⁹

As it was mentioned earlier, relations between Russia and Kartli-Kakheti was on the decline during late 1770s. However, 1780s would witness a series of alterations in the Russian foreign policy towards Kartli-Kakheti. Old bureaucrats

⁴⁶ Gökçe, p.112.

⁴⁷ Montefiore, 291.

⁴⁸ Gvosdev, p.46.

⁴⁹ Dominic Lieven, *Empire: Russia and its Rivals* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 212.

like Panin and Bestuzhev-Riumin were much more inclined to make Russia a part of the European system while the new ones like Potemkin and Bezborodko stressed the importance of the southern expansion and dominance in the Black Sea. Besides, Russia's commercial relations with this region also increased and reached the annual amount of 1.8 million ruble.⁵⁰ Considering these goals, Georgia was a very important asset for the Russian Empire. Especially after the annexation of the Crimea, Kartli-Kakheti became a very strategic point to protect the Russian gains in the Caucasus. In addition, Russia began to pursue an offensive policy at the expense of Persia, and Kartli-Kakheti would be a great asset for achieving this goal.⁵¹

When the Ottoman-Persian war was over, the Porte once again tried to increase its influence over the Caucasus. In 1782, a new port was established in Faş (Poti). Although Solomon of Imeretia argued that this was a violation of the article 23 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, his protests did not bring any result. Earlier in 1779, the Khan of Revan refused to pay its taxes and rebelled against Irakli. Kerim Khan Zend was dead and a competition for succession started. When Ali Murad Zend finally claimed the throne, he turned against Kartli-Kakheti, a move which led Irakli to seek protection of Russia. The impact of the Lezgi raids on Kartli-Kakheti also affected this process.⁵²

On 3 October 1782, Irakli sent a petition to Catherine II, calling her the protector of all Orthodox Christians, he asked for protection. This letter was delivered to Potemkin on 29 October 1782. Irakli asked for protection against the Ottoman and Persian threat. He was troubled by both the Lezgi raids and

⁵⁰ Gvosdev, p.48-49.

⁵¹ Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p.37.

⁵² Gvosdev, p.52. Bilge, pp. 144-145.

Aleksandr, who seek refuge in Feth Ali Khan of Baku. Irakli wanted Potemkin to deliver his request of protection to Catherine the Great personally.⁵³

Bezborodko drafted a report to Catherine II stating the benefits of forming an alliance with Kartli-Kakheti. He claimed that it would be crucial to form a barrier against the Muslims and establish new trade routes. Catherine promised to protect Kartli-Kakheti in return for military assistance in wartime against the Porte. Georgian clergy was encouraged to unite with the Russian church and the local aristocracy was granted titles of their equivalent ranking. On 29 December 1782, Catherine made her final decision and Potemkin was sent to Georgia with full credentials. On 3 April 1783 a draft of the treaty was delivered to Irakli and a common ground was finally reached.⁵⁴

The Treaty of Georgievsk was signed on 24 July 1783.⁵⁵ Two of the most senior officials on behalf of Irakli, namely Prince Ioann Bagration and Prince Garsevan Chavchavadze and Pavel Potemkin on behalf of Catherine II had signed the treaty. The news of the conclusion of the treaty reached Catherine II in August.⁵⁶

It was argued that a hierarchical sovereignty over Kartli-Kakheti by Russia was constructed with this treaty. On the other hand, Irakli only agreed to make foreign policy in line with Russia while retaining his royal titles.⁵⁷ This duality was apparent on the coins of this period; one side of the coin has the Georgian

⁵³ Gvosdev, p.53.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.55.

⁵⁵ Douglas Smith (ed. and trans.), *Love and Conquest: Personal Correspondence of Catherine the Great ad Prince Grigory Potemkin* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), p.148-149 (letter 282-5 August 1783). For the articles of the treaty see, Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, *Mehasinü'l-Âsâr ve Hakaikü'l-Ahbâr* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.76-77.

⁵⁶ Baddeley, p.21.

⁵⁷ Russia did not interfere with the relations of Irakli with his neighbours as long as it was not contrary to the Russian interests in the region. Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix, 2003), p.369.

sign while on the other side there was the two-headed eagle of Russia.⁵⁸ Russian intention in this alliance was political rather than a religious one. The absence of such an agreement with Imeretia is a demonstration of this policy. Imeretia was not a politically stable country because of the struggles for succession. Besides, Imeretia was still theoretically an Ottoman territory and direct intervention would lead to a war against the Porte.⁵⁹

On 20 September 1783, the Treaty of Georgievsk was made public and the Russian officers who were commissioned in the Caucasus line were informed about the alliance. Following the treaty, direct relations were established between Tbilisi and St. Petersburg. Irakli's two sons were sent to St. Petersburg, while first Russian Ambassador, Stephan Burnashev reached Tiflis. In addition, Kartli-Kakheti would not be in need of hiring mercenaries from the local tribes. In October 1783, two battalions and four batteries reached Tiflis under the command of General Samoilov.⁶⁰

The news of the Treaty of Georgievsk reached Constantinople through the Hospodar of Wallachia.⁶¹ The Ottomans tried to prevent the other khanates of Azerbaijan and Daghestan from forming alliances with Russia and from the correspondence of 1784, it is apparent that they succeeded in doing so. Süleyman Pasha informed Constantinople that for strengthening the connections with the khanates of Daghestan and Azerbaycan he sent messengers to the Khans and received positive replies.⁶²

The Porte was not content with the Russian policy and perceived it as an act contrary to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. After the meeting of the *Divan* in

⁵⁸ Allen, p.210, Gvosdev, pp.56-57.

⁵⁹ Gvosdev, p.59.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.60.

⁶¹ Gökc , p.75.

⁶² Ibid, p.76-77, p.82.

December 1784, Yakov Ivanovich Bulgakov, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, was summoned and informed about the protest of the Porte. Although the Ottoman Empire was not strong enough to risk a war against Russia, it did not refrain from provoking the local tribes against Russia in Daghestan. As a response to these raids, the Russian counter-attack was initiated in 1785. In 1786, to find a common ground, Süleyman Pasha and Irakli came together and agreed that the Porte would no longer provoke the local people against Irakli and in return, Russian forces in Georgia would not exceed 3,000 men and Irakli would not threaten the Ottoman territories.⁶³

4.4. The Ottoman role in the Caucasian Resistance and the Ferah Ali Pasha Mission (1781-1785)

After the independence of the Crimea, the Porte felt the need to deal with the local tribes of Circassia on its own, for there were no major Ottoman ports, except Sinop and Kili (at the mouth of Tuna), in the Black Sea. Besides, Russia sent its armies towards Taman and Kabarday, harassed Dagestan and tried to establish its protection over Kartli-Kakheti. Ferah Ali Pasha advised the Porte to spend serious efforts to make loyal subjects out of the local population of this region.⁶⁴

During late 1770s, the Porte was already in trouble in the Crimea and in the East against Persia. Thus, no effective support was offered to the Circassians

⁶³ Gvosdev, p.61.

⁶⁴ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp.708-710.

in this period. The Ottomans were confident that the Circassians would always fight on their side against Russia. Although the Russian efforts to subdue the Kabardays temporarily succeeded, the Kabardays pointed out that they would side with the Sultan in case of the annulment of the peace between Russia and the Porte.⁶⁵

The first time an Ottoman army contacted the Circassians was when Canikli Ali Pasha and Gazi Hasan Pasha anchored in Soğucak in 1778 before the navy reached the Crimea. Although the Ottoman army was welcomed by the local people, at night some of the Circassians ambushed Ottoman soldiers. An equivalent of an ox was paid for each soldier to be freed and the Ottoman navy immediately left the shore.⁶⁶ Later in 1779, Mikdad Pasha, son of Canikli Ali Pasha, was sent to Soğucak with 10,000 men to support the prospective Crimean expedition.⁶⁷

Beginning from the late 1770s the Porte tried and partially succeeded to establish a connection with the Ottoman culture through its commanders and governors among the Circassians, Lezgis, Chechens, and Abhazhas. However, it is important to mention the perceptions of the Caucasians of the Ottoman support. There was not a consensus among the different tribes regarding this issue. On the one hand there was the Zaniko tribe, whose leaders argued that it should be the Caliph who sends help to the Caucasus against the infidel enemy. On the other there was the Kalibaytyko tribe, whose leaders defended the idea that the Ottoman support would antagonize Russia and the Ottoman-Russian rivalry would directly

⁶⁵ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 22, Gömlek No: 1022.

⁶⁶ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp.706-707. After this encounter, a regiment of janissaries were sent to Soğucak under the command of Süleyman Ağa. Bilge, p.134.

⁶⁷ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 19, Gömlek No: 873.

be reflected on the Caucasus. However, both sides were anxious about the Russian advance and finally the Porte decided to take action.⁶⁸

Ferah Ali Pasha was assigned to Soğucak in late 1780. He was the first Ottoman officer who tried to spread Islam among the Circassians and gain the loyalty of these people. After he got the supplies for Soğucak from Sinop, he reached the fortress of Soğucak in 1781, only to find it in a desolated condition. However, he kept this secret and immediately started to gather information about the population of the area.⁶⁹

As a result of the Russian pressure in Taman, population of this area migrated to the Caucasus and Ferah Ali Pasha commissioned the old *Serdengeçti Ağası* Mehmet Ağa to deal with the settlement of these emmigrants. He also asked for financial support from Constantinople to gather and settle these people. When the supportive attitude of the Porte towards these emigrants was learnt, other dispersed emmigrants also arrived in Soğucak.⁷⁰ The Nogays, who had caused trouble during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774 and came to the Kabarday region, asked permission from Ferah Ali Pasha to live in this region. Ferah Ali Pasha considered these people as an element of balance against the Circassians. An agreement was made and Nogays agreed to side with the Ottomans in a possible conflict against the Circassians or Russia. They were to be exempt from any taxes other than *aşar*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Gökçe, p.42-43.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.45. *Pshis* (Princes) were the highest in the hierarchy of the Circassian society and their words were obeyed law. So, when the Ottomans wanted to deliver an order from Constantinople, they chose to meet with these *Pshis* in the first place. Regarding religion, although there are claims that Christianity was common among these people, an eye-witness Haşim Efendi mentions that the Circassians mostly professed their own traditional religion. Although Ferah Ali Pasha's efforts were resulted with the spread of Islam among the Circassians, the traditions went deep with these people and always remained prominent. Ibid, p.46-47, 50.

⁷⁰ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, p.712.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.724.

Ferah Ali Pasha began to spread propaganda of the Porte. He took the oath of allegiance from the people of Soğucak and then invited the other Circassian tribes to recognize Islam and his vizierate. He also married the daughter of a tribal leader to strengthen his connection with the local population. The soldiers under his command followed his example.⁷²

Russia was disturbed by the spread of Islam and the Ferah Ali Pasha mission. In a report, dated 9 September 1782, there was mention of the North Caucasian tribal leaders offering their allegiance to the Porte and they were in close contact with the Pasha of Çıldır (Akhaltsikhe). King Solomon, in his letter dated September 1782, informed the Russian colonel Karl I. Mufel about the two of the Circassian tribes which directly contacted Ferah Ali Pasha and asked for protection. Once again, in a report dated 8 December 1782, the spread of Islam was perceived as a threat since it was manipulated as a tool to provoke the local peoples against Russia.⁷³

In 1781, Ferah Ali Pasha asked for provisions and reinforcements to strengthen his force of 100 men. The conscripts from Anatolia, 1,000 men in total, were sent to Soğucak. Finally in 1782, there was a strong tower, armory and a palace for the Pasha in Soğucak.⁷⁴ To prevent the pirate activities, which even affected the Gazi Hasan Pasha and the Ottoman navy, Ferah Ali Pasha sent envoys with gifts to convince the so-called “Haçepa”⁷⁵ pirates and partially succeeded in doing so.⁷⁶

As it was mentioned earlier, there were not many suitable ports for the Ottoman navy in the Black Sea. The search for a new port resulted in the building

⁷² Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp.719-722..

⁷³ Gvosdev, p.51.

⁷⁴ Gökçe, pp.56-57.

⁷⁵ Name of a certain type of boat used by these pirates.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.58.

of Gelincik located in the north of Soğucak and its command was entrusted to Narcu Mehmed Geray, who was a foster brother of Şahin Geray Khan.⁷⁷

Simultaneously, the fortification of Anapa had begun. It was located on the border of Taman and to the north-west of Soğucak and Gelincik. Thus, it was considered as a protection for both. When the fortification of Anapa was completed, orders arrived from Constantinople also to erect batteries on the banks of the Kuban River.⁷⁸

In 1783, when Şahin Geray Khan's envoy claimed that the Ottoman Empire ceded Taman to Russia, Hacı Hasan Ağa, the *kethüda* of Ferah Ali Paşa, had him killed and diplomatic relations entered a deadlock. Following the annexation of the Crimea, Russia began to deploy soldiers to the Northern Caucasus. As a reaction to the Russian policy, the Circassian *pshis* met with Ferah Ali Pasha and informed him of their decision to resist against the Russian advance.⁷⁹

On 8 December 1783, after the annihilation of the Nogays in the region, Russia settled almost 60,000 Cossacks in the northern Kuban region. Later, Stavropol was to be opened for the German settlers. The Astrakhan and Stavropol gubernias were merged and in May 1785, the Viceroyalty (*Namestnichestvo*) of Caucasus was established. The first governor of this united province became Pavel Potemkin.⁸⁰

Bahadır Geray Khan, who was released from Russian captivity in 1784, caused trouble in the Caucasus. He gained the allegiance of 8,000-10,000 Nogays and refused to recognize the local authority of Ferah Ali Pasha. However, he was

⁷⁷ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, pp. 723-724..

⁷⁸ Gökçe, p. 60-61.

⁷⁹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 28, Gömlek No: 1345.

⁸⁰ Bilge, 141-142.

defeated by the forces of Ferah Ali Pasha.⁸¹ Ferah Ali Pasha requested from the Porte to reside Bahadır Geray Khan to his estate in Rumeli and he received orders to take necessary measures. However, Bahadır Geray Khan could not be convinced.⁸²

In the spring of 1784, a crisis emerged in Imeretia. Although it was theoretically an Ottoman territory, Süleyman Pasha informed Constantinople about the plans of Solomon for a joint attack on the Ottoman Empire with Irakli.⁸³ When Solomon died on 23 April 1784, Lezgis attacked Imeretia together with the Acarans and pillaged the Georgian villages. Altough it was demanded from the Porte to prevent these raids, the Porte was not inclined to protect Georgia.⁸⁴ During 1784, Bulgakov sent several protests to the Porte because of the interventions of Süleyman Pasha.⁸⁵ After they invaded the Imeretian territory, Lezgis arrived in Çıldır, but they were not welcome there. The Porte did not want these raids to cause a war against Russia.⁸⁶ Although the Imeretians responded these raids with a counter-attack, they were ambushed by Abaza Mehmet Paşa and were annihilated on 8 May 1784.⁸⁷ Following this battle, Mustafa Bey was sent to Faş with 500 soldiers to strengthen the Ottoman position.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Halim Geray Sultan, p.282.

⁸² BOA, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sıra No: 5537, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-C, *Cevdet-Hariciye*, Sıra No: 3858. Later, in 1789, he was arrested and sent to Constantinople to reside in his estates in Tekfurdağı. Halim Geray Sultan, p.282.

⁸³ During this period, Russia and Persia once again allied against the Porte. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 9, Gömlek No: 324-D. In 1784, Ali Murad Khan of Persia and Catherine made plans to partition the Ottoman Empire. Ali Khan would receive Eastern Anatolia and Iraq region. He promised the Russians the control of Northern Persia and Caspian shores which were under Qajar rule. Thus, Ali Murad Khan would get rid of the Qajars while at the same time he would be allies with Russia. However, when Ali Murad died in 1785, this plan also failed like the one in 1778. Atkin, p.37.

⁸⁴ Gökçe, p.83.

⁸⁵ Ali İhsan Bağış, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire: Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy to Istanbul 1776-1794* (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1984), pp.26-27.

⁸⁶ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 27, Gömlek No: 1307.

⁸⁷ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, pp. 153-154.

⁸⁸ Bilge, p.146, Gökçe, pp. 81-82.

The hesitant policy of the Porte once again prevented the concrete results to be achieved. It was not the Georgian army or the King that the Ottomans feared; they simply refrained from provoking Russia which might lead to a new destructing war. However, Russia also was not in a position to intervene directly in this period. What the Ottomans did was to provoke the local people without giving any further support and this type of policy ultimately failed to achieve its goal, in preventing the Russian influence and advance in the Caucasus.

4.5. Imam Mansur and first united Caucasian Muslim resistance against Russia

The year 1785 can be regarded as a turning point in the history of resistance of the people of Caucasus against Russia. As a result of Imam Mansur's efforts, for the first time, various peoples of the Caucasus joined under a single leader to fight against Russia. This also demonstrated the important role of Islam as a uniting force among these people.

Imam Mansur's real name was Ushurma and he was a Chechen⁸⁹ born in Aldy in 1760. He was son of a middle-class family and did not receive any religious or higher education. An interesting aspect of Mansur is that very little

⁸⁹ There were other claims about his origins that he was a Nogay or a Circassian. Even there were fantastic rumours about him being an Italian named Giovanni Battista Boetti. "Some Russians did not believe he existed at all: he was just a symbol wrapped in a green cloak." Montefiore, p.292. For further information on the legend of Mansur see, Franco Venturi, "The Legend of Boetti Sheikh Mansur," *Central Asian Survey*, vol.10, no:1-2, pp.93-101, V.A.Potto, pp. 134-150. Nikolai F. Dubrovin, *O Narodakh Tsentralnogo Severo-Zapodnogo Kavkaza: Ot Priniatiia Gruzii Pod Pokrovitelstvo Rossii Do Vtorozheniya Persov* (1794) vol. II (Nalchik, 2002) pp. 331-409.

information was known about his sudden appearance and his background.⁹⁰ He claimed to have a vision of the Prophet and that he was assigned with the holy task of Jihad.⁹¹ One of the first Ottoman officials sent by Ferah Ali Pasha to investigate the situation, Gazioğlu Mehmed Ağa, reported that Mansur attributed himself a kind of religious leadership. There were even reports of his followers joining him from Antep and Sivas, who previously belonged to the Ottoman ulema. He addressed the Muslims of the Caucasus,

O believers! Know that your life is full of ignorance, and that you have committed sins by drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco. Now you have an opportunity to rectify your mistakes and to find a way out. Give alms to the poor, and fight against the enemy. Anything Russian is forbidden, as is any manner resembling that of the Russians. If you get ill do no go to a Russian physician, because you might end up befriending him.⁹²

On 8 March 1785, General Peutling drafted a report on Mansur. General Mattse, the commander of Vladikavkaz, confirmed the information that Mansur was searching allies to his cause and he communicated with Çupalov, a Kumuk Prince, and Dol Muradov, one of Little Kabardinian nobles. On 2 April 1785, Pavel Potemkin manifested a threatening message to the Chechen and Kumuk peoples regarding Mansur.⁹³ The Porte was also not very much comfortable with the activities of Mansur, since his raids to the Russian territories caused tension between Russia and Constantinople. To prevent any further deterioration of the relations with Russia, Ferah Ali Pasha tried to convince Mansur side with him. He

⁹⁰ "Bir çoban idi bir müddet gâyib oldu sonra İmam Mansur deyu zuhûr etti baktık bizim çoban şarap ve duhân içmeyip ve sâîr bunun gibi nasihat ediyor..." BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-C.

⁹¹ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 27, Gömlek No: 1308, Edmund Burke, *Annual Register...1786* (London, 1788), p.51. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, vol. 2, p.750.

⁹² BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 25, Gömlek No: 1246 and 1247.

⁹³ Kutlu, pp.131-132.

also asked for certain gifts to present to the local leaders to prevent them from allying with Mansur.⁹⁴

On 7 May 1785, Grigory Potemkin ordered Pavel Potemkin to capture the “false prophet”. Potemkin estimated the strength of the rebels around 10,000 while the Russian garrison in the Caucasus amounted to 27,000 men.⁹⁵ Acting on this order, Pavel Potemkin sent General Pieri with 7,000 men to capture Mansur and the first major battle between Mansur and the Russians took place in Aldı on 6 June 1785. Pieri, defying the state of peace between Russia and the Porte, began to bombard the village. Initially the Chechens suffered heavy casualties including Mansur’s elder brother. However, Mansur took command and cornered the Russian army.⁹⁶ Almost 300 Russian soldiers were killed including General Pieri. Those who managed to escape took refuge in the Hacilar fortress.⁹⁷ Among them was Pyotr Ivanovich Bagration, the Georgian prince, who would become one of the prominent generals of the Russian army in the struggle against Napoleon.

When Mansur’s reputation spread, the number of his followers began to increase. Mansur’s next target was Kızlar. On 5 July 1785, he commenced an attack on the well-fortified Kızlar with insufficient forces and thus failed to achieve a major success. Although he managed to capture one of the outer defenses of the fortress, he had to retire after suffering heavy losses when the Cossacks attacked him from the rear.⁹⁸ Later, on 26 July 1785, Imam Mansur joined Dol Muradov and together with the Kabarday cavalry, he organized a new attack on the Kumkalesi (Grigoriopolis) with a 15,000 men strong army. The commander of Kumkalesi easily surrendered and Mansur had gained a foothold

⁹⁴ Gökçe, pp.118-119.

⁹⁵ Dubrovin, *O Narodakh Tsentralnogo Severo-Zapodnogo Kavkaza*, p.343.

⁹⁶ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-B and 1011-D.

⁹⁷ Potto, pp.141-142.

⁹⁸ Kutlu, pp. 133-134.

on the Vladikavkaz-Mozdok line.⁹⁹ Encouraged by this achievement, Mansur besieged Kızlar for a second time on 19-22 August and failed once again.¹⁰⁰ During October, Mansur was looking for supporters to his cause in the Eastern Caucasus while he was once again defeated and routed by the 6,000-men strong force of Pavel Potemkin.¹⁰¹

Süleyman Pasha informed Constantinople that Mansur would not be any sort of trouble to the Porte and that he only tried to warn people about obeying the Sharia.¹⁰² This time Gazi Hasan Pasha was sent for gathering detailed information about Mansur. This mission could arrive in Anapa after five months and Gazi Hasan Pasha reported the information to Constantinople which already had reached Ferah Ali Pasha. In addition to this, the *kaftancı* of Ferah Ali Pasha also brought news to the Porte about Imam Mansur.¹⁰³ He reported that Mansur emerged victorious in both battles he fought against the Russians and that he had nothing against the interests of the Ottoman Empire in the region. On the contrary, he was ready to fight under the Ottomans against Russia.¹⁰⁴

The last of the series of defeats that Mansur had suffered was the Battle of Tatartüp. Considering the significance of this insurrection and encouraged with their victories over Mansur, Pavel Potemkin sent Colonel Nagel with reinforcements from the Crimea and Kumkale.¹⁰⁵ On 2 November 1785, Mansur was defeated and suffered heavy casualties.¹⁰⁶ However, Russians could not

⁹⁹ Gökçe, p.121.

¹⁰⁰ Commander of Sohum, Keleş Bey, sent an envoy, Hasan Fehmi, with various gifts to the Chechen territory and for the first time this man was able to contact Mansur directly. Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, Mehasin, p.364. Fehmi was reporting Mansur's both attempts to capture Kızlar when he failed in both. BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-B and 1011-D.

¹⁰¹ Kutlu, p.135.

¹⁰² BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-E.

¹⁰³ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-A.

¹⁰⁴ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1011-B, Dosya No:27, Gömlek No: 1305-A.

¹⁰⁵ BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 801.

¹⁰⁶ Burke, p.145.

advance any further while Mansur remained in the Kabarday region to prepare for a future assault.¹⁰⁷ However, as a result of these series of defeats, Mansur lost his popular support and most of the nobles deserted him. At the same time, unable to capture Mansur, Prince Potemkin put a handsome price on the Sheikh's head, either dead or alive.¹⁰⁸ In St. Petersburg, there were rumours that Mansur was an emissary of the Porte rather than a mere fanatic, and he was manipulating the "peaceful souls" against Russia by using religion.¹⁰⁹

During 1786, Mansur managed to capture Aleksandrovskaya and a few other fortifications in Kabarday. This allowed the Ottomans to communicate easier with the region because of the broken Russian influence. Mansur also continued his raids towards Kuban and in one case; two hundred Russian soldiers were captured with their commander.¹¹⁰

One of the most prominent supporters of Mansur, Dol Muradov was captured by the Russians in early 1786. Although he was released in June 1786 he could not be effective any more and this resulted in some Ingush and Kabarday princes shifting their allegiance to Russia to fight against Mansur. On 17 January 1787, a major Russian army entered Chechen territories under the command of Colonel Savelyev. In the Battle of Ghaçalq (Kachkalikov), Mansur ambushed this army with his cavalry but had to retire. Two days later, Colonel Retinder once again commenced a Russian offensive only to bombard the villages because there was no army to fight the Russians.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Gökçe, pp.121-122.

¹⁰⁸ Dubrovin, *O Narodakh Tsentralnogo Severo-Zapodnogo Kavkaza*, p.356. A certain cleric, who wanted his name to be kept anonymous. He offered the Russians to assassinate Mansur in exchange for 2000 rubles. The Russian authorities found him credible enough to pay him 500 rubles. Khodarkovsky, p. 411.

¹⁰⁹ Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime 1776-1789 II: Republican Patriotism and the Empires of the East* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991) trans. Burr Litchfield, p. 784

¹¹⁰ Gökçe, p.123.

¹¹¹ Kutlu, pp.138-139.

It was even rumoured that Şahin Geray was allowed to go to Constantinople to prevent him uniting with Mansur. The *kethüda* of Ferah Ali Pasha was executed after his intention to join Mansur was learnt by Bicanoğlu Ali Pasha, who succeeded Ferah Ali Pasha on 16 November 1785.¹¹² In 1786, when Mansur failed to achieve his goals, he sought refuge among the Lezgis. Bulgakov on the other hand demanded from the Porte to punish the Lezgis and recognize the Russian suzerainty over Kartli-Kakheti. However, the Porte received the news of any success of Mansur with joy. Thus, Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha ignored the Russian demands and declared that the Porte was going to support Mansur and his Lezgi followers.¹¹³

4.6. The Caucasus in 1787

The successor of Ferah Ali Pasha, Bicanoğlu Ali Pasha, was not a very brilliant leader. The local population was not pleased of him either. He was too much involved in slave trade and disturbed the local people. Thus, he was replaced by Mustafa Pasha. The latter immediately declared his intention to follow Ferah Ali Pasha and he concluded a treaty, composed of nine articles, with the local tribes which remained valid until 1829. He aimed to convince the people that they had common enemies.¹¹⁴

¹¹² BOA, *HAT*, Dosya No: 28, Gömlek No: 1348 and 1350..

¹¹³ Nicolae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol.5 (1774–1912) (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005) trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, pp.51-53.

¹¹⁴ Gökçe, pp. 128-134.

The Russians believed that behind the attacks of the Daghestan tribes on Georgia were the Ottomans,¹¹⁵ and on 18 May 1786, Bulgakov sent a memorial to the Porte demanding Süleyman Pasha to be restrained from disturbing Kartli-Kakheti. After Bulgakov submitted his memorial, Grand Vizier met with Ambassador Ainslee and wanted to learn where Britain stands but he did not receive a definite answer.¹¹⁶ As a response to the Russian demands, Koca Yusuf Pasha, on 14 July 1786, denied the accusations and protesting the Russian activity in the Caucasus and especially Georgia, accused Russia with the violation of Ottoman territory.¹¹⁷ In the summer of 1787, when Russians responded this by accusing the Ottomans of provoking the local tribes against Russia, the Porte gave a final note to Russia demanding the evacuation of Georgia.¹¹⁸ The road to the Second Ottoman-Russian war was opened in August 1787.

The Russian advance in the Caucasus had mainly a militaristic nature. The fortified lines, from Azak to the Caspian Sea, were established both to protect the Russian settlements and to organize new expeditions to expand towards the south further at the expense of the local peoples. The Russian penetration in the Caucasus was propped up with the independence of the Crimean Khanate in the first place and its annexation into the Russian Empire later in 1783. In addition, Russia also took advantage of the Christian population of this region to protect its interests. Although the complete annexation of the Georgian lands could be realized a few decades later, during this thirteen years period, Russia established a strong foothold in the Caucasus. These aggressive policies of Russia ignited local

¹¹⁵ Ahmed Vâsıf Efendi, p.354.

¹¹⁶ Bağış, p.29-31.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p.26-27.

¹¹⁸ Gvosdev, p.61.

resistance and the movement of Imam Mansur emerged as the first united Muslim resistance in the Caucasus. The failure of Mansur against the regular armies of Russia and increasing Russian presence in Kartli-Kakheti, at the borders of the Ottoman Empire seriously disturbed the Porte. The combination of these developments was to become a reason of the beginning of a new Ottoman-Russian war in August 1787.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD BATTLEGROUND: INCREASING RUSSIAN INFLUENCE OVER THE BALKANS

5.1. The Balkans between the Ottoman Empire and Russia

The Balkans had a distinct place in the Ottoman-Russian relations during the 18th and 19th centuries.¹ The main reason was the religious connection between the Russians and the Orthodox peoples of the Balkans living under the Ottoman rule. During the 18th century, religion was a strong motive in the policies of the Russian Empire. It was not primarily for the sake of religious affection, but instead the religious affiliation with the Balkan peoples was manipulated by the Tsars against the Porte.

¹ For a further detailed account of the Balkans during this period see, Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For a general history of the Balkans under the Ottoman rule see, L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

Russian interest and activity in the Balkans mainly dates back to the beginning of the 18th century. The increasing Russian involvement in the affairs of the Balkans was a direct result of Russian territorial expansion during the 17th century. The Ottoman Empire became one of the major opponents of Russia, thus the Orthodox inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire became an indispensable asset for the Russian rulers to use as a threat against the Porte.²

For the first time in 1711, during the campaign of Prut, Peter the Great tried to turn the Christian population of the Balkans against their “infidel” masters. Peter the Great called the Balkan peoples to fight against the Ottomans,

“for faith and fatherland, for your honor and glory, for the freedom and liberty of yourself and your descendants.” Thus would “the descendants of the heathen Mohammed be driven out into their old fatherland, the Arabian sands and steppes.”³

Although both Constantin Brâncoveanu of Wallachia and Dimitrie Cantemir of Moldavia promised Russia military support, only Cantemir could remain true to his word but still no popular uprising had occurred.⁴ Defeat of the Russian army on the banks of the Prut River was also a major disaster for the Principalities.⁵ Since the Sultan perceived that he could not rely on the local boyars anymore, he decided to appoint the H ospodars himself from among the

² For a detailed account of the Russian relations with the Balkan peoples see, Ariadna Pavlovna Bazhova, *Russko-Yugoslavianskie Otnosheniia vo Vtoroy Polovine XVIII v.* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo “Nauka”, 1982).

³ Stavrianos, p.179.

⁴ William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), pp.33-36. After the defeat of the Russian army, Cantemir escaped to Russia with Peter the Great. In 15 August 1714, after peace was finally concluded with Russia, Brâncoveanu and his four sons were brought to Constantinople and executed.

⁵ Among the Balkan countries, the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia had a special administration. Since their annexation to the Empire in the 15th century, Ottomans favored an autonomous rule in these principalities. Governors of both Wallachia and Moldavia were chosen among the local elite. They were serving as a buffer zone against Poland and Habsburgs. Besides, they had to pay a certain amount of yearly taxation to Constantinople. Both sides were benefiting from this deal. Ottomans was free from dealing with administrative burden of Trans-Danubian areas, while the governors of the Principalities were free both in their domestic and foreign affairs.

Phanariotes⁶ of Istanbul. In 1715, Nicholas Mavrocordatos was appointed as the Hospodar of both principalities and thus begun the age of Phanariotes (1711-1821).⁷ The English consul to the Principalities during the 1820s, have later remarked that the appointment of the Phanariotes was the worst thing that happened to the people of Wallachia and Moldavia.⁸

Nicholas Mavrocordatos, was following policies contrary to the interests of the boyars in an arbitrary way. He used the authority of the Metropolitan to inflict death penalties for minor reasons.⁹ As a response to the harsh treatments of the Hospodars, Boyars made their intentions clear for establishing a Christian regime when the opportunity arose. During the 1739 campaign, boyar families sent petitions to the Tsaritsa to annex the Principalities into Russia. Thus, Russia once again called the Christians to rise against the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ Ghica II escaped from Moldavia while General von Münnich was welcomed by the local aristocracy who wanted the Hospodar to be deposed. However, soon after the

⁶ For a definition and discussion of the Phanariots see, Christine M. Philiou, "Worlds, Old and New: Phanariot Networks and the Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," PhD. Dissertation, Princeton University (New Jersey, 2004), pp. 8-11.

⁷ Kurt W. Treptow (ed.), *A History of Romania* (Iași: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1996) p.194-195. For a general account of this period see, Andrei Oțetea (ed.), *The History of the Romanian People* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), pp.254-281.

⁸ Wilkinson, p.95. The Phanariot regime was nothing but beneficial or favourable to the local aristocracy. As a result of this new regulation, the seat of the Hospodar was used to be sold to the highest bidder. During the mid-18th century, it took 30,000 golden pounds to be the Hospodar of Moldavia, while it was 45,000 for Wallachia. Their respective revenues were 180,000 and 300,000 golden pounds. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, p.103. However, there was a constant fear of being deposed and executed, which resulted in the arbitrary rule of the Phanariots to please Constantinople at all costs. After having been appointed, these new governors tried to compensate their expenditures and please Constantinople with large sums of income. They squeezed the local people by increasing the taxes to achieve these goals. These carefree policies of the Phanariotes in the first half of the 18th century resulted with a huge population loss in the principalities. What the rulers could not comprehend was that the economy of the principalities depended on agriculture and heavy taxation on the villagers would cause reaction which would ultimately hurt the economy. This was evident especially during the mid-18th century when almost half of the population deserted the Principalities. George F. Jewsbury, *The Russian Annexation of Bessarabia: 1774-1828, A Study of Imperial Expansion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p.13.

⁹ Nicolae Iorga, *A History of Roumania* (London: Adelphi Terrace, 1925), trans. Joseph McCabe, p.192.

¹⁰ Jewsbury, p.18, Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, p.68.

Treaty of Belgrade was signed, the Russian armies left and Oltenia was also returned to the Porte by the Habsburgs.¹¹

It is important to point out that the Habsburg regime was not any lenient than the Ottoman. After Banat and Oltenia were ceded to Austria in 1718, the Habsburg authorities also ignored the local aristocracy and tried to establish a central rule to improve agriculture. Also in Morea, the Turkish rule was harsh but still not harsher than Venetian rule and under the Ottomans, for the most part the Greeks had the wealth of the country in their hands.¹²

After the treaty of Belgrade till the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774 begun, the Principalities were no longer a primary political object of any neighbouring Empire. "At that stage, the suzerainty of the Porte was a shield that ensured their existence within a policy of balance."¹³ During the period preceding the Ottoman-Russian war of 1768-1774, Russia tried to disturb the Ottoman rule in the Balkans through its agents in Greece, Bosnia, and Montenegro. The hope was embedded in the peoples of the Balkans, either Slav or Greek, that the old prophecy about the destruction of the Ottoman Empire was about to be accomplished.¹⁴

¹¹ Following the treaty of Belgrade until the Ottoman Russian war of 1768-1774, Constantine Mavrocordatos was the most important actor in the principalities who initiated a series of reforms to improve the conditions of the people. Serfdom was abolished in both Principalities during 1740s. However, these kinds of reforms were contrary to the interests of the nobility and as a result they continued to search for external support. Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 3-4.

¹² Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime 1768-1776: The First Crisis* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) trans. Burr Litchfield, p.25.

¹³ Gheorghe Platon, "The Romanians Caught Between the Turkish, Austrian and Russian Empires." In *Romania: A Historic Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) ed. Dinu C. Giurescu and Stephen Fischer-Galati, p.150

¹⁴ J.A.R. Marriot, *Anglo-Russian Relations 1689-1943* (London: Methuen & Co., 1944), p.45. There was an interesting prophecy from a 1769 dated gazette, according to which Ottoman Empire was destined to doom at the hands of the Venetians and Russians and when these two capture Constantinople, they would elect a Christian king. During the 18th century, this old prophecy was quite popular according the famous historian Rulhiere the author of *Histoire de l'anarchie de Pologne*. Venturi, p.27

5.2. The Balkans during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774 and Küçük Kaynarca

In January 1768, after the Ottoman-Russian war broke out, Catherine the Great made a call to the “all Orthodox peoples groaning under the Ottoman yoke”¹⁵ to rise against their “infidel” masters. Some of the boyars invited the Russian invasion and the Russian generals established contacts with the nobility.¹⁶ In 1770, Russian armies under the command of Pyotr Rumiantsev captured Iași and Bucharest. They were greeted by the local population as an army of liberation.¹⁷ During the long war, which lasted for six years, the Russian armies greatly benefited from the collaboration of the local people and received both military and logistic support. The victories of the Russian forces against the Ottoman armies entailed the increase of Russian influence in the region.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the expected uprising of the Christian population did not occur in the Principalities.

During the negotiations which took place in Focșani and Bucharest, the boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia wanted to regain their absolute autonomy under the guarantee of Russia, Prussia and the Habsburgs. The regime was to be either a monarchy or an oligarchy but their main goal was to get rid of the Phanariots.¹⁹ The boyars were comfortable even with uniting the principalities under the Russian suzerainty, only with the condition that a committee of boyars,

¹⁵ Venturi, p.35.

¹⁶ Iorga, *A History of Roumania*, p.193.

¹⁷ Gladys Scott Thomson, *Catherine the Great and Expansion of Russia* (London: The English Universities Press, 1966), p.138.

¹⁸ Jewsbury, p.18.

¹⁹ Treptow, p.212.

composed of twelve families, would retain its authority.²⁰ However, in general, an important aspect of the petitions sent to Russia was that the local boyars or clergy was only asking the Tsaritsa to send them aid to free them of their problems rather than expressing a wish to be annexed into the Russian Empire.²¹

Another major theatre of war during the Ottoman-Russian war was the Peloponnesian peninsula.²² The Greeks of Morea rebelled against the Porte in 1770. They were encouraged by the Russians and received material support through the Mediterranean navy of Russia. Antonio Psaros, an important figure in the preparation of the insurrection, pointed out that unless Russia would not send a considerable force to support the Greeks, no conclusive result could be achieved with this rebellion.²³

The rumours were circulating about a united Russo-Greek army of 50,000 was being formed and during the spring of 1770 there was an optimistic mood among the Greeks that they were about to be liberated from the Ottoman rule. However, the idea of liberation brought only a great deal of horrors and massacres. “This war will be the most atrocious ever seen, because the Turks will slaughter any Greeks they capture, and no quarter will be given by Greeks or Muscovites to Turks or Jews.”²⁴

When the Ottomans commenced their counter-attack by sending the Albanian irregulars, this time Greeks suffered massacres of the same kind which

²⁰ Iorga, *A History of Roumania*, p.194.

²¹ Jewsbury, p.21. Perhaps an exception to this would be Mihai Cantacuzino, who in 1772 asked for independence or else Russian protectorate for his lands. These petitions were used by the Russian diplomats in 1774 to demand certain rights on the principalities.

²² For a further detailed account of the insurrection see, Venturi, pp.23-74.

²³ Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* vol.4, part 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), pp. 391-392, Venturi, pp. 28-29,38. Indeed the Russian expeditionary force was so small that it disappointed the Greeks and when they lost their will to fight against the Ottomans, the Russians interpreted the Greek attitude as treason. Stavrianos, p.189

²⁴ Venturi, p.41.

they committed earlier and the captives were sold as slaves.²⁵ Since the Russian garrison in Morea was not strong enough to fight against the Ottoman forces, the newly arriving volunteers from other parts of Greece were sent to the front. After Aleksey Orlov and Dolgorukii were wounded in action, the Russian forces had to retreat. This was followed by the wrath of the Albanians. As a result of this continuous fighting, Morea turned into a wasteland while its population had fled to mountains, if they were not already sold as slave.²⁶

Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca is a major turning point regarding the Russo-Ottoman relations in the Balkans. Although Russia gave up its conquests in the Balkans, namely Wallachia and Moldavia, it gained the right to intervene into the domestic politics of these Principalities. The Crimea became independent and Russia extended its borders to the banks of the river Bug. The vague rights that Russia had gained with the signing of Küçük Kaynarca over the Christian subjects of the Porte, was to become a reason to justify possible Russian interventions to the affairs of Balkan Christians. Last but not least, according to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Russia had gained extensive rights to open consulates in the Ottoman territories.²⁷

²⁵ Venturi, p.44.

²⁶ Ibid, p.46.

²⁷ For an account of the Russian consulates in the Balkans see, Osman Köse, “Balkanlarda Rus Konsolosluklarının Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri,” *Turkish Studies*, vol.1, no. 2 (Fall, 2006), pp. 153-171. Russian ambassador was claiming that it was necessary for his country to open consulates in certain cities to protect the commercial interests of his country. Müntehabat, pp.503-505.

5.3. Russian penetration into the Balkans after 1774

After 1774, Russia constantly tried to organize and support local partisans who were in favour of departing their ways with the Porte. The Russian consuls in Thessalonica, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Crete were mainly dealing with gathering intelligence and provoking the Christian population against the Sultan.²⁸ Russia also had established consulates in several Balkan cities.²⁹ These consuls were practically Russian agents who were spreading the ideas of revolt and discontent among the Christian subjects of the Sultan. According to the reports of Diez, Prussian Ambassador at the Porte, the Jesuit priests who were expelled from various countries of Europe were assigned by the Russians in the Balkans with the duty of provoking the Christian subjects of the Sultan.³⁰ Russia was also supporting the Greek pirates in financial and military terms. These pirates were harassing the Ottoman sailors in the Mediterranean and the Aegean.³¹

As long as the Ottoman authority diminished in this region, the Christians of the Balkans looked for cooperation and support from external powers. In 1781, deputies from Montenegro and in 1783 from Moldavia were asking for protection from the Habsburgs against the pressure from Constantinople.

²⁸ Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul: Tatav, 2001), p.206.

²⁹ Russia also established a consulate in Sinop. However the local people were not used to any kind of foreign representatives and gave a hard time to the Russian consul who in February 1785 had to flee to Crimea which resulted with a Russian protest through the Ambassador at Constantinople. Ahmed Vâsıf Efendi, *Mehasinü'l-Àsâr ve Hakâikü'l-Ahbâr* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.226-227.

³⁰ Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1985), p.139.

³¹ Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp.24-25. For Russian efforts to increase its influence in the Mediterranean see, Thomas Fréller, "In Search of a Mediterranean Base: The Order of St. John and Russia's Great Power Plans During the Rule of Tsar Peter the Great and Tsarina Catherine II," *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 8, no. 1-2 (2004), pp. 3-30.

5.3.1. Wallachia and Moldavia

To expand its influence and territories further towards the Danube River, Russia first had to find a stable pro-Russian environment which required political, diplomatic, and military preparations. The opportunity presented itself to the Russian officials in Wallachia and Moldavia as the Ottoman weakness further increased during the last quarter of the 18th century.³²

The worsened condition of the Principalities during the course of the 18th century also worked for the benefit of the Russian rulers. The Christian population of the Balkans was frequently disturbed by the renegade janissaries. When they did not receive protection even though they paid heavy taxes, these people started to question the legitimacy of the Ottoman regime. Thus, these uncomfortable conditions prepared the ground for further Russian influence.³³

The article 16 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was directly related to the Principalities. Russians gained the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Principalites which included investigating the Ottoman policies and receiving petitions from the Hospodars. The Ottoman Empire could not depose any Hospodar arbitrarily and should protect the rights of the Christians by allowing them to perform their religion and to build and repair their churches.³⁴ Later, Russia did not hesitate to intervene on behalf of its Orthodox co-religionists and demanded from Constantinople to follow such policies to secure the stability and tranquility in the Principalities.³⁵

³² Jewsbury, p.7.

³³ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p.69.

³⁴ Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878*, p.5-6. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, pp.69-70.

³⁵ Jewsbury, p.23.

The Hospodars of the Principalities were one of the important sources of information for the Sultan, especially regarding the European affairs.³⁶ The autonomous history of the Principalities produced local rulers who were experienced in diplomacy and relations with the Great Powers. Besides, they were used to be governed from a remote center and learnt to approach a new master when they realized the power of the old one was in decline. Rumiantsev commented that Russia's supporters in Moldavia and Wallachia were “similar to Janus, having two faces and two heart, and both are cunning.”³⁷

After 1774, Russia got the upper hand in the affairs of the Principalities and it was difficult for the Porte to deal with Russian advance alone.³⁸ Russia increased its pressure on the Porte, especially by using the partisan groups in Iași and Bucharest, and the Porte had to comply with this as long as no other great power interest was at stake. The Russians promoted the personal interests of the Boyars for the Russians knew that Boyars would cooperate with whoever offered the greatest benefit. During the late 18th century, the Russian role increased almost to a level of virtual protectorate.³⁹ No matter how significant the religious brotherhood was presentet, in the worldly affairs of Catherine II, political interests were almost prominent.⁴⁰

Since the Phanariots ruled for short periods and did not have any connection with the local population, they presented a harsh regime by heavy taxation. “The weight of this system on the population can be appreciated by

³⁶ Thomas Naff, “Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789–1807, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 83, no. 3 (Aug.-Sep., 1963), p.302, Sarıcaoğlu, p.225. For examples of reports from the Hospodars see, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archives of Prime Ministry of Turkey, hereafter *cited as*; BOA), HAT, Dosya No: 171, Gömlek No: 7318-A and C. Dosya No: 9, Gömlek No: 326-E, Dosya No: 17, Gömlek No:744.

³⁷ Jewsbury, p.8.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.7.

noting the growth in the amount of tribute paid to the Sultan in the last part of the eighteenth century from one to six million *kuruş*. The Hospodar and his colleagues could take what was left over.”⁴¹

In 1777, problems occurred in Moldavia. Grigore Ghica III, who was known to be pro-Russian, was executed and replaced with Constantine Demetrius Mourousis who was a dragoman of the Porte. The Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, Stakhiev sent a note to the Porte to protest this nomination, however, when the Ottomans proved that Ghica’s policies had been contrary to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Russia could not pressure the Porte any further.⁴²

In 1780, Russia wanted to assign Sergey Lazarevich Lashkarev as consul for Wallachia, Moldavia and Bessarabia. However, considering the personality and influence of Lashkarev, the Ottomans refused this offer and wanted him to reside in Silistre where intense commercial relations between Russia and the Porte existed. The Ottomans declared that, if Russia insisted on this appointment, they would interpret this as a hostile act. Finally, the French Ambassador Saint-Priest became the mediator, and in January 1780, both sides agreed on the opening a Russian consulate in Silistre.⁴³ Yet, this was followed by the opening of Russian consulates in Iaşi and Bucharest in 1782. The activities of these consuls together with the ones located in the Greek islands disturbed the Porte significantly.⁴⁴

On 12 January 1785, the Hospodar of Moldavia Alexander Mavrocordatos (Delibey) was deposed and replaced with Alexander Mavrocordatos (Firaris). The Porte justified this change by claiming that the policies of the former were

⁴¹ Jewsbury, pp. 9-11.

⁴² Nicolae Jorga, *Osmalı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol.5 (1774–1912) (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005) trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, p. 28.

⁴³ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarslı, vol. 4, part 1, p.475.

⁴⁴ Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: MacMillan, 1966), p.13.

harmful both to the Porte and the peoples of Moldavia.⁴⁵ Later on 7 April 1786, to counter-balance the activities of Russian consul Voinovich, Nicholas Mavrogenes, a dragoman of Gazi Hasan Pasha, was appointed as the Hospodar of Wallachia. The former Hospodar, Mihai Draco Suçu was caught in a serious illness which prevented him from performing the duties of his office.⁴⁶ Although, this appointment was regarded by Russia as an act contrary to the terms of the treaty, the Ottomans did not consider this as a problem.⁴⁷ Again on 14 December 1786, because of the “necessities of the period” the Ottomans deposed the Hospodar of Moldavia, Alexandru Mavrocordat Firaris, and replaced him with Alexander Hypsilanti, who was the Hospodar of Wallachia during 1774-1782, a man whose policies had already been tested by the Ottomans.⁴⁸

In 1786, when Alexander Mavrocordatos Firaris was deposed, Yakov Ivanovich Bulgakov, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, sent a note to the Porte condemning this act,⁴⁹ while Mavrocordatos seek refuge in Russian territories. This situation was transformed into a crisis as both sides refused to give in the demands of the other, and this conflict was to become another cause of the second Ottoman Russian war in the following year.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, p.210.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.332. Taylesanizade Hafız Abdullah Efendi, *İstanbul'un Uzun Dört Yılı (1785-1789)* (İstanbul: TATAV, 2003), p.142

⁴⁷ Jorga, vol.5, pp.53-56

⁴⁸ Ahmed Vasîf Efendi, p.372. “iktizâ-yı vakt ü hâl hasebiyle azlı lâzım ve bu esnâda Boğdan’dâ mücerrebü'l-etvâr bir voyvodanın vücûdu emr-i mühimm olduğuna binâen...”

⁴⁹ Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878*, pp.5-6.

⁵⁰ Ahmed Vâsif Efendi, pp.380-381

5.3.2. Greece

In 1774, the situation of the Greeks differed from the other Balkan peoples since they had already rebelled against the Porte and caused serious problems during the war. So, they were not in a position to ask any concessions. The Albanian irregulars were still terrorizing Morea after the Ottoman-Russia war was over. Thanks to the efforts of Gazi Hasan Pasha, the Albanian rule over the Greeks ended and once again central authority was established in Morea in 1779.⁵¹ Nevertheless, as a result of the population loss during these nine years which was estimated as 100,000,⁵² the Ottoman revenue from this region was decreased by half.⁵³ Besides, according to the convention of Aynalıkavak, the Porte agreed to pay compensation to the Greeks whose lands were confiscated during these years.⁵⁴

Russia tried to form partisan groups also among the Greeks. The consuls who were commissioned to the Aegean and Mediterranean islands (Crete, Rhodes and Cyprus) were responsible for gathering all kinds of information and provoking the local Christians against the Ottomans. An eye-witness reported that, “there is not a rock in the Archipelago where there is not to be found a Greek in Russian uniform exercising an authority which is tyrannical towards the Turkish chiefs and insulting towards the agents of the Great powers.”⁵⁵ These consulates,

⁵¹ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, vol. 4, part 1, pp. 434-435. “That resolute commander defeated the Albanians in the plain of Tripolitsa, and erected there a pyramid of 4,000 heads as a trophy and a warning.” William Miller, *The Turkish Restoration in Greece, 1718-1797* (New York: MacMillan, 1921), p.28.

⁵² Miller, p.30.

⁵³ Jorga, vol.5, p.32.

⁵⁴ Miller, p.30.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p.8-9, ⁵⁵ Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), p.49.

like the ones in other Balkan cities, were used as centers for partisan groups to provoke the local Christians.

5.3.3. Montenegro

In 1766, an impostor of Peter III, Stefan the Little, managed to hold power in Montenegro.⁵⁶ Although Stephen did not openly declared himself to be the exact personality of the deceased Tsar, he wanted to be called after him. He aimed to resolve the problems among the clans and after unifying his country he was going to concentrate his forces against his suzerain, namely the Ottomans.⁵⁷ Since Catherine the Great tried to form alliances with the Balkan peoples, she sent Major-General Yuri V. Dolgorukii on a mission to Montenegro however the Russian mission could not achieve any major success.⁵⁸ In 1773, Stefan the Little was assassinated. A Greek from Morea was hired either by the Turks or the Venetians. He served Stefan as his servant and then killed him by cutting his throat ear to ear.⁵⁹

During late 1770s, relations between Russia and Montenegro deteriorated and in 1777, Catherine II refused to accept an envoy from Montenegro. Russia

⁵⁶ He was told to be an Italian whose name was Bandini and escaped Russia after he faced a criminal charge. Madariaga, Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix, 2003), p.210.

⁵⁷ Venturi, p.10.

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp.12-13. For a detailed account of Catherine II and Stephen the Little see, Michael Boro Petrovich, "Catherine II and a False Peter III in Montenegro," *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Apr., 1955), pp. 169-194.

⁵⁹ Venturi, p.15.

was trying to be in good terms with the Venetians and remained indifferent to the affairs of the Balkans during 1780s.⁶⁰

The next challenge awaiting the Montenegrins was Kara Mahmud Bushati of Albania. He became the governor of İskodra (Shkoder) in 1779 and was an ambitious leader. He defeated the Ottoman forces in the Southern Albania thus came into conflict with Constantinople. Aydoslu Mehmet Pasha was sent to handle the situation, however he also joined Kara Mahmud. As a result, Abdulhamid I ordered the executions of both unruly figures. Simultaneously, the Sultan also wanted his Grand Vizier to commission a Pasha to deal with the rebels of Silistre, since it would be beneficial for a possible future war against Russia.⁶¹

Kara Mahmud's opposition to the Ottoman Empire attracted the attention of Russia and the Habsburgs who wanted to use him against the Porte. Later in 1785, Kara Mahmud invaded Montenegro and sent his words to Belgrade and Bosnia that he was willing to fight against the Habsburgs in the case of any conflict.⁶² Finally, Kara Mahmud was forgiven by the Sultan and became an ally of the Porte in the Ottoman-Russian war of 1787-1792.⁶³

5.4. The Greek Project

After the infamous manifesto of Peter the Great, the Greek Project is the second project of a comprehensive Russian foreign policy in regard to the Balkans. In the case of Peter's manifesto, there was an observable tradition,

⁶⁰ Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878*, p.95.

⁶¹ Sarıcaoğlu, p.186.

⁶² Taylesanizade Hafız Abdullah Efendi, pp.104-105.

⁶³ Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878*, p.96.

lacking documentary evidence. Whereas, Catherine's Greek project had a clearly authentic documentary foundation but a doubtful tradition.⁶⁴

The Greek Project, though mystical it may seem was a very much pragmatic asset for foreign policy-making. That Potemkin or Bezborodko were dedicated to the implementation of this policy, did not necessarily implicate the same thing for Catherine II, who was a realistic policy-maker. While Potemkin was dreaming of a Kingdom of Dacia to protect himself from the heir, Paul, Bezborodko's dedication was a consequence of his hate towards the Ottomans. In addition, Bezborodko, who tried to emphasize his role in the decision-making process, claimed that Catherine II was devoted to the project. However, Catherine II was not looking forward to see the Balkan peoples falling under the suzerainty of the Habsburgs in place of the Porte. Her attitudes such as naming her grandchildren Constantine or changing some of the names of the cities on the Black Sea coast were affected partly from the pro-Greek trend of her age. Although these were causing anxiety in her enemies, at the same time she was not committed to any concrete policy decision.⁶⁵

The first mention of the Greek Project had appeared in 1779 after the naming of Catherine's grandson.⁶⁶ In 1780, Bezborodko drafted the Greek Project in three levels. According to the first possibility, Russia would annex the Crimea together with some Aegean Islands while the Habsburgs would claim parts of Serbia. The second option was the establishment of the Kingdom of Dacia over the lands of the Danubian Principalities which would be ruled by Potemkin

⁶⁴ Hugh Ragsdale, "Russian Projects of Conquest in the Eighteenth Century," in Hugh Ragsdale (ed.), *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.75.

⁶⁵ Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), pp.23-24.

⁶⁶ Ragsdale, "Russian Projects..", pp. 82-83. Potemkin advised Catherine to assign Greek nurses to the boy. The coins that were struck for Constantine aimed to establish a connection between the Russian Prince and Constantine the Great.

independently. The last one considered the total annihilation of the Ottoman Empire and partition of its lands, while the old Byzantine Empire would be resurrected with its center at Constantinople and ruled by Catherine's grandson Constantine.⁶⁷

Catherine and Joseph met in Mohilev during May-July of 1780.⁶⁸ Although Joseph II did not refuse the offer of Catherine, he still had some reservations about the practical applicability of the project.⁶⁹ The death of Maria Theresa in December 1780 left Joseph II, who was defending expansionist policies, alone in his decision regarding the foreign policy which also enabled the Russo-Austrian alliance to be further developed.⁷⁰ The discussions of a defensive alliance began in July of 1780 and finally in January 1781, with the efforts of Count Ludwig Cobenzl, the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, a defensive alliance was drafted. Despite some complications, finally on 18 May 1781, the alliance was ratified. This provided the Habsburgs with Russian support against Prussia and the Russians with Austrian support against the Porte.⁷¹

When an insurrection broke out in the Crimea against the Russian puppet Şahin Geray Khan, Catherine informed Joseph that she has to take necessary precautions on her borders to suppress this revolt. In return, Joseph II told Catherine II that he was supporting her decisions completely on this matter.⁷² As a result, on 21 September 1782, Catherine II, in her own hand-writing, sent a letter to Joseph II about the final plans regarding the Greek Project. Although in

⁶⁷ Hugh Ragsdale, "Evaluating the Traditions of Russian Aggression: Catherine II and the Greek Project," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol.66, no.1 (Jan., 1988), p.94.

⁶⁸ Douglas Smith (ed. and trans.), *Love and Conquest: Personal Correspondence of Catherine the Great ad Prince Grigory Potemkin* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), pp. 108-109 (letter 246-22 May 1780).

⁶⁹ Thomson, pp. 178-180.

⁷⁰ Beydilli, p.124.

⁷¹ Smith, p.110-113.

⁷² Karl A. Roider, *Austria's Eastern Question 1700-1790* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.162.

principle there was nothing in disagreement, Joseph was anxious about the reaction of Prussia and France.⁷³ After the Anglo-French rivalry over the colonies came to an end, France once again wanted to take an active part in the European affairs and as a reaction to the Austro-Russian plans, it refused to be a part of any kind of partition of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴

The Greek Project was also interpreted as a diplomatic game of the period which was ambitious but unrealistic rather than a “concrete plan of action.”⁷⁵ No one but Bezborodko firmly believed in the feasibility of it. The Russian expansion and colonization towards the south was a more gradual one which necessitated the control of the waterways and cleaning the area from foreign threats.⁷⁶ There was not any mention of this grandiose project in the correspondence of the Russian Ambassador at Vienna. However, this does not prove its inexistence. Rather, it shows that Catherine II wanted to keep this top-secret.⁷⁷

Gaffron, the Ambassador of Frederick at Constantinople, informed the Porte about the Greek Project.⁷⁸ According to the detailed report of Frederick, Russian and Austrian armies were preparing for a new war against the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁹ However, in 1787 chances of achieving a project such as this one was much less than it was in 1782. First of all, it was a necessary condition to provoke the Ottomans to war before going through with the rest of the plan. Russia failed

⁷³ Ragsdale, “Russian Projects..”, p.83. The correspondence on this project is found in the Austrian archives and there has not been any new materials found during the 20th century to alter the interpretation.

⁷⁴ Jorga, vol. 5, p.39.

⁷⁵ Ragsdale, “Russian Projects..”, pp. 84-85.

⁷⁶ Marc Raeff, “On the Imperial Manner,” in Marc Raeff (ed.), *Catherine the Great: A Profile* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), p.201.

⁷⁷ Ragsdale, “Evaluating the Traditions of Russian Aggression..”, p.97

⁷⁸ BOA, HAT, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 799.

⁷⁹ Beydilli, p.126. The Russian army was divided into five divisions; Potemkin with 40,000 soldiers would attack Özi, while Rumiantsev with 24,000 men to Bender, Repnin with 12,000 men to Hotin, Pavel Potemkin with 15,000 men to Georgia. 15 men-of-war would be sent to Mediterranean and eight men-of-war to the Black Sea. In addition to these, Austria was going to try capturing Serbia and Bosnia with an army of 60,000-70,000 strong.

to achieve this goal in 1783, and when it came to 1787, the international politics had a much more different shape which would not let such a major downfall without any protest.⁸⁰ Three main reasons can be stated why the Greek Project could not be realized;

[First of all] the lenient reaction on the part of the Ottoman Empire to the Russian annexation of the Crimea, which did not lead to war; secondly, the end of the war of independence between Britain and United Colonies in North America together with the vain efforts by Spain to conquer British Gibraltar, which enabled the parties to press for the maintenance of the status quo in Eastern Europe, and finally, the quarrel of the allies over the spoils yet to be won.⁸¹

5.5. The Balkans in 1787

In late 1786, Catherine II gave full authority to Potemkin over the southern policies of the Russian Empire. With this authority, Potemkin informed Bulgakov about the military preparations of Russia and that he might call him back to St. Petersburg soon. He also wanted Bulgakov to report the military condition of the Porte.⁸²

The Porte accused Russia, to Prussia and England, of violating the terms of Küçük Kaynarca by giving asylum to the deposed Hospodar of Moldavia, Mavrocordatos, mistreating the Muslims in her territories and provoking the

⁸⁰ Later, after the Ottoman-Russian war of 1787-1792 had begun, *The Times* was criticizing the policy of Catherine and Potemkin for thinking that their grandiose project on the Ottoman Empire would go without any opposition from the Great Powers of Europe. *The Times*, Tuesday, Mar 15, 1791; pg. 2; issue 1952; col. D.

⁸¹ Theo Maarten Van Lint, “The Prophecy of Liberation: Margar Xōčenc' Erewanc'i and Catherine the Great's conquest of the Crimea (1783): A paragraph in the history of the Armenian Church in Russia,” *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, vol.53, no.3-4 (2000), p.285.

⁸² Ragsdale, “Russian Projects..”, p.88.

Ottoman subjects against the Sultan. Catherine II replied these accusations in kind, only to increase the tension between the two empires.⁸³

Bulgakov's request for a consulate in Varna was once more rejected on 22 January 1787, when the Ottomans had learnt about the projected visit of Catherine II to the Crimea.⁸⁴ Actually, during the negotiations with the Ottomans in the spring of 1787, Catherine II was more lenient compared to Potemkin's aggressive attitude. She agreed with some of the demands of the Porte which would not directly harm the interests of her Empire like the change of the vice-consul of Moldavia or letting the Ottomans establish consulate in the Crimea. However, with the orders he received from Potemkin, Bulgakov rejected all these demands and paved the way for the Ottoman declaration of war in August 1787.⁸⁵

As it was the case in the Crimea and in the Caucasus, during this thirteen years period, Russia irreversibly got the upper hand in the Balkans against the Ottoman Empire. The efforts of the Russian consuls to provoke the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan, prepared the ground for the national awakening of these peoples in the 19th century. The Russian influence and the power of the âyâns increased at the expense of the central authority of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Ottoman Empire practically lost control over the parts of the Balkans. The inescapable rise of Russian role in the Balkans, especially in the Principalities, would become one of the causes of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1787-1792.

⁸³ Jorga, vol. 5, pp.58-60, Ragsdale, "Russian Projects..", p.89.

⁸⁴ Ali İhsan Bağış, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire: Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy to Istanbul 1776-1794* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1984), p.32.

⁸⁵ Ragsdale, "Russian Projects..", pp. 90-91.

CHAPTER VI

FROM 1774 TO 1787: SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

6.1. Black Sea Trade

Before the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, although the British and especially French had dominated the Mediterranean commerce, the Black Sea trade was compensating this loss for the Ottoman Empire.¹ This intense and productive commercial relation also connected the merchants of the Black Sea to Anatolia and Constantinople which was neutralizing the effects of the military defeats.² However, the territorial losses that Ottomans suffered, negatively affected the Black Sea economy by disturbing the economic unity and commercial relationships which had been continuing for a long time.

The Russian conquest of the northern Black Sea also falls into this category of territorial losses. Ottoman textile producers were one of the groups

¹ For a general account of the trade in the Black Sea see, M. De Peyssonel, *Traite sur le Commerce de la Mer Noire* 2 vols. (Paris, 1787)

² Karpat, Kemal, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3. (Jul., 1972), p.246.

which effected from this loss of territory. “Thereafter, the new imperial frontiers between Russia and the Ottoman Empire impeded or choked off altogether the longstanding flow of goods and peoples between two areas that had been part of one economic zone but now were divided between two empires.”³

Although Russia had already acquired trade rights in the Black Sea with the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, it was not allowed to anchor any commercial vessel or men-of-war even in the Azak Sea. Thus, the Russian presence in the Black Sea was very limited during this period.⁴ Still, it was beneficial to the Russian merchants. Article 11 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca allowed Russia’s commercial activities both in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, which also meant unrestricted passage through the straits. Besides, the Russian merchants acquired the same rights with the merchants of France and England. Consequently, for the first time, Russia had the right for trade with its own ships.⁵

Although the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca allowed Russian ships to trade in the Black Sea, the struggle over the Crimea was a major obstacle in this period. In 1775, a Russian merchant who wanted to buy timber from Sinop had to leave the port as a result of the hostile attitude of the local merchants. There was also the problem of customs. In some cases the Ottomans charged the Russian merchants more than once with the same duty. The buyers were charged with another tax, *masdarriyye*⁶, although it was abolished in the first place. As a result of this heavy taxation, Russian merchants were having difficult time selling their goods on an

³ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.126-127.

⁴ İdris Bostan, “Rusya’nın Karadeniz’de Ticarete Başlaması,” in İdris Bostan, *Beylikten İmparatorluğa Osmanlı Denizciliği* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), p.290-294.

⁵ İdris Bostan, “Rusya’nın Karadeniz’de Ticarete başlaması,” p.288. One of the major weakness of Russia was its lack of shipping. During 1773-1777, compared to the total number of 1748 ships visiting Russian ports, only 227 of them were Russian ships. Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix, 2003), p.473.

⁶ This tax was charged when a product was not consumed where it was produced but anywhere else.

appropriate price. Either the customers wanted the product cheaper to be able to pay taxes or they chose not buy in the first place. Later it was decided to abolish *masdarriyye* tax completely.⁷ There were also environmental problems such as the storms in the Black Sea. However, the main issue was that the shipwrecks on the Ottoman shores were ravaged by the local people. In 1782, a Russian merchant ship was wrecked on the shores of the Danube and the question of the compensation of the property that was pillaged continued until 1787.⁸

Not long after, the terms of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca had to be reconsidered. Russia wanted all sorts of ships to be granted free passage through the straits. In 1776, four old men-of-war were demilitarized and wanted to be used for commercial goals but the Porte did not consent this demand of Russia.⁹ Another matter of conflict was the crew of these Russian trade ships. Since Russia did not have enough trained men to operate their ships, Russians tried to persuade the Ottoman subjects, in most cases Greeks residing in the Aegean islands, with concessions to settle in the Crimea in exchange for their services. In addition, Russia tried to hire foreign shipmen to its service.¹⁰

In the correspondence between Catherine II and Potemkin during June 1778, the plans for the construction of Kherson were mentioned and in July Catherine ordered the building of this new city for ship building and as a harbour at the mouth of Dnyepr.¹¹ Destruction of the Zaporozhian Cossack *Sech* in 1775 and the building of Kherson gave Russia a more secure and direct access to the

⁷ İdris Bostan, "Rusya'nın Karadeniz'de Ticarete başlaması," pp.301-302

⁸ Ibid. p.303.

⁹ Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p.474.

¹⁰ İdris Bostan, "Rusya'nın Karadeniz'de Ticarete başlaması," p.296

¹¹ Douglas Smith (ed. and trans.), *Love and Conquest: Personal Correspondence of Catherine the Great ad Prince Grigory Potemkin* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), pp.99-100 (Letter 224, dated 1 June 1778 and Letter 226, dated after 29 June 1778)

Black Sea which contributed to the Russian trade in the Black Sea immensely.¹²

The increase of the agricultural production in the southern provinces of the Empire was followed by the construction of ports such as Odessa with the aim of exporting the grain to Western Europe.¹³

In the Aynalıkavak Convention of 1779, the terms of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca were re-evaluated. According to the article 6 of the convention a limit was brought to the Russian ships that they should be between 1000-16.000 *kile*¹⁴. In addition, the employment of Ottoman subjects was prohibited without the consent of the Porte. Another important stipulation was that Russia could only sell its own products and only when there was no need for these products in Constantinople, Russia could export these to the other countries of the Mediterranean.

After the annexation manifesto of the Crimea was drafted in April 1783, a commercial treaty was concluded on 21 June 1783, which was composed of 81 articles. According to this treaty, the duty was reduced to 3% and Russia was going to benefit from the same trade privileges with other countries.¹⁵ Russian merchants gained extensive rights including the right of free trade in the Ottoman territories, and to anchor and repair their ships in the Ottoman ports.¹⁶ The right of free passage from the straits was granted also to England, France and finally

¹² Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: MacMillan, 1966), p.6-7

¹³ Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), pp.147-148.

¹⁴ Equals to a bushel, which is approximately 36.5 kg.

¹⁵ Nicolae Jorga, *Osmancı İmparatorluğu Tarihi* vol. 5 (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005), trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, p.40.

¹⁶ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* vol.1 (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1983), pp. 512-514. İdris Bostan, "Rusya'nın Karadeniz'de Ticarete başlaması," p.289

Austria in 1784. As a result, the Black Sea was opened for international trade which further weakened the Ottoman economy.¹⁷

Between the years 1774-1787, the total number of the Russian merchant ships in the Black Sea was 445 while Russian merchants using Ottoman ships for trade numbered 38. After 1782, there was a significant increase in the number of the Russian ships trading in the Black Sea and the Russians no more used Ottoman ships.¹⁸ During 1778-1779, when the Ottoman-Russian relations deteriorated over the Crimea, the Ottomans presented all kinds of difficulties to the Russian merchants, which resulted in the decreasing number of Russian merchant ships. However, after the Aynalıkavak Convention and especially after the trade agreement of 1783, Russian commercial activity in the Black sea intensified once again.¹⁹ Consequently, the Russian revenue from trade in the Black Sea rose from merely 400 rubles in 1776 to 2 million in 1796.²⁰

¹⁷ Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* (İstanbul: Tatav, 2001), pp.170-171

¹⁸ There were in total 232 Ottoman merchants who were trading with Russia during 1780-1787. İdris Bostan, “İzn-i Sefine Defterleri ve Karadeniz’de Rusya ile Ticaret Yapan Devlet-i Aliye Tüccarları,” in İdris Bostan, *Beylikten İmparatorluğa Osmanlı Denizciliği* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), p.340.

¹⁹ İdris Bostan, “Rusya’nın Karadeniz’de Ticarete başlaması,” p.297

²⁰ Vasili Osipovich Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History: The Time of Catherine the Great* (London: M.E.Sharpe, 1997) trans. and ed. Marshall S. Shatz, p.84. According to the account of William Tooke, although the trade in Black Sea was still in infancy, Russian exports were amounted one million ruble and imports one million and a quarter. For further details see, William Tooke, *View of the Russian Empire During the Reign of Catharine the Second, and to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* vol. 3 (London, 1800), pp.440-459.

6.2. The Balance of Power in Europe and its reflections on the Ottoman Empire and Russia

After the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, the Ottoman Empire felt the need for establishing new alliances. During late 1770s, Abdürrezzak Efendi tried to form a triple alliance between the Ottoman Empire, Prussia, and Russia. Although he was able to convince Frederick of Prussia and Nikita Panin, the Foreign Minister of Russia until 1780, Catherine II was clearly against the possibility of an alliance with the Porte.²¹ In 1777, the Ottomans asked for 12 ships from Britain to protect the Muslim merchants in the Black Sea and Mediterranean however Weymouth, the British Foreign Secretary, rejected this offer not to offend Russia. Once again, the British administration made this decision with regard to their trade interests. England was trading with Russia especially raw materials, timber for the navy.²²

The Ottoman Empire, continued its search for new allies during the 1780s, and a commercial alliance with Spain was concluded in 1782. Discussions for a commercial treaty had begun in 1779 by the Spanish envoy Juan de Bouigny and resulted with a trade agreement in 1782.²³ As a result of this improved relations trade flourished between the two Empires and both sides sent their ambassadors to

²¹ Jorga, vol.5, pp.34-35. For a detailed account of the correspondence in this issue see, Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayımları, 1985), pp. 110-121.

²² Ali İhsan Bağış, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire: Sir Robert Ainslie's Embassy to Istanbul 1776-1794* (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1984), p.8. "The friendship subsisting between this Court and that of Russia cannot admit His Majesty's lending twelve ships of war to the Ottoman Porte."

²³ Eloy Martin Corrales, "İspanya-Osmanlı İmparatorluğu İlişkileri, 18.-19. Yüzyıllar," in Pablo Martin Asuero (ed.), *İspanya-Türkiye: 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), p.236. For the process of this discussions and the signing of the treaty see, Christoph K. Neumann, "Decision Making without Decision Makers: Ottoman Foreign Policy Circa 1780," in Caesar E. Farah (ed.), *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire* (Missouri: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1993).

each other.²⁴ For the Spanish, the Ottoman Empire was no longer the feared enemy, but a market to sell the materials brought from the colonies.²⁵

Russian role in the European diplomacy increased in this period. Russia became the mediator between the Habsburgs and Prussia to end the Bavarian Succession war and the Treaty of Teschen was signed in May 1779. Later on 28 February 1780, Russia led the European states against the British supremacy over the open seas and gathered the league of Armed Neutrality.²⁶ Later in 1782, Catherine II refused the British offer of Minorca Island in return for mediation between England, France, and Spain.²⁷ Moreover, after rejecting the British request of military support in 1775, Russia projected military aid to Holland, a force of 20,000 men in 1782. This attitude of Russia caused a certain level of deterioration in Anglo-Russian relations during the initial years of 1780s.²⁸ Nevertheless, England remained silent to the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 1783. Once again, the British administration made this decision with regard to their trade interests. England had a vast interest in trading with Russia especially raw materials, timber for the navy.

Although France was one of the main allies and supporters of the Porte, beginning with the 1780s, some French officials began to have reservations about the traditional policy regarding the Ottoman Empire. It was argued that although the survival of the Ottoman Empire was crucial for the stability of Eastern Europe, they also started to realize that preserving the Ottoman Empire with its archaic

²⁴Juan de Bouiligny was to become Spanist Ambassador at Constantinople in 1784, while the Ottomans sent Ahmed Vâsif Efendi to Spain in 1787.

²⁵Pablo Martin Asuero, "İspanya-Türkiye, 1700-1923," in Asuero (ed.), *İspanya-Türkiye*, p.265.

²⁶Raeff, "On the Imperial Manner," in Marc Raeff (ed.), *Catherine the Great: A Profile* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), pp.188-189.

²⁷Bağış, p.10.

²⁸Matthew Smith Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia 1553-1815* (London: MacMillan, 1958), p.137. See also Frank A. Golder, "Catherine II and The American Revolution," *The American Historical Review*, vol.21, no.1 (Oct. 1915), pp.92-96.

institutions was a heavy liability. Hesitation on the side of the Ottomans to allow the French ships through the straits frustrated the French Ambassador and Foreign Minister. Thus, the Ottomans alienated their traditional ally in Europe. Choiseul-Gouffier considered leaving Constantinople to express his government's protest. It was obvious in 1786 that the Ottoman-French relations were deteriorating.²⁹ The French military specialists were called back from the Ottoman Empire and a new commercial treaty was concluded with Russia which was a clear intention of the French during the last years of the *Ancien Régime*.³⁰

Segur, French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was against the protection of the Ottoman Empire. However, to represent the view of his government, in response to Potemkin's aggressive comments on expelling the Ottomans from Europe, he argued that the destruction of the Ottoman Empire would result in war between the Great Powers and the end of Levant trade.³¹ However, the Russians were not comfortable with the French playing on both sides, both "a protector of the Turks and as a friend of the Slavs."³²

In Russia there was not a united opinion over foreign policy either. In 1786, the French Ambassador Segur was reporting that, some of the ministers did not share the enthusiasm of Potemkin since war and conquests did not offer them any personal benefit, but would cause complications in commerce and diplomacy. Bezborodko was advising Catherine II to deal with the Ottomans alone without

²⁹ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, p.12. See also Virginia Aksan, "Choiseul-Gouffier at the Sublime Porte 1784-1792," *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1992).

³⁰ Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p.22.

³¹ Hugh Ragsdale, "Russian Projects of Conquest in the Eighteenth Century," in Hugh Ragsdale (ed.), *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.92-93.

³² Frank Fox, "Negotiating with the Russians: Ambassador Segur's Mission to Saint-Petersburg, 1784-1789," *French Historical Studies*, vol.7, no.1 (Spring, 1971), p.53.

the mediation or intervention of any other foreign power.³³ Besides, as it was noted earlier, Catherine bestowed Potemkin with full authority over Russian foreign policy and other ministers were anxious about his growing power.³⁴

Both Britain and France were aiming to conclude a commercial treaty with Russia during the 1780s. James Harris, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg (1777-1783)³⁵ was trying to convince the Russians on the one hand, while Segur, French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, had achieved this goal in 1787.³⁶ This treaty was interpreted as a part of the great project against the Ottoman Empire, which would prevent the French at Constantinople from provoking the Ottomans against Russia.³⁷ In 1786, in his correspondence with the Crown Prince Selim, Louis XVI informed him that France would not provoke the Porte into war against Russia. He was pointing out the changing nature of the warfare and that a state with a weak army was destined to be defeated. To improve the military condition of the Porte, Louis promised technical support, but no further.³⁸

The Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha exaggerated the weaknesses of Russia and Austria and hoped for the Prussian support in case of a war against Russia in 1787. There was a fierce contest among the ambassadors of Austria, France and England. Choiseul-Goiffleur claimed that Ainslie was trying to provoke the Porte into war with Russia by presenting the Russo-French trade agreement in January 1787 as an alliance against the Porte. Potemkin and

³³ Smith p.177 (letter 302-1 February 1787)

³⁴ Ragsdale, "Russian Projects..", pp.98-99.

³⁵ For further details on the mission of James Harris and the Armed Neutrality see, Isabel de Madariaga, *Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780: Sir James Harris's Mission to St. Petersburg during the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Pres, 1962), Frank Fox, "Negotiating with the Russians: Ambassador Segur's Mission to Saint-Petersburg, 1784-1789," *French Historical Studies*, vol.7, no.1 (Spring, 1971), pp.47-71.

³⁶ For further details on the Russo-French relations during the reign of Catherine the Great see, P.P.Cherkasov, *Ekaterina II i Lyudvik XVI: Russko-Frantsuzkie Otnosheniia 1774-1792* (Moscow: Nauka, 2004).

³⁷ Raeff, "On the Imperial Manner", p.190.

³⁸ Shaw, *Between Old and New*, p.16.

Bezborodko sent a note Fitzherbert, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to protest the attitude of Ainslie.³⁹

During 1787, a rapprochement was reached between the Porte, Prussia, and England. However, this was not resulted in an alliance. Both Prussia and England started to be worried about the advance of Russia at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Frederick was still content with the status quo since Austria and Russia were drafting plans on the Ottoman Empire and neither of these was causing any trouble to Prussia.⁴¹

The international politics was one of the factors which prepared the ground for the aggressive policies of the Russian Empire against the Porte during this inter-war period. Benefiting from the conflicts of the Great Powers of Europe, Russia was able to annex the Crimea without any major protest. In addition, the defensive alliance with the Habsburgs gave Russia a free hand to increase its influence among the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan. The other great powers of Europe were aware of the growth of the Russian Empire and many of them had vital trade interests in Russia. Thus, during this period, they preferred to be in good terms with Russia rather than preserving the Porte. In August 1787, even when the Ottomans declared war on Russia, the latter had a favourable position regarding international politics.

³⁹ Bağış, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰ Shaw, *Between Old and New*, p.23.

⁴¹ Beydilli, p.140.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The last quarter of the 18th century was one of most delicate and fragile periods in the history of the Ottoman-Russian relations. The conclusive defeat of the Porte at the hands of the Russian armies started a kind of chain reaction which had a major impact on the history of these Empires and the international politics in the following century. As a result of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, at once, the superiority passed to the Empire of the Tsars over the Sublime Porte and remained so until both had collapsed as a result of the First World War.

The Ottoman Empire, before and after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was nothing but the same and it was not merely because of some territorial changes. Küçük Kaynarca was the second disastrous peace treaty the Ottomans had signed after the Carlowitz in 1699. However, there was a great difference of perception in the Ottoman statesmen regarding the causes and results of these two events. What differed 1774 from 1699 was that after the Küçük Kaynarca there was a

reformist group of Ottoman statesmen who believed in the need for urgent reforms and the necessity to modernize the Empire.

The independence and separation of the Crimean Khanate from the Porte was a very significant fact of this period, it was a part of the reflection of a much broader fact. The independence of the Khanate remained only on the text of the treaty. What actually happened was that the Crimea was detached from the protection of the Porte, and was left open to all kinds of Russian intervention. It can be observed from the sequence of events after 1774 until 1783 that Russia wanted to create a new Crimea which would serve its own interests instead of being an obstacle on the way of its expansion. Any means to achieve this purpose was applicable for the Russians.

The destruction of the Crimean Khanate occurred during a relatively long period, and was composed mainly of three stages. The first phase was the independence of the Khanate from the Ottoman Empire after the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty of 1774. Between the years 1774 and 1779, the Crimea experienced a certain level of independence; however, Russian influence and military intervention steadily rose during this period. The second phase began in 1779 with the Convention of Aynalıkavak, and lasted four years until the final declaration of the Russian annexation in April 1783. Between these years, although the Porte accepted Crimean independence, in practice, the Crimea was mostly under the occupation of Russian forces. For more than once, the Russian armies invaded the peninsula to suppress revolts and re-instate their candidate, Şahin Geray, as the Khan. After 1783, as the last phase of the annexation, Catherine the Great initiated

a well-organized plan for the colonization and the integration of the territories of the Khanate to the Empire.

For the first time, a Muslim populated territory was separated from the Porte which resulted in the concept of Caliphate being used for the first time in a political context to influence the Muslim population outside the Empire. The annexation of the Crimea made Russia strategically advantageous when dealing with the Ottoman Empire. Now that the peninsula was under the direct control of Russia, Constantinople and the Black Sea shores of the Ottoman Empire were under constant threat. The Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, Franz Thugut, noticed the level of the danger in his report dated 3 September 1774, by pointing out that whenever the Tsar wished he could mobilize an army from Crimea and reach the shores of Constantinople between 36-48 hours. In which case, the only thing the Sultan could do would be packing his bags and leave for Asia.¹ Although, a Russian naval attack to Constantinople seems to be possible as Thugut described, because of the fear of intervention of the Great Powers, the Russians, for a long time did not try to invade Constantinople.

As a broader impact of the annexation, Russia became more and more dominant in the Black Sea, as Sevastopol become its major naval base. The settlement policy of Catherine the Great which aimed at the Christianization and Russification of the annexed territories, led to the settlement of large numbers of Russians, Greeks and Germans from foreign countries as well as from interior Russia. Although this was not the only cause, as a result of this change in the demographic structure, the Crimean Tatars began to leave their homeland for the

¹ Joseph Von Hammer Purgstall, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* vol. 16 (1757–1774) (Paris: 1829), pp.496-497.

Ottoman Empire a process which in the long run would make the Crimean Tatars a minority in their own homeland.

The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was an important mark in the history of Caucasian resistance against the Russian Empire. Although there had already been a significant Russian presence in the Caucasus during the 18th century until 1774, especially after the annexation of the Crimea, Russia's way to penetrate into the Caucasus and its beyond was opened and the resistance of the local people intensified parallel to the Russian advance and intervention into the affairs of the Caucasus. During this period, the Ottoman Empire faced a serious dilemma in its relations and policy regarding the Caucasus. On the one hand, the Porte was encouraging and supporting the resistance of the local peoples of the Caucasus against Russia. Sometimes this was done secretly but in other cases, like in Ferah Ali Pasha's mission, deliberately. On the other hand, there was a constant fear of provoking Russia into a new war which prevented any further Ottoman intervention, either political or military, in the affairs of the Caucasus. This dilemma is one of the main reasons of how Russia could penetrate into the Caucasus much easier than it could have been.

This period also witnessed the first united resistance against Russia under the leadership of Imam Mansur. Although Mansur fought against a common enemy of the Ottoman Empire, there was a constant anxiety among the Ottoman statesmen that Mansur might shift the allegiance of the Caucasian tribes from the Ottoman Empire to himself, thus gaining a regional authority. Apparently, Mansur and the Porte had the same goal, to expel Russia from the Caucasus. However,

they could not cooperate fully because of this mutual distrust and it ultimately worked in the benefit of Russia.

The advantage shifted in favour of Russia also in the Balkans. The peoples of this region already had a spiritual bond with the Russian Empire through Orthodox Christianity and they were not bound to the Ottoman Empire with a sense of loyalty to its Islamic cause.² Since the beginning of the 18th century, they witnessed the growing power of the Russian Empire while the central Ottoman authority gradually disappeared. The Ottomans suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of the Russian armies more than once during the 18th century, which gave a certain level of confidence to the Christian subjects of the Sultan that their liberation was on the horizon. One thing that should be kept in mind is that the idea of liberation from the Porte during this period was partly motivated by the worsened conditions of these people, especially the Principalities under the Phanariote rule, and partly by religion rather than by a sense of strong national identity, as was the case in the 19th century.

Another important outcome of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca for the Balkans was the opening of Russian consulates in various important cities such as Iași, Bucharest, and Thessalonica. These consulates became centers for breeding discontent and resentment against the Ottoman rule. In addition to gathering information and regulating Russian trade in their region, the Russian consuls continuously tried to provoke the Christian subjects of the Sultan while making propaganda of the Russian rule. The Porte tried to balance and if possible to prevent the activities of the Russian consuls by appointing governors and

² Dominic Lieven, *Empire: Russia and its Rivals* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.148.

Hospodars who were loyal to the central authority. Nevertheless, as a result of Russia's policies, its influence in the Balkans increased significantly during this period.

Last but not least, the international political environment was so ripe for Russia that it was left alone in its struggle with the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, other European states spent so much effort to ally themselves with Russia against each other. France and England were drafted in a long struggle over the colonies while Austria and Prussia were checking each other's growth in the continent. The decline of French power in the continent after Louis XIV, also reflected to its traditional client, the Porte.

During this thirteen year period, from 1774 to 1787, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was seriously at stake. If there was any suitable time for the realization of a plan like the Greek Project it was during this period, but Russia failed to achieve this grandiose goal. When it came to 1787, however, the circumstances were much more different and any further advance of Russia at the expense of the Ottoman Empire would not go unnoticed as it happened in the annexation of the Crimea in 1783.

To conclude, the inter-war period after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca till the declaration of war in August 1787, witnessed the shift in the balance of power between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in favour of the former. Russia established strong footholds both in the Caucasus and the Balkans, which prepared the grounds for the Russian expansion in these regions in the following century. After the annexation of the Crimea, the Black Sea was gradually transformed from "*Bahr-i Siyah*" into "*Chernoye More*". As a result, this period

marked the beginning of the Russian superiority over the Porte, which proved to be an irreversible process.

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