

W. E. Gladstone and British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire

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Doctor of Philosophy in History in November 2016.

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List of Abbreviations

Add MS	Additional Manuscripts
AP	Aberdeen Papers
BL	British Library
BOA	Ottoman Foreign Ministerial Archives
CAB	Cabinet Papers, Public Record Office
ESA	Yildiz Foreign section
FO	Foreign Office
GP	Gladstone Papers
LP	Layard Papers
HR.SYS	Political Section
TNA	The National Archives

ABSTRACT

Beyond being an international question of the status of the Ottoman Empire, it was The Eastern Question that determined the course of diplomacy towards the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century. Lord Palmerston's policy of preserving Ottoman territorial integrity (with domestic reforms), and guarding Ottoman independence against the Russian threat provided a close relationship with the Ottoman Empire based on mutual trust and friendship. Gladstone's keen interest in the condition of Christian subjects of the Porte permeated every aspect of his long life. In arguing for Gladstone's consistent attitude towards the Ottoman Empire on behalf of Christian subjects of the Porte since his early life, this thesis emphasizes the need to re-examine the degree of Gladstone's passionate involvement in Eastern affairs which contributed significantly to the dynamics of British foreign policy. It argues that the political, humanitarian and ideological role that Gladstone played was far greater throughout his life than has previously been acknowledged.

Given the inflammatory rhetoric that he employed in 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet, the reasons for Gladstone's indignation over Turkish administration as well as his attitude towards Islam demands attention. However, there is a clear distinction between Ottoman-centric and Europe-centric historiography as to Gladstone's engagement with Ottoman affairs. Yet, very few studies have analysed Gladstone's central role in shaping of British policymaking towards the Porte. By placing Gladstone's attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire at the core of the research, this study seeks to reassess the impact of Gladstone's background and the key events for his concern with the civil rights and religious liberty of the Christian minorities of the Porte. It further explores whether Gladstone altered the historic British policy of maintaining Ottoman territorial integrity. An analysis is made, therefore, of

Gladstone's humanitarian perspectives and the 'Concert of Europe' approach by examining what he said and did in respect to Anglo-Ottoman relations throughout his long life.

OZET

Ondokuzuncu yuzyil boyunca, 'Dogu Sorunu', Osmanli Imparatorlugu'nda yasayan Hristiyan tebaanın statu sorunu olmasi otesinde, Osmanli'ya yonelik diplomasinin de seyrini de belirlemistir. Lord Palmerston'un Rus tehditine karsi reformlar ile ayakta canli tuttuğu Osmanli toprak butunlugunu ve bagimsizligini koruma siyaseti ortak guven ve dostluga dayanmaktaydi. William E. Gladstone'un Osmanli'da yasayan Hristiyan azinliklarin konumuna yonelik yogun ilgisi hayatinin her safhasina derinden islemisti. Gladstone'un Osmanli Imparatorlugu'na yonelik istikrarli politikasini tekrar analiz etme amaciyla, bu tez Ingiliz dis politikasinin dinamiklerini de etkileyen Gladstone'un Dogu siyasetine tutkulu bagliligini vurgulamaktadir. Ozellikle, bu calisma Gladstone'un bu gelismelerde oynadigi politik, insani ve ideolojik rollerin sanilanin aksine cok daha buyuk oldugunu savunmaktadir.

'Bulgar Dehseti' kitapçigindaki kiskirtici retorigidenden bu yana, Turk yonetimine yonelik kizginligi ile Islama yonelik tutumlari ozel ilgi gerektirmektedir. Lakin, Gladstone'un Osmanli iliskilerine dahil olusuna yonelik Osmanli-odakli ve Avrupa-odakli historiografi arasinda oldukca acik bir ayirim mevcuttur. Bununla birlikte, coz az sayida calisma Gladstone'un Osmanli'ya yonelik Ingiliz politika olusumundaki merkezi rolunu arastirmistir. Gladstone'un Osmanli Imparatorlugu'na yonelik tutumlarini bu calismanin merkezine koyarak, bu calisma Gladstone'un hayatinin onemli olaylarinin manevi ve politik sinirlar cercevesinde ne derecede etkili oldugunu yeniden degerlendirmektedir. Ozellikle Gladstone'un geleneksel Ingiliz Osmanli toprak butunlugunu koruma politikasini degistirip degistirmedigini de sorgulamaktadir. Tum bu sebeplerle, Gladstone'un soyledikleri ve yaptiklarindan yola cikarak, bu tez devlet adaminin hayati boyunca benimsedigini insani ve 'Avrupa Uyumu' gorusunun Turk-Ingiliz iliskilerine olan etkisini tahlil etmektedir.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to a number of important individuals without whom this thesis would never have been completed. First and foremost, I will always be indebted to my supervisors, Professor Richard Toye, whose wisdom, patience, understanding for me during my research and to Professor Andrew Thorpe for his insight and enthusiasm. Many kind and generous people also contributed to this thesis. I would like to express my special gratitude to Dr. Richard Batten, Dr. Cat Wilson and Dr. Jim Goodchild who generously supported me during my research and for proof-reading of my chapters. I also owe much to my colleagues, especially to Meg Kazanawa, Simon Mackley, Frederick George Cooper, Emily Bridger and David Singeisen in our office in the Amory Building. I will never ever forget our memories in the meetings of *Ex-Historia*, lunches and afternoon teas.

The staff members of various organizations were very helpful. My thanks to the team of Gladstone's Library in Hawarden and I would particularly like to thank to the Warden of the library Peter Francis for enabling me to stay two weeks in the library residence. I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of British Library, National Archives, University of Exeter Forum Library, University of Exeter Old Library, and to the rest of the History Department academic community here at the University of Exeter. I also would like to my sponsor Ministry of National Education in Republic of Turkey for their support and without whom this thesis would never have been accomplished.

My greatest debt is owed, however, to my family. Of course, I wouldn't be where I am today without their support. First of all, I owe the greatest debt to my mum Ayfer Yildizeli for her patience and endless love with the great encouragement of my dad Ridvan Yildizeli and

enthusiasm of my brother Reyman Yildizeli and my sister-in-law Gozde Yildizeli. I am eternally grateful. Finally, I am really thankful to my dear friend Kursat Yilmaz who always patiently encouraged me as a good friend, was always willing to help and give his best suggestions whenever I needed. Finally, I would like to express sincere thanks to Marius Liviu Nasgodineanu whose humour was energising and continuous support is unforgettable. My research would not have been possible without their helps. I love you and so lucky to have you all in my life. Only the mistakes in this work are entirely mine.

This thesis is dedicated to my mum AYFER YILDIZELI
For her endless love, patience, encouragement and support

W. E. GLADSTONE AND BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Introduction

‘A question above all’

Three hundred years of ‘stable’ and ‘consistent’ Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations which were fundamentally based on the economic interests of the two empires began to diverge with the French occupation of Egypt in 1798. The nineteenth century was a period that saw the transition from *ad hoc* principles of diplomacy to the Anglo-Ottoman alliance. A broader framework, however, was implemented due to the shadow of ‘The Eastern Question.’ The foundation of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire can be defined as a co-operation between two empires and British protection in order to secure Ottoman territorial integrity against the thread posed by Russia. While the Crimean War can be considered as the peak-period of friendly relations between the two empires, Palmerston’s tradition was pursued by Whig and Tory policymakers with respect to the Ottoman Empire. The reforms focused heavily on rejuvenating the Ottoman central administrative structure and enhancing the status of non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that the desire to keep the Porte friendly for economic and strategic reasons was a more important concern than the welfare of the Christian subjects of the Porte. It is also fair to state that there was no distinct division between the Liberals and the Conservatives in respect to the formation of British foreign politics towards the Ottoman Empire until the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-8. Notwithstanding, this study suggests that Gladstone’s involvement and moral concern eventually changed this situation. This concern was not limited to publishing the famous ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet of 1876. His leadership and rhetorical framework

during his opposition period was not only a response to the shortcomings of his rival Benjamin Disraeli's pro-Turkish foreign politics but also to Turkish maladministration which he campaigned against throughout his political life. Gladstone's advocacy of the civil and religious liberties of the Ottoman Christian populations substantially emerged from his special interest in regions such as Crete, Bosnia, Greece, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Armenia. This was evident when he reinforced his arguments by making reference to matters of freedom and religion in his literary works and speeches. In fact, Gladstone paid particular attention for modifying British policy towards the Porte along with his confidence in Lord Granville's handling of the affairs during his second ministry.

Historiography on Gladstone and British policy towards the Porte

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, British guardianship of the Ottoman provinces eventually developed into an 'intimate' alliance at the end of the Crimean War in 1856. There is little doubt that Lord Palmerston and 'Great Elchi' Stratford Canning left their legacies in building a friendly relationship with the Ottomans. This research begins with an analysis of Gladstone's commitment to human rights, the formation of his notions of morality and freedom, and how the Crimean War affected British policy towards the Ottoman Empire up until 1876.¹ The question as to whether Gladstone was an aggressive Crusader who sought to destroy the Ottoman Empire or the humanitarian voice of the Ottoman Christian subjects is hotly debated; therefore the driving forces behind this involvement in the Near Eastern Crisis in 1876 will be explored. It would be fair to say that there is a clear distinction between Ottoman-centric and Europe-centric historiography regarding Gladstone's attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire—a gap to which this research addresses with regards to Gladstone and his role in shaping the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations. The main objective of this thesis,

then is to demonstrate Gladstone's consistent involvement with Ottoman affairs from his early life onwards in order to illustrate how experience acted for so long and helped to shape his political attitudes. Gladstone's participation in the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876 formed an explicit and absolutely novel departure in the formation British policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Biographers and the studies on Gladstone's roles during the Eastern Question, as discussed below, have neglected to show the broader picture of how the British policy towards the Porte evolved over time. Nonetheless, as is well-known, Gladstone's involvement in the Eastern Question was not limited to publishing the famous 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet of 1876. Analysis of Gladstone's attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire, especially in the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-78, will reveal the extent to which his humanitarian feelings for the Christian subjects under Ottoman rule were influential in the determination of British foreign policy during his second ministry. It further investigates the ideological and political background that brought Gladstone to espouse strong anti-Turkish sentiments and as to whether his actions can be defined as 'Islamophobic' during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875-78. By paying particular attention to the case of Egypt, this thesis scrutinizes the reasons why Gladstone abandoned his earlier support of Egyptian self-determination, and his eventual authorisation of British military intervention.

It is true that there is no shortage of studies on popular politics and on Gladstone's role in Bulgarian Agitation of 1876.² Predominantly, the parliamentary point of view has been represented with analysis of the pamphlets by politicians of the period such as James S. White, Baron Henry De Worms, Duke of Argyll, Malcolm Maccoll, Anthony Gallenga and

¹ The term human rights came into use in the twentieth century. Gladstone widely used the term 'civil rights' while referring to human rights.

² The terminology regarding the Bulgarian uprising may vary in literature. The Bulgarian Crisis of 1876, Bulgarian Massacres, Bulgarian Atrocities, April Uprising and Bulgarian Agitation are the most common usage for these events. This author will hereinafter refer to the said events as the Bulgarian Agitation.

Edward A. Freeman.³ By contrast, the works of Januarius MacGahan, William T. Stead and Eugene Schuyler constitute the newspapers' perspective in how they considered and commentated on the Bulgarian Agitation.⁴ Apart from their close friendship in the Parliament, in his heroic picture of Gladstone's life, John Morley outlines the fundamentals of Gladstonian liberalism and also points out how important the Eastern Question was in the long life of the Grand Old Man.⁵ Morley assesses the 'Bulgarian Horrors'⁶ pamphlet as a 'fire' and portrays Gladstone's passionate statesmanship over Turkish affairs thus: '...not the man, his readers and his public were not the men, for mere denunciation. They found in him a policy. Indignation, he said in a thoroughly characteristic sentence, indignation is froth, except as it leads to action; mere remonstrance is mockery.'⁷ In the 1930s, the historiography of the Eastern Question has witnessed an expansion with regards to the British stance in the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876. This started with a comparative analysis of party politics under the guidance of Robert. W. Seton-Watson's *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*⁸

³ James S. White, *A Lecture on the Eastern Question*, (Mechanics Institute, Singleton), 10 May 1877, Edward A. Freeman, *The Eastern question in its historical bearings, an address. Revised, an address delivered in Manchester*, 15 November 1876, Baron Henry De Worms, *England's policy in the East*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1877), Duke of Argyll, George John Douglas Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, 'Our Responsibilities for Turkey, Facts and Memories of Forty Years', (London: John Murray), 1896, Malcolm Maccoll, *The Eastern Question its facts and fallacies*, (Longmans, Green, 1877), Malcom Maccoll, *Three Years of the Eastern Question*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1878), Anthony Gallenga *Two Years of the Eastern Question*, vol. 2, (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1877).

⁴ Mr. Schuyler's Preliminary Report on the Moslem Atrocities, published with the letters by Januarius MacGahan, (London, 1876); William T. Stead, *Gladstone: A character Sketch 1809-1898 with portraits and other illustrations*, (London printed by William Clowes and sons, limited, Stamford street and Charing cross, 1898).

⁵ John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3 vols. (Great Britain: Wyman & Sons Ltd., 1903).

⁶ William E. Gladstone, 'Bulgarian Horrors and The Question of the East', (London: John Murray, 1876).

⁷ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol.ii, p. 553.

⁸ Robert W. Seton Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics*, (London: Macmillan, 1935).

and continued with the works of David Harris⁹ and Walter Wirtwein who pointed out the significance of ‘the national mind’ on their affairs.¹⁰

In his extensive study, Seton-Watson not only revealed the images and the perceptions that affected British foreign policy towards the Porte but also provoked increasing interest among historians on diplomatic history. Along with his lifelong sympathy and studies on Balkan nationalism, Seton Watson’s admiration for Gladstone’s ‘prophetic vision’ which ‘the whole subsequent history of the Near East bears witness’ can be considered as his appreciation for Gladstone’s humanitarian principles and this is summed up in the phrase ‘the Balkans for the Balkan people.’¹¹ Furthermore, Harris examines the awakening of public opinion and the ‘defence’ of the Foreign Office during the Bulgarian Agitation. However he also makes an incompatible argument that British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire did not depart from ‘the old policy, nor the new one demanded by the agitation.’¹² In 1963, when Richard Shannon published his explicit analysis on Gladstone’s role on Bulgarian Agitation, he argued that the ‘Bulgarian agitation achieved nothing more than a temporary and superficial diversion of British Eastern policy’ but that, ‘its consequences were profoundly significant.’¹³ This is especially true for the period under consideration. Yet, the historiography has largely missed the point of the extent to which British policy was influenced by Gladstone’s humanitarian visions and intervention. It was Paul Knapland who had anticipated that ‘still the opinion existed in 1880 that Gladstone was the enemy of Turkey and that he wished to

⁹ David Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

¹⁰ Walter W. Wirtwein, *Britain and the Balkan Crisis 1875-1878*, (London: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 7.

¹¹ Seton Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, p. ix, 72-3, R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of nationality in the Balkans*, (New York: E.P Dutton Company, 1918), p. 126.

¹² Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876*, p. 398.

¹³ Richard T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, (Great Britain: Robert Cunningham and Sons Ltd., Longbank Works, Alva, 1963), p. 266.

hasten its expected dissolution. It was commonly believed then, and this belief has been promulgated by more recent writers of biographers and histories, that Anglo-Turkish relations were friendly before the advent of Gladstone in April, 1880, and that his government ended promising efforts to reform the government of Asiatic Turkey.¹⁴ This is a crucial point in understanding the unique place of Gladstone in Eastern affairs from a British perspective. A.J.P Taylor describes Gladstone's triumph of 1880 as 'a victory for moral principles in foreign affairs, for the Concert of Europe instead of Balance of Power, and for trusting Russia instead of bolstering up Turkey.'¹⁵ He further emphasizes Gladstone's 'advocacy for an entirely new system of a foreign policy' that was strengthened with a 'genuine humanitarianism.'¹⁶ However, it was a policy that also neglected elements of consistency in his principles towards Christian subjects of the Porte. Keith A. Sandiford demonstrates Gladstone's abiding principles in the liberal-nationalist movements by referring to his 'cautious conservative attitude' and for placing more emphasis on order and stability than on national liberty.¹⁷ Besides, David Steele draws attention to Gladstone's position during the Crimean War as a member of Palmerston's Cabinet and argues that 'the earnest moralising and the contrasting reiteration of his concern for the position recurred in Gladstone's rhetoric and was the basis of his policy when he again held power in 1880.'¹⁸ This is a fundamental point. In considering Gladstone's solicitude for the Christian subjects of the Porte and his concern about the financial burden which the Ottoman loans entailed, it follows that Gladstone never abandoned his original thoughts with respect to Turkish maladministration

¹⁴ Paul Knapland, *Gladstone's Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank & Cass, 1970), pp. 132-3.

¹⁵ A.J.P Taylor, *The Struggle for mastery in Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 268.

¹⁶ A.J.P Taylor, *the Troublemakers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939*, (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 93.

¹⁷ Keith A. P. Sandiford, 'W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist Movements', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring, 1981), pp. 27-42, p. 27.

¹⁸ David Steele, 'Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:1, (2014), pp. 43-60, p. 49.

and failure of previous reforms. Nonetheless, the direct influence of the Crimean War upon Gladstone's attitude and his concern for the emancipation of minorities of the Porte has been largely overlooked by historians. Therefore, this study aims to contribute towards a greater measure of understanding of the principles of Gladstone's Eastern policy was founded.

Colin Matthew's publication of the thirteen volumes of *The Gladstone Diaries*,¹⁹ was a landmark in studies of Gladstone. Additionally, the well-arranged memoirs provided pivotal significance for Gladstone's political and intellectual life, particularly his estimation during the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876.²⁰ Matthew expands the common sense by providing knowledge beyond historical-narrative on Gladstone's pursuit of morality and shows that this had a significant effect on the contemporary opinion.²¹ Martin Swartz concurs with the idea that Gladstone's emphasis was the moral rather than the political aspects of the Bulgarian atrocities and argues that 'ecumenical Christianity was the theological equivalent of the diplomatic concept of a concert of Europe.'²² It is also arguable that studies, prior to Matthew's contributions paid little attention to analyse the Ottoman system of government and did not engage with Gladstone's key attitudes towards the Porte. It is true that Matthew, for example, saw a direct connection with Gladstone's policies between Turkey's responsibilities for the reforms in order to guarantee the liberties of Christian subjects since 1856 Paris Treaty under the Concert of Europe.²³ Matthew's interpretation of Gladstone's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire is based on Gladstone's intention to pursue justice for

¹⁹ H. C. G. Matthew, (ed.), *The Gladstone Diaries: With Cabinet Minutes and Prime-Ministerial Correspondence, XIII Volumes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986-1994).

²⁰ H. C. G. Matthew, (ed.), *The Gladstone Diaries: With Cabinet Minutes and Prime-Ministerial Correspondence, Volume IX: January 1875-December 1880*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

²¹ H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 270-1.

²² Marvin Swartz, *The Politics of British Foreign Policy in the era of Disraeli and Gladstone*, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1985), p. 39, also Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, pp. 23-37.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 273-4.

the Empire's minorities. Nonetheless, Matthew does not cover each event related to Gladstone's Eastern policy. Rather, he portrays the development of his ideas and how they were applied throughout his political and public career. In that respect, Ann P. Saab's unique study of how Gladstone's moral outrage about Turkish misrule of Christian subjects was inflamed since the Crimean War which caused him to embrace the leadership of protests. This study further contributes towards a critical appreciation of Gladstone's standpoint in the Eastern Question.²⁴

Aside from Gladstone's central role in the Bulgarian Agitation, little has been written on definitive breakthroughs for either British policy towards the Porte or Gladstone's pursuit for the welfare of the Christian subjects in the early months of his second premiership. It would also be fair to suggest that there is a clear distinction between the Turkish and the British historiography regarding perceptions of Gladstone and the Eastern Question. Modern Ottoman-centric historiography has always struggled to associate Gladstone's moral perception with British policy. Since the 1980s, Turkish analyses of Gladstone's politics have mainly been based on perceptions of 'his hostility of Islam' and 'Turcophobia', deriving from his rhetorical and also his strong commitment to Christianity. A historian who is a representative of this historical interpretation, Kamuran Gurun, argues that 'after the Berlin Congress, there was a major change in British policy. Gladstone, who became Prime Minister for the second time in 1880, changed the policy which had been followed for a century, which Pitt had initiated, and put an end to protecting the administrative integrity of the Ottoman Empire. We have mentioned that the religious factors and Gladstone's conformist point of view as well as his hostility towards Muslims played an important role in this change

²⁴ Ann P. Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria, and the Working Classes, 1856-1878*, (Harvard Historical Studies, 1991)

of policy.’²⁵ It is, therefore, widely assumed that Gladstone was ‘a militant defender of Christian causes in general.’²⁶ Kemal Karpat concurs with the idea that Gladstone became decidedly ‘anti-Turkish and regarded Islam as reactionary.’²⁷ Furthermore, he claims Gladstone accused ‘the Turks (not the Ottoman government) of killing sixty thousand Christians.’²⁸ There has been a tension between whether in Gladstone’s rhetorical indignation in his ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet – ‘clearing the Turks out of Europe as the anti-specimen of humanity with bag and baggage’ – or his religious fervour primarily determined his policies. Sukru Hanioglu argues that it was Gladstone’s crusade against the ‘Turkish race’ and that ushered ‘in the replacement, in the British imagination, of the post-1848 image of liberal Ottomans with one of bloodthirsty Muslim tyrants brutally oppressing defenceless’ which made the Crimean alliance impossible and damaged Anglo-Turkish friendship.²⁹ By the same token, Ebru Boyar argues that Gladstone ‘became the symbol of the British and European reaction and enmity against the Ottoman empire’ while referring to prudential basis of Ibrahim Rafet’s comment in his 1913 book on Bulgaria: ‘Moving the Circassians and Pomaks against the comitadjis, the Ottoman government began to punish them and the Balkans ran with blood. It is thought that the enmity of the Englishman Gladstone began at this time.’³⁰ From ‘Bulgarian atrocity’ propaganda of the 1870s until the Armenian uprisings in the 1890s, Jeremy Salt seems largely convinced that Gladstone had a special animus against the Sultan and that he shared the antagonistic Christian view both of Islam as a

²⁵ Kamuran Gurun, *The Armenian File The Myth of Innocence Exposed*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), p. 75

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kemal Karpat, *the Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 142.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 111.

religion and of the Turks as people.³¹ He defines British policy as ‘ostensible’ and uncongenial towards ‘humanitarian relief of the Armenians through reforms drew support from the broadly held perception of Christian suffering under Muslim rule.’³² Arguably, the most recent published work on Gladstone that can be considered original and distinctive in historiographical research is Taha N. Karaca’s work.³³ Karaca’s approach to Gladstone’s arguments was based particularly on his alleged aim ‘to destroy the Ottoman Empire as a Crusader’.³⁴ As a consequence of this, Karaca suggests that the uprisings and the wars in the Middle East and the Balkans during the nineteenth century were parts of a Great Game and should be connected with this plan. Furthermore, he explicitly suggests that ‘Gladstone dedicated his life to destroy Quran-i Karim and destroy the Ottoman Empire.’³⁵ Moreover, the fact that Karaca connects the Bulgarian Agitation with the Armenian uprisings and the Armenian Question³⁶ with Egypt is significant. As he identifies Gladstone as a key figure in the origins of the anti-Ottoman movement, he disclaims Gladstone’s humanitarian and libertarian attitudes. Eventually, Karaca argues that Gladstone led the movement ‘to send the Turkish majority to where they belong’ which created a butterfly effect and hastened the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.³⁷ It should also be pointed out that contemporary historians

³⁰ Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans Empire Lost, Relations Altered*, (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), p. 102

³¹ Jeremy Salt, ‘The Narrative Gap in Armenian History’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), p. 34.

³² *Ibid*, p. 23.

³³ Taha N. Karaca, *İngiltere Başkanı Gladstone'un Osmanlı'yı Yıkma Planı: Büyük Oyun*, (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2011.) (The Ottoman destruction plan of British Prime Minister Gladstone: The Great Game)

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 18.

³⁶ The phraseology regarding the question of the Ottoman Armenians gives rise to serious debates amongst the commentators whether it reached up to the genocide level. As the purpose of this thesis is not to analyse the nature (both legal and sociological) of these events, this author will hereinafter referred them as Armenian Question of 1894-96 and Armenian Question of 1915 .

³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 489-98.

also provide the contextual knowledge from the perspective of Ottoman officialdom.³⁸ This point of the historiography explains Gladstone's actions as deriving from his Turcophobic and Islamophobic sentiments and views his inflammatory Bulgarian pamphlet as the source that encapsulated these sentiments. There is a unanimous understanding between British historians as to Gladstone's pursuit of morality. However, from the Ottoman-centric point of view, Gladstone's fervent fanaticism to Christianity was the most prominent aspect of his policy. Such a comparison helps to clarify Gladstone's position further on certain matters. Nonetheless, the majority of the scholarship overlooks Gladstone's consistent morally principled manner as to the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte since his early life which was a key priority in his attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. These works have ignored Gladstone's original intention and his willingness to make a common cause with those who embody humanitarian ideals and the deep bitterness he expressed towards the Turkish government. This thesis sets out to rectify this gap between the history and historiographies of both Britain and Turkey, analysing the elements of consistency and the key events which influenced Gladstone to adopt such a determined tone with respect to Ottoman minorities.

The importance of Gladstone's role in determining his humanitarian approach is particularly emphasised in most recent studies on the British history of humanitarian interventions in the nineteenth century. Defining Gladstone as a 'thundering moralist', Garry J. Bass argues that the Bulgarian agitation of 1876 did not only pave the way to the modern human rights movement but also his rhetoric of human rights on behalf of the human rights of Zulus and

³⁸ Tokay's article titled 'Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone, 1868-80' can be considered as the most extensive study on Gladstone's 'emphasis' on the Anglo-Ottoman relations but did not primarily focus on Gladstone's rhetorical framework throughout his life. Gul Tokay, 'Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone', pp. 318-333; source: <http://ebox.nbu.bg/hist12/ne3/5tokay.pdf>; Yasamee's study also examines the events from the politics of Abdulhamid, Feroze A. K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdulhamid II and the Great Powers*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1996)

Afghans even inspired Tony Blair.³⁹ Bass regards Gladstone's concerns for Afghanistan 'moving beyond his religious concern for Christians to a broader humanitarianism, although with Christian faith as his intellectual anchor.'⁴⁰ Therefore, it could be argued that a process of development took place on the balance between Gladstone's principles and political circumstances which were determining factors of Gladstone's attitude towards the Porte. What is often overlooked by historians, nonetheless, is the nature of Gladstone's thinking towards Islam and Muslims. Deryck Scyreuder defines Gladstone's attitude to Islam as a 'residual antipathy' along with 'the doctrines of grace and St. Augustine's inclusivity' but one that also emphasizes that 'even in his most inflammatory language (over the Bulgarians), Gladstone developed no "axis of evil" to shape a crusading foreign policy.'⁴¹ The question of whether or not Islamophobic sentiments had a place in his humanitarian role was not up for discussion. Nonetheless, Gladstone's early private and public life was vigilance about the Ottoman Empire and Muslims. It is, consequently, important to emphasize how Gladstone was personally influenced by these factors. Eugenio Biagini regards Gladstone's 'dislike of Islam' as a cultural component in his approach to Egypt.⁴² In the case of British occupation of Egypt, therefore, an analysis of economic, political and imperial reasons complements the reasons why Gladstone had abandoned his earlier belief in self-determination. Historians have traditionally focused on either Gladstone's religious motivation or humanitarian sentiments in Ottoman affairs. Nevertheless, Gladstone's attitude to Islam deserves further attention because it helps to construct a more accurate picture of his humanitarianism. To

³⁹ Garry Jonathan Bass, *The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), p. 6, p. 236, p. 343; Roland Quinault, 'Afghanistan and Gladstone's Moral Foreign Policy', *History Today*, Volume 52, Issue 12, December 2002, pp. 28-34.

⁴⁰ Bass, *The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*, p. 307.

⁴¹ Deryck M. Scyreuder, "'Gladstone's Greater World': Free Trade, Empire and Liberal Internationalism' in Roland Quinault, Roger Swift and Ruth Clayton Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone: New Studies and Perspectives*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), p. 268, p. 271.

appreciate more fully the nature of Gladstone's attitudes, it is also necessary to understand his contention with Sultan Abdulhamid II. It can also be argued that historians and researchers have put so much emphasis on Gladstone's evangelism and Abdulhamid's authority of the Caliphate that they have tended to underestimate the impact of mutual antipathy between these statesmen for the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations.⁴³

Sources and Methodology

By showing the consistent elements in Gladstone's thinking in the case of Greece, Crete, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Armenia, this study suggests a new perspective on his long-engagement with the Eastern question throughout his life. Seen in this light, this thesis is divided into two main parts: Gladstone's ideology and foreign policy until 1880 and the record of Gladstone's second Ministry with respect to the Ottoman Empire. The first part of the study is mainly concerned with the dynamics of British policy towards the Porte with a detailed analysis of the development of Gladstone's ideas along liberal lines in accordance with his Christian faith, which provided the moral fervour for the condition of Christian subjects of the Porte. Unpublished primary source material from the Gladstone Papers in the British Library is analysed and forms the core of the research to establish the evidence for Gladstone's thinking. The research focuses on his diaries, speeches, pamphlets, articles, and his correspondence with Lord Granville. Gladstone wrote often and voluminously on current politics particularly during the Crimean War and Near-Eastern Crisis of 1876-8. This is apparent in his letters to his wife and memoranda together with his private correspondence

⁴² Eugenio Biagini, 'Exporting 'Western & Beneficent Institutions': Gladstone and Empire, 1880-1885', *Gladstone Centenary Essays*, p. 214.

⁴³ Speculations and debates on Gladstone's declaration on the Quran as an 'accursed book' and 'We cannot rule over the Muslim as long as this Quran remains in their hands; we must do everything possible to remove the Quran away from Muslims, or alienate them against the Quran' and eventually became an enemy of Islam despite any evidence. Conversely, a recent and unique study on Gladstone which argued that Gladstone's plan

which is a rich source of information. *The Gladstone Diaries* edited by Matthew is inevitably a key source as well as Ramm's edition of his correspondence with Lord Granville which both reveal how they determined new foreign policy directions and objectives. Specific attention will be given to Gladstone's 'Bulgarian Horrors' and 'Lessons in Massacres' pamphlets which can be considered as his most powerful condemnations of the Turkish government. Analysing public and parliamentary speeches will demonstrate how he employed his humanitarian concerns for the fate of Ottoman minorities. Additionally, there will be a comparative analysis of the new dynamics of Anglo-Ottoman relations and Gladstone's foreign policy legacy in particular by comparing and contrasting Abdulhamid II and Gladstone. In exploring Gladstone's second Premiership, the telegrams between Lord Granville, George Goschen and Henry Layard that are housed in the National Archives will also offer a perspective into how Gladstone's agenda was informed by humanitarian and moral objectives. Beyond this, it is also important to consider the Ottoman point of view in respect to the politics of Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II during the Eastern Question. As in the cases of Egypt and Armenia, furthermore, *Osmanli Belgelerinde Misir*, 'Egypt in Ottoman Documents' and *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives (1891-1893)* enhances the importance of the Ottoman assumption that Gladstone had considerable personal responsibility for the occupation of Egypt and that he provoked the Armenians to rise against Turkish rule. In sum, by both balancing and connecting Gladstone's attitude and features of British traditional approaches towards the Ottomans, this thesis imparts a general assessment of Gladstone's humanitarian diplomacy towards the Ottoman Empire, and the long-term effects of his policies on the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations during his second ministry.

to destroy the Ottoman Empire who published in 2011. Karaca, *Ibid*, p. 18; For further information, see Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)*, (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 1997)

Outlines of the Chapters

In addition to being an examination of the Ottoman policies of the ‘Grand Old Man’ throughout his life on the Eastern Question, this thesis takes into account key events that modified his thinking and helped to give shape to his outlook. Consequently, this thesis is chronologically organized into two main sections and nine sub-chapters dealing with Gladstone’s involvement in the crises of the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter I begins with a brief background of Gladstone’s life and outlines the key features of his state of mind. Along with the profound effect that Christianity had upon his understanding of genuine liberty, it considers how individuals and incidents, such as George Canning and the debate at the Oxford Union on Mahomet’s character influenced his perspective on the Turkish government and the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

Chapter II presents a general picture of British policy towards the Porte until the Crimean War under Lord Palmerston who believed in the functionality of Turkish reforms for the protection of minority rights. It further investigates how and to what extent the Greek question influenced Gladstone’s humanitarian vision which was his first intimation of British intervention against the Turkish rule towards the liberation of Christian subjects.

Chapter III analyses the effects of Gladstone’s political transition from Peelite Conservatism to Liberalism on his notion of international affairs. It also considers to what extent he broadened his humanitarian sensibilities during his visits to Naples with Italy and whether he was sincere in his utterances for the Don Pacifico appeal.

Chapter IV illustrates how the Crimean War affected Gladstone's views on Britain's foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Along with Gladstone's experience and responsibilities as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Palmerston's ministry, this section seeks to explain why Gladstone clung to his belief in the protective policy and the implementation of Ottoman reforms despite his concerns over the Turkish loans and the Turkish government.

Chapter V investigates the standpoint of Gladstone's evolving theological convictions in the concept of religious nationality towards Eastern Christians. Indeed, his role during the Cretan insurrections had a profound effect on his understanding of self-government for the liberties of Ottoman nations. It will also assess both the conduct of Gladstone and his responses towards Ottoman policy in his first ministry.

Chapter VI provides an analysis of Gladstone's constant endeavour and advocacy for the rights of Ottoman subject races during the Bulgarian agitation of 1876. Along with his moral fervour for the recognition of Turkish obligations to carry out their promises, this chapter further explores the reasons why Gladstone was concerned with British attitudes towards the Porte under the Disraeli ministry.

Chapter VII evaluates Gladstone's efforts to adjust British Official Eastern policy at the beginning of his second Premiership with Lord Granville. In particular, this chapter particularly focuses on which political and moral principles were formally proposed that would both keep the Ottoman Empire alive and improve the conditions of the Christian subjects of the Porte. Specific attention will be given to the Berlin Treaty and why Gladstone supported a British naval demonstration at Smyrna.

Chapter VIII crucially explores why Gladstone had abandoned his earlier belief in Egyptian self-government. As a debate emerged over British imperial interests, the discussion offers an

insight into the factors that led Gladstone to support the British invasion of Egypt instead of Egyptian nationalism for the rights of Egyptians.

Chapter IX seeks to explain why Gladstone's engagement with Armenian affairs is essential to understand Gladstone's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Addressing recent Ottoman-centric and British historiography, it further illustrates Gladstone's consistency and inflammatory rhetoric in defending the rights of Ottoman Christian subjects.

I. W. E. GLADSTONE'S IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY UP TO 1880

Introduction

The ensuing chapters establish the general framework of Gladstone's attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire prior to his second premiership. The following analysis will provide an understanding of the components of and key players in British strategy in the Near East leading up to the publication of Gladstone's Bulgarian pamphlet in 1876. Throughout Gladstone's career, it becomes clear that there were elements in his politics and ideology that can only be understood by an investigation of his approach to the Turkish government and its Christian subjects. The chapters of this thesis that examine the period prior to 1880 will, therefore, identify where he was consistent and illustrate the foundations of his concern for humanitarianism in the Ottoman provinces. The motivation behind his acts will be explored from the assumptions embedded in British policy towards the Ottoman Empire, and this thesis will present possible answers as to how these driving forces evolved and interacted with developing affairs – as in the case of the Crimean War. Specific attention will be given to the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875–78 in order to investigate Gladstone's attitude to the Christian uprisings in the Ottoman Empire which compelled him to set out his thoughts with respect to the Turkish government. This research will also concentrate on the indications and features of Gladstone's rhetoric where he invoked anti-Turkish sentiments, and whether he may be perceived as an antagonist of Islam.

I. W.E. Gladstone's early life and ideology

The fourth son of the merchant John Gladstone, William Ewart Gladstone was born on 29 December 1809 in Liverpool. The family's Scottish ancestry meant that William was brought up in the Evangelical tradition, and his strong Christian values remained a constant

throughout his life. During William's early childhood, his father enhanced both the economic well-being and social status of his family through business and political engagements.¹ Sir John Gladstone was one of the financial supporters of the Tory statesman George Canning and he chaired the election committee which assured Canning's success in Liverpool. Sir John's personal achievements were an 'inspiring image' for his sons, particularly for his youngest.² In fact, William would later recall one of Canning's visits to his father's home, in which the three year old William gave his first attempt at a public speech in front of the assembled guests and family.³ It is fair to state, therefore, that William owed much of his political success not only to his father's economic well-being and political connections, but also to 'his first hero'⁴ George Canning— a man whom he always regarded with great sympathy.

William Gladstone followed in the family tradition – he was educated at Christ Church, and subsequently at Eton College. Accepting the substantial influence that his elitist education would have on his future career, William proved eager to develop his political skills, intellect, culture, and likewise his ideology. While describing his 'melancholy' upon graduating from Eton, he nonetheless expressed gratitude to God for 'the happiest period' of his life.⁵ Gladstone developed a deep enthusiasm for Greek ethnology and literature, and the subjects of Homer and religion became an intertwined 'central intellectual preoccupation' of his life.⁶

¹ S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones, a Family Bibliography 1764-1851*, (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1971), p. 93.

² Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: God and Politics*, (London: Continuum Books, 2007), p. 3.

³ John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859, Vol. I*, The Project Gutenberg e-Book, (Release Date: April 15, 2007), p. 11

⁴ Roland Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy, From Disraeli to Blair*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 32.

⁵ Diary entry for 2 December 1827, M. R .D. Foot and H.C.G.Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. i, 1825-1832, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 151.

⁶ David Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer and Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

He regularly read studies on history, politics, and culture, including Homer, Cicero, Herodotus, David Hume and Edward Gibbon. Although he assessed Hume to be ‘greater’ historian than Gibbon, whose style he considered to be ‘highly ornamented’⁷, it is clear that Gibbon’s work was to be significantly influential as it inspired Gladstone to read and consider Gibbon’s account of Mahomet.⁸ Although Gladstone voted against the character of Mahomet in a debate at Oxford Union, and the decision was made to disapprove of Mahomet’s character, it would be groundless to consider his vote as evidence of antipathy towards Islam.⁹ At the same time, however, this incident illustrates the importance that this emphasis on the issue of Islam would have on his early life. Gibbon described the spread of Islam as follows: ‘the authority the companions of Mahomet expired with their lives; and the chiefs or emirs of the Arabian tribes left behind...the regal and sacerdotal characters were united in the successors of Mahomet and if the Koran was the rule of their actions, they were the supreme judges and interpreters of that divine book. They reigned by the right of conquest over the nations of the East, to whom the liberty was unknown and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence.’¹⁰ Gibbon in assessing Mahomet’s character pointed out the significance of the Koran when he wrote that it was due to ‘the sayings of Mahomet’ were being ‘lessons of truth’ which led to his actions being ‘examples of virtue’ that ‘revealed a man of ‘superior intelligence.’ It is true that Islam’s most fundamental concept disregarded the contributions of Greek mythology to faith such as Homer’s *Iliad*, or

⁷ Diary entry for 12 March 1827, M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. i., p. 105.

⁸ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire, Volumes I–VI* (London: Strahan & Cadell, 1776–1788). See his summary of chapters in the Gladstone Papers (hereafter GP), located at the British Library (hereafter BL), BL Add MS 44717 fol.64, ‘Epitome of Gibbon’s Fall and Decline of the Roman Empire.’, See ‘Diary entry for 3 February 1827, M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. I, p. 104.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gibbon, *Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. V*, p. 271.

the *Philippics* of Demosthenes.¹¹ Due to his sympathy for Greek culture and literature, Gladstone would have been concerned by this exclusion and Gibbon's cognitive perspective of Islam and its founder. On this basis, his irritation with the Ottoman conquest in Europe, the impact of Turkish rule on the cultures and the principles of Islamic governance remained consistent until his death.

Gladstone's interest in classical literature preceded apace during his education in Oxford, and it shaped his intellectual development as well as his approach towards human nature, society, and the state. He would remain indebted to his Oxford tutors, but particularly to the 'four doctors' – Aristotle, St. Augustine, Dante and Bishop Butler – each of whom shaped his ideology.¹² Aristotle was an intensely important figure who illuminated Gladstone's understanding of state, government, and man's nature as 'a political animal' within society. He explicitly absorbed Aristotle's belief that political authority must be limited to Government institutions which, in turn, was obliged to respect the freedom and protect the natural rights of the individual. It was Gladstone's regular study of the *Ethics*, during May 1831, which has prompted David Bebbington to situate Aristotle at the 'core of Gladstone's formal curriculum'.¹³ With regards to the form of government, Gladstone derived two questions from Aristotle's politics: 'whether the form of the government is the best', and 'whether it be consensually adapted to its end whatever it may be.'¹⁴ Moreover, Gladstone utilized William Paley's moral philosophy to consider the relationship between Church and State. He mainly criticized Paley's system of moral virtue to be the best 'system' to produce good for mankind which 'overlooked what he might have learned...from Aristotle; that

¹¹ Ibid, p. 114–5.

¹² The latin concept of 'dottore' was referred as 'doctor' which means teacher or tutor in a letter to Cardinal Henry Edward Manning: Morley, *Gladstone 1809-1859, Vol. I*, p. 208 and p. 219.

¹³ Bebbington, *Mind of Gladstone*, p. 23.

¹⁴ BL GP Add. MS 44812, fol. 91.

essential requirement to moral action, that sole ingredient which renders action moral, the motive on which it proceeds’, ‘since it is on these terms that God wills to make man happy’ to the question arises, ‘if virtue be exclusively doing good to mankind, how can duties to God be virtuous?’¹⁵ Gladstone also approved of the ‘pure and good morality’ of Dante and Homer who always seemed to ‘throw our sympathies on the right side.’¹⁶ As ‘an Anglican doctor of the moral government of the world,’¹⁷ Bishop Butler’s work was to become Gladstone’s ‘lifelong obsession’.¹⁸ Butler’s work laid the foundation for the relationship between morals and religion in Gladstone’s mind. He also regarded Paley’s statement that ‘the will of God ought to be our rule’ to be derived from Aristotle not from Butler, as ‘the essential requisite to moral action is the sole ingredient which renders action moral, the motive on which it proceeds. It is trifling to call the will of God our rule merely because we perform the acts which he desires us to perform; unless we also perform them from the motives which he prescribes and desires.’¹⁹

Gladstone’s speech on the Reform Bill at the Oxford Union Debating Society on 17 May 1831 was a statement of his opposition to electoral reform. He viewed the Bill as a ‘threat to change the form of the British government’, which would consequently ‘break up the whole frame of society.’²⁰ Roland Quinault explains Gladstone’s opposition to electoral reform as being due to his belief in a constitution ‘that should grant...little political liberty to the subject’, as the protection of public peace and the freedom of expression of all classes was

¹⁵ BL GP Add. MS 44812, fols. 177-8.

¹⁶ Lionel A Tollemache, *Talks with Mr. Gladstone*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), p. 76

¹⁷ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone, Vol. I 1809-1865*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), p. 178

¹⁸ Gladstone’s interest in Butler’s works lasted for a major of time and he edited his studies in 1896. William E. Gladstone, *The Works of Joseph Butler, Volumes I-II*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896-1897)

¹⁹ BL GP Add MS 44812, fol. 180, ‘Theory of Moral Obligation.’

²⁰ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, vol. I, p. 73. Gladstone’s description of his Oxford debate to his brother, 20 May 1831.

legitimately held 'in the hands of educated men.'²¹ His speech in Oxford was an eloquent springboard for his entry into Parliament, especially as it impressed the Duke of Newcastle who offered to sponsor him as a candidate for the borough of Newark. Before becoming an M.P., however, the main challenge to Gladstone's political career was the tension between his humanitarian commitments and his regard for his father – a slave-owner in the British West Indies. Quinault argues that, when addressing the electorate at Newark, Gladstone's stance on slavery was 'essentially the same as his father's' although he supported his line of conduct with reference to the 'moral' and 'physical' emancipation of slaves under the guidance of Christian education.²² Indeed, Gladstone's 'religious conscience' meant that he could declare to his Newark electors in 1832 that 'there was nothing in scripture' that stated slavery was 'absolutely and necessarily sinful.'²³ Gladstone's concept of slavery enabled him to soften the existing tension between the slave trade and his morality, and set a precedent for his understanding of the world order in the 1870's. In his maiden speech to the House of Commons (3 June 1833), Gladstone emphasised the responsibility of the British Parliament 'to the honour of the nation', as well as to the Ministers and West-Indian plantation owners, and urged them to rest upon 'her principles, her intellect, and virtue'. If this were not in place, he continued, it would signify the 'ruin of the colonies, and the downfall of the empire.'²⁴

Canning's political inspiration and the influences upon Gladstone's early life proved pivotal in determining his policy towards the Ottoman Empire. His concept of genuine liberty (based upon his consideration of local self-government and freedom of religious faith) was the principal reason for his association with Turkish-Christian subjects in the 1870s. Although

²¹ Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy, From Disraeli to Blair*, p. 34.

²² Roland Quinault, 'Gladstone and Slavery', *The Historical Journal*, 52/2 (June 2009), pp. 363–83, pp. 366–7.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 367.

²⁴ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 18 (1833), cc308-60.

much has been written about Gladstone's strong religious beliefs being the driving force for his involvement, other arguments, such as his thoughts on the moral obligations of the Turkish government and the capacity of Turkish governors, are more plausible given an examination of the evidence. It is important to understand that while Gladstone's religious beliefs motivated his concern about the situation of Christian minorities, the reasoning behind his concern resulted from his early career thoughts and his subsequent declarations on 'the conduct of the Turkish government in Bulgaria.'²⁵ To Gladstone, civil government was 'not a matter of option but of nature.'²⁶ He followed Edmund Burke's thoughts on the effect of liberty upon the individual, and the maintenance of their rights by a legitimate constitution. That said, he addressed Bishop William Warburton's concept of freedom when he wrote that, 'no free man can be bound by laws, to which they have not given their consent, either in person or by representative.'²⁷ Regarding the relationship between 'the self-governed and self-directed' he observed that 'the law of God and immutable conformity of will to the time standard' would steer the goodwill of human nature.'²⁸ He thus reasoned that 'freedom or self-government is rather a condition of perfect good than a part of the good itself' which 'men are looking at self-government essentially as a good; whereas any reasoning love of freedom would admit that it was not necessarily good when alone...and indeed this is the product of the human nature as it is.'²⁹ Evidently, therefore, it was a combination of his love of freedom, his notion that although self-government was limited it was imbued with equality and liberty, together with his belief that government was guided by moral and ethical obligations, which formed the substance of his 'Principle of Government'. Gladstone rejected the idea that 'the

²⁵ W.E.Gladstone, 'Lessons in massacre; or, The conduct of the Turkish government in and about Bulgaria since May, 1876. Chiefly from the papers presented by command', (London, 1877).

²⁶ BL GP Add MS 44721, fol. 5.

²⁷ BL GP Add MS 44812, fol. 282, 'Lacedaemonians foreign and domestic policy.'

²⁸ BL GP Add MS 44721, fol. 8.

²⁹ Ibid.

right of government lies in the numerical majority’, as well as Burke’s argument that ‘statesmen could be bound by their decision if it did.’³⁰ In this regard, this can be linked with the ethnic and spatial distribution of the Ottoman population. Gladstone had always regarded the Ottoman nation states with ethnic-religious differences independently from the Sublime Porte’s Islamic character of the state. Concerned about the conquering dominant Turks, he defined the existence of the Turkish government and the Turkish race in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire to be ‘very peculiar and in an unexemplified condition.’³¹ To Gladstone, absolute power was established under the direct government of the Turks in a ‘wretched system’ despite the socio-ethnic structure of the society and the number of different -religious identities.³² Furthermore, Gladstone’s Aristotelian inspired emphasis was that ‘we cannot consistently with our ideas to make Providence conceive that the right to govern can lie in any place except where the capacity is to govern is also to be found.’³³ Bebbington and Quinault are of the opinion that it indeed was Gladstone’s ‘Aristotelian background’ that enabled him to develop his axioms and his inspiration which would become ‘a hallmark for his later political career.’³⁴ On this basis, his comparison of the cases of slavery on the one hand and the system in the Ottoman Empire in 1877 on the other revealed his key assumption towards Ottoman rule. His pamphlet titled ‘The Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire’ gives a clear indication of his subsequent attitude towards the Turkish government, ‘in the case of negro slavery, at any rate, it was a race of higher capacities ruling over a race of lower capacities; but in the case of this system, it is unfortunately a race of

³⁰ BL GP Add MS 44721, fol. 13, ‘On the Principle of Government’, II.

³¹ William E. Gladstone, *The Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire*, (London, 1877), p. 5.

³² *Ibid*, p. 16

³³ BL GP Add MS 44721, fol. 13, ‘On the Principle of Government’, II.

³⁴ Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer and Politics*, p. 23; Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy, From Disraeli to Blair*, p. 33.

lower capacities which rules over a race of higher capacities.’³⁵ While this statement has racist overtones, it is evident that this was an expression of a loss of confidence and trust towards Ottoman provincial governors. The following question arises: how did Gladstone become convinced that the Turkish government was unable to adapt itself to the modernization process, and what was the nature of the compromise in terms of her Christian subjects that she was obliged to make? It is nevertheless true that the Crimean War, and the subsequent humanitarian questions until the Bulgarian Agitation, aided Gladstone’s mental and theoretical processes. Distinguishing the stance of the Turkish government from the English government in terms of protecting the rights and properties of the community, further reveals Gladstone’s appreciation for the safeguarding the religious freedom of non-Muslims by the British.³⁶ He was, particularly concerned with the military, dynastic, and Islamic principles behind the Ottoman state that prevented amalgamation, and which did not truly embrace the mass of subjects but instead aggrandized Turkish ethnicity. To Gladstone, the violation of religious freedom since the rule of the Ottoman conquest in the provinces was reached through ‘death, a sort of servitude or to embrace of the Mahometan religion.’³⁷ Without question, the elements in Gladstone’s transition from Tory to Liberal were based upon his conscience which stemmed from his early life and upbringing; he wrote that ‘the general tendencies’ of his mind were, ‘in the time of my youth...illiberal.’³⁸ From this point of view, Gladstone’s international statesmanship built upon his earlier intentions, and remained faithful to his strong morality – especially in the case of the Ottoman Empire and the campaign for the liberation of Balkan states. As he wrote,

³⁵ Gladstone, *The Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 11.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 6.

³⁷ Gladstone, *The Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 6.

³⁸ BL GP Add MS 44790, fols. 107-110, ‘Autobiographical Retrospect’, fol. 107.

How little I then knew or ever dreamed not only of the great domestic subjects which were to come up and of the laborious part I was to bear in them of those influences seemingly casual which were to make more conspicuous in many foreign countries than almost any politician of my time: in connection with especially with Naples and Italy first, then with Greece, Balkan Peninsula and the whole question of the Turkish Empire so truly and largely *welt-historisch*.³⁹

³⁹ Ibid, fol. 110.

II. W. E. Gladstone and British policy towards the Ottoman Empire prior to the Crimean War

In the late eighteenth century, the colonial and European wars, which followed the American declaration of independence, left Britain diplomatically isolated. The British Empire had to regain prestige, as well as revive its economy, in the international arena. Jeremy Black argues that, between 1783 and 1793, the Pitt ministry wanted ‘to widen horizons and adopt a more active approach to international problems.’¹² With regards to trade, Black addresses ‘a background of political volatility and of resulting opportunities’ as a consequence of the struggle between Christian powers and Ottoman Turks, as well as ‘territorial changes that might create new trade routes’ for Russia, Austria and France in the Ottoman territories.³ Nonetheless, it is fair to state that, in principle, British foreign policy had a tendency to be pragmatic and to protect commercial interests abroad. The international order in Europe, on the other hand, had already begun to transform dramatically in the age of Enlightenment and democratic ideals of the French Revolution in 1789. Furthermore, Britain not only altered her economic patterns, but also enhanced her importance in this new order by way of the Industrial Revolution. Despite Britain’s rise to become the world’s dominant power, Thomas G. Otte argues that British foreign policy was ‘never truly isolationist’, and that the British imperial position ‘was thus linked to the Continental balance of Power.’⁴ Therefore, foreign policy decisions were therefore not solely not only determined by the Foreign Minister, Prime

¹ Jeremy Black, ‘British Foreign Policy and International Affairs during Sir William Trumbull’s Career,’ *British Library Journal*, 19 (1993), p. 202.

² Jeremy Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Revolutions 1783-93, 1783-93* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1993), p. 19p. 19

³ Jeremy Black, *Trade, Empire and British Foreign Policy, 1689-1815*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 36.

⁴ Thomas G. Otte, ‘It’s what Made Britain Great’: Reflections on British Foreign Policy; from Malplaquet to Maastricht’, in Thomas G. Otte (ed.), *Makers of British Foreign Policy, From Pitt to Thatcher* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 9.

Minister, and the British cabinet, but conducted with the international political conjuncture very much in mind.

There is little doubt that economic and imperial considerations formed the foundation of British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. A broader framework, however, was implemented due to the shadow of ‘The Eastern Question’; a shadow which influenced the attitudes of statesmen throughout the nineteenth century. Traditionally, the Eastern Question is a broad term; it describes the events and line of vision concerning the fate of the weakened Ottoman Empire, with particular regard to her Balkan and Middle Eastern territories. The matter of the guardianship of the Ottoman provinces (in order to secure passage between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean), otherwise known as the ‘Great Game’, enhanced the importance of the Eastern Question. Beside the economic and political underpinnings, one significant aspect of British policy towards the Porte was the status of Christian subjects under Turkish rule. During the longest century of the Ottoman Empire,⁵ as Garry Bass writes, the ‘politics of human rights made a big impact on foreign policy in the heyday of imperialism and *realpolitik*’.⁶ Yet it was this humanitarian intervention, according to Davide Rodogno, that was at the heart of the Eastern Question, and which led to ‘a specific relationship between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire.’⁷

In the meantime, Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations developed. The nature and scope of Ottoman foreign affairs had been limited to European imperial interests, *vis-à-vis* one another, and their determination to dominate Eastern affairs. In 1793, Yusuf Agah Efendi

⁵ The phrase ‘the longest century of the Ottoman Empire’ originates from Ilber Ortaylı’s study on Ottoman reform and the modernization process. Ilber Ortaylı, *Imparatorlugun En Uzun Yuzyili* (The Longest Century of the Empire), (Istanbul: İletisim Yayinlari, 2005).

⁶ Garry Bass, *Freedom’s Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009), p. 6.

⁷ Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 22.

was appointed as the first Ottoman ambassador to London – two centuries after William Harborne’s arrival in Constantinople as the first British Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte in 1583. Anglo-Ottoman relations therefore began in earnest in the late eighteenth century. Christine Woodhead argues that the stability of the relationship was largely due to the geographical distance between London and Constantinople, and that as ‘there were no common borders or areas of major contention. Most aspects of Anglo-Ottoman relations tended to coincide rather than to conflict.’⁸

The French occupation, by Napoleon, of Egypt in 1798 and Syria in 1799, left an imprint on British diplomatic strategy towards the Middle East and Mediterranean. Existing British interests and the French threat to establish colonies in North Africa, led Britain to aid the Ottoman navy. Britain would later, however, adopt the doctrine of the ‘Concert of Europe’; a policy created during the Vienna Congress of 1815 for the long-lasting solution to the Eastern Question. The British representative at the Congress, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, became the central figure after assuring that the European peace settlement was achievable alongside the protection of British interests. While Castlereagh’s reluctance to interfere in relations can be described as ‘non-interventionist’, his successor George Canning, however, took a more enthusiastic and involved approach – especially towards liberal nationalist and constitutionalist movements in Portugal, Spain and Latin America.⁹

Gladstone referred to Canning’s ‘dominant’ influence on his early political ideas as ‘Canningism’ – which he broke down into three sections: ‘the Roman Catholic emancipation, freedom of trade and the hostility of Mr. Canning’s on the Holy alliance.’^{10 11} It becomes clear

⁸ Christine Woodhead, ‘England, the Ottomans and the Barbary Coast in the late sixteenth century’, State Papers Online, The Government of Britain 1509–1714, University of Durham, p. 5.

⁹ Derek Beales, *From Castlereagh to Gladstone 1815–1885*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969), pp. 95–6.

¹⁰ BL GP Add MS 44790, fol. 28, ‘My Earlier Political Opinions (I) The descent.’

that, apart from his strong belief in using the Concert of Europe to maintain European peace in his subsequent career, Gladstone adhered to two principles. He assessed Canning's 'wisest and bold' policy towards Greece as one where 'its leading characteristic was a generous confidence in the good sense, and a liberty, and almost chivalrous belief that they would go right if their leaders did not lead them wrong.'¹² Canning's inspiration and motivation was not limited to Gladstone's place in the heart of Greece but also the Hellenic race, from Macedonia to Crete, and heralded his support for the liberal principles of national self-determination during his Lordship as the Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. In a House of Commons debate, on 27 April 1866, Gladstone admitted the impact that Canning had upon him when he stated that, 'I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning; every influence connected with that name governed the first political impressions of my childhood and my youth; with Mr. Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities from the Roman Catholic body, and in the free and truly British tone which he gave to our policy abroad.'¹³ Bebbington further emphasized Canning's influence on Gladstone's political career, namely through the principle of preserving national interests before the 'defence of European order' during his tenure as Foreign Secretary.¹⁴ Beyond any doubt, the Greek revolt against Ottoman rule (in 1821) featured prominently in Canning's foreign policy agenda; especially since giving his full support to the Greek war of independence enabled him to also protect economic interests in the Mediterranean from any Russian threat. Nonetheless, there were other reasons for his admiration to Canning in addition to their sympathy with Hellenic culture. Indeed, John Gladstone's decision in 1827 following the death of George Canning on

¹¹ BL GP Add MS 44790, fols 26-7, 'My Earlier Political Opinions (I) The descent.'

¹² W.E.Gladstone, *Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Question*, (Foreign and Commonwealth Office Collection, 1876), p. 13.

¹³ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 183 (1866), cc6-156, 'Adjourned Debate-Eighth night'

¹⁴ David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), p. 103

British inclusion into European alliance was not only a continuation of Canning's foreign policy but also an enforcement of it to compel the Ottoman Empire to give independence to Greece which ended with a destruction Ottoman and Egyptian navies at Navarino by the British, French and Russian fleet.¹⁵ This action can further be considered as the British commitment to the Concert of Europe, as a coercive influence on the Ottoman government in favour of the Greeks, and as a renewal of the Triple Alliance first witnessed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Subsequent to the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-8, Gladstone's decision in favour of the naval demonstration to coerce the Porte to carry out the obligations of Berlin Treaty in 1880 also appears to run parallel. With regards to the humanitarian aspect, Rodogno asserts that 'the rationale was unconvincing' and defines the intervention against 'the massacre' as just.¹⁶ Furthermore, the conference attempted to solve the international crisis over Greece, the concerted action did not manage to implement a long-lasting solution for the Eastern Crisis. Beyond the influence on British policy, this stance also reveals the Gladstone family tradition with respect to humanitarian intervention. Quinault describes John Gladstone, who raised money for the purpose of funding humanitarian assistance to Greece, as a 'friend of humanity' who advocated 'civil and religious liberty' during a public meeting in Liverpool Town hall on 14 February 1824.¹⁷ This humanitarian action set a vital 'precedent' for William Gladstone's 'subsequent stance in the Eastern Question.'¹⁸ Indeed, this can be associated with Gladstone's endeavour at the National Conference in St. James Hall fifty years later, with his support of the relief work for and the charity organizations aiding, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria between 1875 and 1876. The St. James Conference,

¹⁵ S.G.Checkland, *The Gladstones, a Family Bibliography 1764-1851*, (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1971), p. 159.

¹⁶ Rodogno, *Against Massacre Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*, p. 83.

¹⁷ 'Advertisement & Notices', *Liverpool Mercury*, 20 February 1824.

¹⁸ Ronald Quinault, 'Gladstone and War', pp. 235-51, in Ronald Quinault, Roger Swift and Ruth Clayton Windscheffel (eds), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012) , p. 236.

or the National conference on the Eastern Question, held on 8 December 1876 and organised by the *Eastern Question Association*, would be substantially noted for not only being a meeting of the Bulgarian relief fund but also as a strong indication of public consciousness from the Victorian stanza to Gladstone's humanitarianism.¹⁹ Further to Gladstone sharing Canning's interest in the question of Greece, it comes clear that the Hellenic element of the Eastern Question would eventually hold a special position in Gladstone's mind. To Gladstone, the Greeks did not stand up for Pan Islamism against Russian aggression as Servians, Montenegrins, and Bulgarians, but rather 'the Greek desire was to keep down Slavonic influences to be free from the yoke of Islam' which coincided with his estimation of the Ottoman government.²⁰ In that respect, Gladstone explicitly adhered to Greek affairs with admiration and love throughout his career. The Greek frontier would become the most urgent question of foreign policy to deal with in Gladstone's second premiership.

On the other hand, Colin Matthew points out the impact of Gladstone's Grand Tour in Europe upon his life; how he felt compelled to satisfy the 'dualities between internationalism versus nationalism' and how this 'strengthened another dimension' of 'Gladstone's experiences of religion in Italy' in the 1830s.²¹ This said, the roots of Gladstone's internationalism can also be seen to have been based upon a significant evolution of the theological approach he took to high churchmanship with regards to the relationship between state and religion. Evidence for this exists in his pamphlets, *The State in its Relations with the Church* (1838) and *Church principles considered in Their Results* (1840).²² According to Gladstone, 'the state is to contract with the largest religious society' and by emphasizing the moral acts of government,

¹⁹ See proceedings: BL 8028. AA, *Eastern Question Association: Report of Proceedings of the National conference at St. James Hall*, London: Direction of the Committee by James Clarke & Co., 13&14 Fleet Street.

²⁰ BL GP Add MS 44698 fol.157, 'Greece and the Treaty of Berlin' June 1879.

²¹ H. G. Colin Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 36.

²² William E. Gladstone, 'The State in its Relations with the Church', (London: John Murray, 1838); William E. Gladstone, 'Church principles considered in Their Results', (London: John Murray, 1840).

he wrote, ‘there was far more truth in the *eu zen* of Aristotle; under which we may consider that the state, bound to promote more generally the good of man, finds the church ready made to its hand, as the appointed instrument for advancing that department of human well-being which is spiritual, and contracts with it accordingly.’²³ Richard Shannon examines another duality of Gladstone’s stance, when he was Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office, between the Liberal ‘principle of self-government’ and the Conservative ‘principle of obedience.’²⁴ There is little doubt that this contrast would remain in Gladstone’s politics despite his moving in a liberal direction, particularly with the affairs in Ireland. Nonetheless, his aspiration for self-determination and liberal democracy would truly emerge with respect to the Balkans during the 1870s.

While aspects of Gladstone’s British foreign policy evolved, Palmerston was the architect of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Beyond any doubt, the British confrontation and struggle to play the Great Game with Russia in Asia became significantly intertwined with the Eastern Question, and became central to British foreign policy. In answer to Henry Bulwer’s question on 11 July 1831, as to whether the government would allow a possible Russian conquest of Turkey, Viscount Palmerston assured the Cabinet that it was of, ‘the utmost importance for the interest of England, and for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, that the Ottoman Empire should remain entire, and be as an independent state.’²⁵ By doing so, Palmerston emphasised that it was ‘the duty of my Majesty’s Ministers to resist any attempt on the part of Russia to partition the Turkish Empire; have liberty to interfere, and prevent the Pasha of Egypt from dismembering any portion of the dominions of the Sultan in

²³ Gladstone, ‘The State in its Relations with the Church’, p. 18.

²⁴ Shannon, *Gladstone: 1809–1865*, p. 34.

²⁵ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 19 (11 July 1833), cc570-83, ‘Russia and Turkey’

reference to political, and not to religious interests'.²⁶ Although he adhered to the policy of British protection of Ottoman territorial integrity in the 1830s, Palmerston had also begun to substantially alter the Concert of Europe policy in the Near East. According to Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, this change was due to 'his sagacious judgement and cool practical mind.'²⁷ Jasper Ridley supports this argument by defining Palmerston's determination as, 'a complete *volte-face* accomplishment' at the end of playing the 'whole game by ear', and that he had not anticipated that events would 'take their own course' and obtain 'the maximum advantage for Britain from a complex international situation.'²⁸ The political unrest in Egypt under the lead of Mehmet Ali Pasha in 1831, and the *Hunkar Iskelesi Treaty* (1833) which allowed economic privileges towards Russia on the Straits, proved to be the contributing factors in leading Palmerston, unlike his predecessors to adopt a revised British policy. Mehmet Ali's hegemony in Egypt, Crete, and Syria meant not only disintegration of Ottoman rule but also a Russian protectorate of the Sultan. Additionally, the *Hunkar Iskelesi Treaty* gave privileges to Russia on the Straits which increased British apprehension. Palmerston's policy towards the Ottoman Empire revolved around protecting British commercial interests, and blocking any Russian bid for hegemony in the Ottoman Empire. Palmerston's strategy can be grouped under three headings: strengthening trade relations with the Porte, promoting Ottoman reforms, and gaining the trust of the Sultan through British diplomacy. With respect to the first, the Anglo-Turkish trade agreement of 1838, also known as the Treaty of Balta Limani, was remarkable for the amelioration of diplomatic and economic relations with the Porte. Beyond the significance of the maintenance of peace, British merchants gained trade privileges in the Ottoman market along

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson (eds.), *Foundations of British Foreign Policy, From Pitt(1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, (London: Frank Cass&Co.Ltd, 1966), p. 117.

²⁸ Jasper Ridley, *Lord Palmerston*, (London: Book Club Associates, 1970), p. 208

with the treaty. With regards to the free trade argument, Emine Zeytinli states that there was an increase of 6.8% per year in exported Ottoman goods to Great Britain between 1838 and 1854.²⁹ More to the point, Britain prevented Mehmet Ali Pasha from becoming stronger, secured Britain's interests by safeguarding the Eastern Mediterranean with India, and witnessed how 'valuable Egypt was for the higher British interests.'³⁰ Hasan Sahin further claims that this treaty became central to British Near East policies, which involved the protection of Ottoman integrity against the spread of French and Russian ambitions.³¹ As a matter of fact, such economic considerations were also important as the material of Turkish policy on her Christian subjects. Regarding the promotion of Ottoman reforms, Palmerston's prominent belief in Ottoman integrity, his interest in the welfare and rejuvenation of the Ottoman Empire, set him apart from his predecessors. For example, he was pessimistic over the belief that reform of the Ottoman Army, the education, and legal system were vital in order to maintain the existence of the Ottoman Empire. This period of reorganisation known, as the Tanzimat reform, began shortly after the proclamation of 'Gulhane Decree' (or Hatt-I Sarif) following the succession of the new Sultan, Abdul Mecid. Palmerston was satisfied with the process of reform and in a letter to John Ponsonby, the British ambassador at Constantinople, asked him to 'direct the cordial congratulations of the British Government to the Porte on the adoption of a measure which was "fraught with incalculable advantage to the Ottoman Empire" and which redounded highly to the honour of the statesmen by whom it had been framed.'³² While this can be considered as strong evidence of a British presence in

²⁹ Emine Zeytinli, 'The Effect of Trade Agreements: the case of international trade of Europe and Turkey', *Economics and Management*, 2012, p. 1630.

³⁰ Mehmet Kocaoglu, 'Cavallan Mehmet Ali Pasha 1831-1841', *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, p. 223.

³¹ Hasan Sahin, 'Sark Meselesi Acısından Osmanlı-İngiliz İlişkilerine bir Genel Bakış', *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi Sayı 29* (Erzurum 2006), p. 226.

³² Frederick S. Rodkey, 'Lord Palmerston's Policy for the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1839-1841', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fourth Series, Vol. 12 (1929), pp. 163-192, p. 173.

domestic Ottoman affairs, Ramazan Ata and Norman Anick both agree that Palmerston's letter, stating 'Hatt-i Sarif is a major success of yours', also revealed Ponsonby's influence on the Ottoman reformation era.³³ Anick further argues that Palmerston himself embraced the idea that Ponsonby had asserted British supremacy 'more firmly at Constantinople than it ever was established before', and that 'Ponsonby's successors, including Stratford, were able to maintain until the end of the century what Ponsonby had established.'³⁴ English ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte were therefore not only rendering advice to the Foreign Office, but also substantially engaged with domestic Ottoman politics. Palmerston's final trump over Ottoman foreign policy, however, was to replace Russian control over the Sultan, and strengthen Ottoman government through British influence. It is true that this diplomatic tradition and intimacy will continue until the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-8.

The long-lasting ambassadorship in Constantinople of Stratford Canning, George Canning's cousin, accentuated the emphasis Palmerston placed on the importance of the Sultan, which subsequently reinforced Ottoman trust in British protection. Canning's first principle in Ottoman diplomacy was to engage with Ottoman internal affairs, and establish strong relationships with the Pashas and ultimately with the Sultan. From the Ottoman point of view, Stratford Canning was styled as the 'Great Elchi (ambassador)' –a strong sign of Turkish trustfulness to his statesmanship in diplomacy.³⁵ Nonetheless, his emphasis in the reformation process did not go beyond implementing British diplomatic strategy. He adhered to the protection of British interests, and did not generate a strong pro-Turkish sentiment. For

³³ Ramazan Ata, 'Osmanli kaynaklarina gore 1839-1841 arasi Osmanli-Misir iliskileri ve Duvel-i Muvazzama', 1839-1841 Ottoman Empire and Egypt Affairs and Great Powers under the Light of Ottomans' Sources', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara: Ankara University, 2011, p. 95

³⁴ Norman Anick, 'The Embassy of Lord Ponsonby to Constantinople 1833-1841', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Canada: Montreal University, 1970, p. 318

³⁵ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Foreign Office (hereafter FO) TNA: FO 78/178: To and from Mr S. Canning, January to August 1829, 'Stratford Canning to Lord Aberdeen, 3 March 1829'.

instance, in a letter to Lord Aberdeen on 3 March 1829 as to Greek question, Stratford wrote that, ‘my first duty on pursuing the Pashas’ communication was to consider whether it offered a satisfactory fulfilment of the condition prescribed in your Lordship’s dispatch.’³⁶ Steven Richmond supports this view by defining Stratford not as the ‘Reformer of Turkey as reported in the newspapers’, but rather as ‘the voice of England in the East’ – words that ‘still adorn his statue in Westminster Abbey.’³⁷ Canning thought of the international peace settlement from a humanistic perspective that political considerations had guided him ‘less powerfully than the sympathies of humanity.’³⁸ A sentiment confirmed by Jon Western when he writes that, ‘the fight over the international response to the Greek Revolution in the 1820s marked one of the major dilemmas of humanitarian intervention amid great-power conflict.’³⁹ Gladstone’s witnessing of, and standpoint during the Greek question, on the other hand, was his first intimation of British intervention against the Ottoman Empire towards the liberation of Christian subjects. Beyond any doubt, Gladstone was an enthusiastic follower of Stratford Canning’s humanitarianism, and it becomes clear that Gladstone invoked the term ‘bag and baggage’ from the Great Elchi – a title which means a distinguished ambassador that represents Turkish trustworthy friend. In a letter to George Canning on 29 September 1821, Stratford Canning wrote: ‘I spoke of probabilities as a matter of humanity I wish with my all soul that the Greeks were put in the possession of their whole patrimony and the Sultan were driven, bag and baggage, into the heart of Asia, or a provisional measure that the divided Empire which existed four centuries ago could be restored.’⁴⁰ Beyond his enthusiasm in

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Steven Richmond, *The Voice of England in the East: Stratford Canning and diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), p. 3.

³⁸ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Life of Right Honourable, Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe, II.*, p. 419.

³⁹ Jon Western, ‘Prudence or outrage? Public Opinion and Humanitarian Intervention in historical and comparative perspective’, Fabian Klose, *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 2016), p. 171

⁴⁰ Lane-Poole, *Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe, I*, p. 307.

Greece, Stratford Canning was raised to the peerage as first Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe, due to his support in solving the Hungarian refugee problem, and for his trenchancy in British foreign affairs.⁴¹ Furthermore, Gladstone would later dedicate his famous ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet to De Redcliffe, not only for his endeavours in Ottoman affairs but also for his promotion of humanitarianism ‘with the admiration which all accord to him and the esteem which has grown out of a friendship of more than forty years.’⁴²⁴³ Such admiration and support was reciprocated as De Redcliffe declared with respect to Gladstone’s Bulgarian campaign: ‘my feelings naturally go with yours on the subject of Turkish misrule whereas the whole Eastern Question is my theme, and the Bulgarian atrocities, execrable as they were, only a part of it.’⁴⁴ Canning continued advising Gladstone; based on his diplomatic experience on the principles of humanity in foreign policy, reactions from the Great Powers and the possible manners of Sultan with the Turkish governors, until the end of 1876.⁴⁵

The political unrest in Egypt, British commercial interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Russian threat in the region, arguably contributed towards the foundations of the new British policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Despite Palmerston’s ‘suspicions’ towards Russia, British foreign policy had principally adhered to the Concert of Europe.⁴⁶ For instance, in order to secure the settlement in Egypt with an international commitment, the *London Convention for the Pacification of the Levant* was signed between the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia on 15 July 1840. Answering a question

⁴¹ See *Correspondence respecting refugees from Hungary within the Turkish Dominions presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of her Majesty, 28 February 1851*, (London: Harrison and Son, 1851).

⁴² BL GP Add MS 44695, fol. 376.

⁴³ William E. Gladstone, ‘Bulgarian Horrors and The Question of the East’, (London: John Murray, 1876).

⁴⁴ BL GP Add MS 44451, fol. 161, ‘Stratford De Redcliffe to Mr. Gladstone’, 10 September 1876.

⁴⁵ BL GP Add MS 44452, fol. 126, ‘Stratford De Redcliffe to Mr. Gladstone’, 14 November 1876.

⁴⁶ Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830–1841, Volume I* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1951), pp. 292–3.

raised by Sir Robert Peel, with regards to the Queen's speech at the opening of the session and on the persistence of the unity, Lord Palmerston (as Foreign Secretary) assured Parliament that, 'these powers had been unanimous in preserving peace in that quarter.'⁴⁷ Taking this point of view further, Charles Webster claims that 'the triumph of Palmerston in 1840 was perhaps the greatest which he ever won in his long connection with foreign affairs and at one time he stood almost alone, not only in Europe but in his own country, for a policy which he thought essential for British interests and preservation of peace.'⁴⁸ Within limits, Palmerston owed his success to maintaining the policy of keeping Ottoman territorial integrity (with domestic reforms), and guarding Ottoman independence against the Russian threat. It becomes clear, therefore, that Britain developed an intimate relationship the Ottoman Empire –based on mutual trust and friendship. From the Ottoman point of view, the increasing significance of strategic alliance with Britain was a prominent feature in Ottoman foreign policy.⁴⁹ As to the question of protecting the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, Palmerston's belief in Turkish reforms was a true aim of British policy, and his sensitivity to humanitarian causes was overshadowed. Palmerston's successful roles in directing British policy established during, and as a result of, the Crimean War, provided the basis for British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire which remained present in Anglo-Ottoman affairs until the 1870s.

⁴⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 52 (1840), cc445–8, 'Affairs of Turkey'.

⁴⁸ Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830–1841, Volume II* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1931), p. 621.

⁴⁹ Bayram Soy, 'Lord Palmerston's Policy of the Ottoman Territorial Integrity', *Turkiyat Arastirmalari*, p. 154.

III. The foundation of Gladstonian liberalism and his notion of interest in international affairs

While Gladstone's political career proceeded with the ideas and influences that shaped his conduct, Peel brought him into the cabinet and Gladstone continued to show his ability at the Board of Trade (1843-45), and at the Office of War and the Colonies (1845-6). According to Matthew, the decade 1841-51 was 'the crucial period of Gladstone's political development', especially as it proved to be a time when he was still uncertain as to whether to pursue his career as a Tory.¹ There is little doubt that Gladstone's political views aligned with Sir Robert Peel's Conservative cabinet throughout the 1840s. However, the liberal elements of his religious, intellectual, and moral outlook continued to develop particularly when supporting national causes. It was this evolution that eventually led him to take up a liberal position in the 1850s. Gladstone would later remark, in 1891, that, 'I think I can truly put up all the change that has come into my politics into a sentence; I was brought up to distrust and dislike liberty, I learned to believe in it. That is the key to all my changes.' Scholarship seems largely convinced that Gladstone's coherent liberal approach to politics, which gradually developed as a result of his evolving liberal interpretation, formed the dynamics of Gladstonian liberalism. Ian St. John argues that this change enabled Gladstone 'to do his work of emancipation' in the 'political, economic, social, moral, [and] intellectual' spheres, so that he could ensure that 'individual liberty rested upon law and good order together with freedom of the individual.'² This transition to Liberalism, indeed, can be linked to Gladstone's orientation of democratic sensibilities and high moral stance in his politics. In 1891 Gladstone further justified his motivations, by arguing that, since the 1840s, there had been no general change

¹ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 81.

² Ian St. John, *Gladstone and the logic of Victorian Party politics*, (London: Anthem Press, 2010), pp. 395-6.

in his principles, only in his manner of applying them to concrete situations.³ Gladstone retained strong Conservative elements in order to help implement policy framework. In this regard, Bebbington contends that, ‘Gladstone propounded a political theory that had freedom at its heart, but he retained Conservative values of tradition, social inequality, and order.’⁴ Eugenio Biagini has also suggested that ‘Gladstone was consistently spurred on to embrace liberal causes for motivations which were intrinsically conservative. Thus, despite his evolving opinion on a variety of matters of great importance, there was not only certain continuity but also a long term conservative strategy undergirding his views.’⁵ Shannon regards Gladstone’s belief as the key component for Gladstone that, ‘liberty made opinion bigger and better, but nonetheless... formed and directed to ends not chosen by itself. No more lately than earlier did Gladstone ever admit that the virtue and righteousness of freedom-loving people was translatable into directive popular political prerogative.’⁶ Illustrating Gladstone’s support for the emergence of democratic government and furthering Shannon’s argument, Quinault points out Gladstone’s emphasis for ‘the need of government to be based on popular consent and liberal values.’⁷ Bebbington also referred to Gladstone’s studies on Homer in 1858, as well as his Christian beliefs which were associated with a statesman’s attitudes and the importance of ‘the humanity that transfigured Olympus and the humanity required of British foreign policy for one and the same, a core value of Gladstonian liberalism.’⁸ As Bebbington has put it, Gladstone’s inspiration for humanity’s struggle for freedom in his later career manifested itself regardless of nationality and religion but, in the

³ BL GP Add MS 44791, fols.14–15.

⁴ Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer and Politics*, p. 259.

⁵ Eugenio F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (London: St.Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 24–5.

⁶ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: 1865–1898, Volume II* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 4.

⁷ Quinault, *British Prime Ministers: Disraeli to Blair*, p. 52.

⁸ David Bebbington, ‘Gladstone and Homer’ in David Bebbington and Roger Swift (eds.), *Gladstone Centenary Essays* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p.71.

case of the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876, and the English oppression of the Irish, it ‘reached its apogee in the peroration of the second Midlothian speech about concern for ‘the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan’ being the duty of fellow human beings ‘in the same flesh and blood.’⁹ Furthermore, it is fair to state that Gladstone’s liberal convictions became rigid once the call for the independence of Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire came under the principle of self-determination in Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Crete and Armenia.

Thus, one may argue that Gladstonian liberalism was not a single affair, and that the transition from Conservatism to Liberalism was completed by 1859. The principles behind this consistent political emphasis were free trade, civil and religious liberty, keeping government interventions to a minimum rather increasing the conditions of society by reforms, and the application of moral principles alongside the international rule of law and British foreign policy. In doing so, it is also reasonable to suggest that there was a significant development in Gladstone’s method of appeal, and the tendency to give up his social and political Tory prejudices. For instance, he judged that ‘the gravity of State interference’ was less vital than ‘the policy of interference’ as in the case of protecting the rights of Irish tenants from landlords in 1870.¹⁰ On matters of finance and the political economy, he followed the free trade-policies pursued by Peel as ‘the pioneer of Gladstonian liberalism.’¹¹ Yet he also combined his sense of morality with his feeling with economics; ‘I am a Free Trader on moral no less than on economic grounds: for I think human greed and selfishness

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Viscount Gladstone, *After Thirty Years*, (London: Macmillan, 1928), p. 93.

¹¹ Peter Ghosh, ‘Gladstone and Peel’, in Peter Ghosh & Lawrence Goldman (eds), *Politics & Culture in Victorian Britain, Essays in Memory of Colin Matthew* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2006), p. 45.

are interwoven with every thread of the Protective system.’¹² With regards to religious freedom, his Christianity was the main driving force behind his politics, as he understood man’s imperfections. Speaking against the Ecclesiastical Bill on 25 March 1851, he claimed that each of the member Churches or provinces of the English Church were to be governed independently and with an equal application, so that ‘the energies of this religious bodies are effectively exerted for the promotion of peace, order and morality.’¹³ Parliament was responsible for granting this right and, ‘would revolt against such applications; therefore, do not extort from the ancient doctrine of supremacy a proposition which is unfavourable to religious liberty, and a partial and exceptional application to the case of the Roman Catholics.’¹⁴ In his subsequent career, there is little doubt that Gladstone’s view on the importance of the establishment of national churches may not only be associated with the Irish Church Act of 1869, but also with the Eastern Orthodox Churches as he considered them to be ‘the most natural ecumenical partners of [the] Church of England’, particularly during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875–8.¹⁵

Gladstone’s appreciation of Peel had not been evidently forward in foreign affairs. Instead, Gladstone’s ‘tutor’ was the Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen whose approach to international relations ‘coincided with Gladstone’s natural inclinations – toward conciliation, concession and peace.’¹⁶ In regards to the Eastern Question, Lord Aberdeen articulated in 1828: ‘the general policy of this country was the same now as it had been for many years past

¹² John Brooke and Mary Sorensen (eds), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume IV: Autobiographical Memoranda* (London: H.M.S.O., 1971), p. 75.

¹³ W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years 1843–1878, Volume VI: Ecclesiastical* (London: John Murray, 1879), p. 9.

¹⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 115 (25 March 1851), cc514–618, especially 584–597.

¹⁵ Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, p. 228.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.109.

– namely, an earnest desire to preserve peace, not only to England, but... the whole world.¹⁷ Gladstone’s emphasis on the Eastern Question was truly consistent with his commitment to his second principle, ‘to preserve to the nations of the world...the blessings of peace’; a point he highlighted, with regard to the conduct of British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire, in his ‘right principles of foreign policy’ speech at West Calder during the Midlothian Campaign of 1879.¹⁸ Up to 1859, during Gladstone’s transition period from Conservatism to Liberalism, the development of Britain’s role in foreign affairs and his reflection upon Palmerston’s foreign policy, contributed to the development of Gladstone’s liberal approach to international relations. His consideration as to the policy-making in the Don Pacifico affair and the Crimean War, in this regard, would in fact signal a breakthrough in the formation of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire in his later career.

A Gibraltar-born Jew, Don Pacifico appealed to the British for help in compensating for the property he lost during the anti-Semitic riots in Athens, against the Greek government. This event contributed to the coining of the term ‘Palmerston’s gunboat diplomacy.’ The value of the Don Pacifico affair, however, was not only because it proved to be Gladstone’s first parliamentary speech on foreign affairs, but also it pivotally illustrated his concern with Palmerston’s conduct over the issue.¹⁹ Although Gladstone found himself in different degrees of ‘energetic antagonism’ to Palmerston, as Morley has suggested²⁰, Palmerston’s use of the

¹⁷ Lord Aberdeen in the House of Lords, Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 19 (16 July 1828), cc1709–41.

¹⁸ The following six principles which will be detailed in the subsequent chapters were i. to foster the strength of the Empire by legislation and economy at home ii. ‘To preserve peace’ iii. ‘To maintain ... the Concert of Europe’ iv. ‘to avoid the needless and entangling engagements’, v. ‘to acknowledge the equal of all the nations’, vi. To ensure that ‘the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom’, ‘Speech at West Calder on 27 November 1879’, William E. Gladstone, *Political Speeches in Scotland, November and December 1879*, (London: W. Ridgway, 1879), p. 115.

¹⁹ ‘It was in the Greek debate of 1850, which involved the censure or acquittal of Lord Palmerston that I first meddled in speech with foreign affairs, to which I had heretofore paid the slightest possible attention.’ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859*, p. 370.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

rhetorical principle of ‘civis Romanus sum’ awoke Gladstone’s humanist and peaceful sentiments that appealed to the moral virtues of foreign governments.²¹ The ‘counter-doctrine’ that Gladstone put forward was to:

recognise and recognize with frankness, the equality of weak with strong to the common sentiment of the civilised world, to the general and fixed convictions of mankind, to the principles of brotherhood among nations, to their sacred independence, to the equality in their rights of the weak with the strong. When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights that belong to our fellow-subjects’ resident in Greece,’ he said, ‘let us do as we would be done by; let us pay all respect to a feeble state and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and should exact from others towards their authority and strength.’²²

In a similar vein, Gladstone broadened his liberal stance during his visit to Naples, and other parts of Italy, throughout the 1850s. The year 1850 was particularly painful for Gladstone, as his four-year old daughter, Catherine Jessy, died. This year also marked a turning point in his emphasis on humanitarian concerns in foreign affairs. Subsequent to his visit to Naples, he regarded this process as unpredictable in that it introduced him ‘to a new and very important chapter of public life in the advocacy of the rights of the oppressed abroad.’²³ He admitted that his concern for Italy was not ‘primarily or mainly political’, but it related rather ‘to the sphere of humanity at large.’²⁴ Gladstone’s humanitarian sensibility was likewise stirred by

²¹ Ibid.

²² Paul Knapland, *Gladstone’s Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank & Cass, 1970), p. 8; *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 505 (27 June 1850) cxii.

²³ John Brooke and Mary Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica*, Historical Manuscripts Collection (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1971), ‘1846–52 An Interval No. 1’, p. 65.

²⁴ ‘An examination of the Official reply of the Neapolitan Government, 1852’ in W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years 1843–1878, Volume IV: Foreign* (London: John Murray, 1879), p. 113.

his visit to Naples, and he defined the practices of the Neapolitan government as ‘an outrage upon religion, upon civilization, upon humanity and upon decency’ in reference to real or supposed political offenders.²⁵ Rather than being solely motivated by political considerations, most historians agree on the genuine deep sympathy Gladstone felt for individual liberties. In fact, it is clear from his letters to Lord Aberdeen that his ideals, ‘were not meant to encourage revolutionary activities, but to save the traditional system from the excesses of an individual ruler.’²⁶ Taha Karaca, however, opposes such arguments about Gladstone’s humanitarian emphasis. In the Don Pacifico affair and in Italy, Karaca argues that although Gladstone’s concern was limited to safeguarding British interests in the Ionian Islands, his endeavours in Italy were to become the foundation of his great plan to save ‘the Christians under the Ottoman Rule.’²⁷ It seems that, besides Gladstone’s inspiration for his subsequent policies during the Near Eastern Crisis, Karaca regarded his humanitarian motives as ‘insincere’.²⁸ Michael Meltev, on the other hand, argued that ‘Gladstone was very sincere in his reaction to the events in Bulgaria. He reacted with the same passion with which, in the 1850s, he had embraced the cause for protecting Italian political prisoners, or in the 1860s when he had opposed the so-called “Tea War” in China, the way he defended Armenians, Afghans...’²⁹ The difference between the historian’s interpretations of Gladstone’s strong religious beliefs, vary greatly according to how they perceived the consequences of the Ottoman Empire’s

²⁵ W. E. Gladstone to the Earl of Aberdeen, first letter on the State Prosecutions of the Neapolitan Government, 7 April 1851 in Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years: 1843–1878*, p. 3.

²⁶ K.A.P Sandiford, ‘W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist Movements’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 13/1 (Spring 1981), p. 29.

²⁷ Taha Niyazi Karaca, *Buyuk Oyun: Ingiltere Basbakani Gladstone'nun Osmanli'yi yikma plani*, (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2011), pp. 57–9.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ ‘The Bulgarian Horrors’: Gladstone’s Bulgarian legacy’, Exclusive Novinite.com interview with Associate Professor Dr. Michael Meltev last accessed on 8 January 2016.
<http://www.novinite.com/articles/111458/The+Bulgarian+Horrors%3A+Gladstone's+Bulgarian+Legacy#sthash.fExfCN49.dpuf>

dissolution and the awakening of Balkan nationalism. It remains certain, however, that Christian humanitarianism and compassion was both a consistent and major motivational factor for Gladstone. What further complicated Gladstone's personality was the duality between his internationalism and nationalism.³⁰ In a letter to Lord Granville, dated 8 October 1870, Gladstone admitted that, 'in moral forces, and their growing effect upon European politics, I have a great faith: possibly on that very account, I am free to confess, sometimes a misleading one.'³¹

³⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809–1898*, p. 36.

³¹ A. Ramm (ed.), *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1868–1876, Volume I*, Camden Third Series (London: Royal Historical Society, 1952), p. 140.

IV. W. E. Gladstone and the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War

An analysis of the Crimean War sheds light not only on the basis of Gladstone's thoughts which came to fruition in the Near Eastern Crisis twenty years later, but also upon the relationship between Gladstone and Disraeli. There is little doubt that one important aspect of this rivalry was the debates over foreign policy which accelerated the mutual antipathy during Disraeli's second premiership. By 1852, the year in which Derby formed his ministry, the differences between the two statesmen arose in the implementation of fiscal policy which 'kept the two men politically apart.'¹ As Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Derby's ministry, Disraeli's aim was to 'halve the malt tax while raising the House tax' which 'was palpably designed to compensate the agricultural industry as a whole, including the landowners, for the potential damage done to it by free trade.'² While this tactic appealed to the working-class in particular, it offended the free-traders who gathered under Gladstone's attack on Disraeli's budget. On 16 December 1852, Gladstone's speech in Parliament further evidenced his grand eloquence. Sir George Trevelyan delineated the debate as follows, 'Mr. Gladstone bounded on to the floor amidst a storm of cheering and counter-cheering such as the walls of Parliament have never re-echoed since, and plunged straight into the heart of an oration which, in a single day, doubled his influence in Parliament and his popularity in the country.'³ According to *The Times*, Gladstone 'was pitched in a high moral tone feeling – now rising to indignation, now sinking to remonstrance – which was sustained throughout without flagging and without effort.'⁴ In a letter to his wife, Gladstone wrote that he thought

¹ Roland Quinault, 'Gladstone and Disraeli: A Reappraisal of their Relationship', *History*, 91/4 (October 2006), p. 560.

² Robert Blake, *The Conservative party from Peel to Churchill* (London: The Book Service Ltd, 1970), p. 83.

³ Francis W. Hirst, *Gladstone as Financier and Economist* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1931), p. 130.

⁴ *The Times*, 18 December 1852, p. 5.

that *The Times*' correspondent had been 'stung by' what he had said and was 'too much in praise of Disraeli's speech.'⁵ He further commented that he 'had never gone through so exciting a passage of parliamentary life.'⁶ Even though Gladstone fully appreciated Disraeli's 'superlative acting and brilliant oratory', it could be argued that his attack on Disraeli's budget stoked his passionate criticism even further.⁷ With regards to Gladstone's separation from the Tory party, Matthew further points out the significance of 'his violent and devastatingly successful attack on Disraeli's budget', which 'slowly broadened into a difference on fiscal policy', in addition to the tariff issue.⁸ Yet with his passions aroused, Gladstone would later attack Disraeli's foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire in the same vehement manner.

It became clear that Gladstone's keen sense of morality influenced not only his ideology, but also his vision of political economy. When the Derby ministry was defeated on the house tax proposition, and the new Whig-Peelite coalition under the leadership of Aberdeen was established, Gladstone succeeded Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer. His first task was to present a Budget to replace that which Disraeli had introduced, which, as Matthew has suggested, instigated 'a further round of indirect taxation reductions, including a considerable number of duty abolitions.'⁹ Furthermore, Gladstone claimed responsibility for answering the nation's 'resistless call for a vigorous and united effort to settle and secure the finances of the country' by gradually reducing income tax and lowering tariffs.¹⁰ In considering Gladstone's

⁵ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 95, 18 December 1852.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁷ The following day of Disraeli's speech, Gladstone wrote his diary that 'I had but two hours sleep. My nervous system was too powerfully acted upon by the scenes of last night'. M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. iv, 1848-54, p. 477; Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 95, 18 December 1852.

⁸ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809-1865, I*, pp. 78-9.

⁹ H.C.G. Matthew, 'Disraeli, Gladstone and the Politics of Mid-Victorian Budgets', *The Historical Journal*, 22:3 (September 1979), pp. 615-43, p. 626.

¹⁰ Foot and Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. IV, 1848-54*, p. 478.

efforts to devise his scheme,¹¹ this budget has been widely regarded as career advancement and the establishment of his national reputation; as Bebbington argues, ‘probably his greatest single achievement.’¹² To Gladstone, however, the 1853 budget can be considered as an attempt to strengthen the morality within his financial policy. In this respect, he thought that self-assertion, ‘can never be satisfactory to the country’ because it ‘renders the real inequality of the tax which immediately strike the public eye and secondly the tendency to immorality which is essentially inherent in the nature of the operation.’¹³ According to Francis Hirst, to understand the motivations and logic behind Gladstone's financial policy, ‘we must remember that he (Gladstone) had grown up during the starvation and misery of the years following a great war....But as a great statesman and a great Christian, his influence was almost always used to promote peace and the reduction of armaments.’¹⁴ In this vein, Matthew has accepted the influence of Peels’ reforms with regards to public morality on Gladstone’s Chancellorships representing ‘the politicization of Peelism’, and emphasising that, ‘for Gladstone, big bills and big budgets represented a means of regular renewal of the legitimacy of Parliament and the political system.’¹⁵

When Russia invaded the Ottoman controlled Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, based on the terms of Treaty of Kainardji (Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca) of 1774 as the protector of Orthodox Christians, Gladstone’s ‘naïve optimism’ for the British avoidance of war ‘lost its charms with the public’, and when Turkey declared war on Russia, ‘British

¹¹ Between December 1852 and April 1853 he generally worked fifteen hours a day, see Matthew &Foot (eds), *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. IV, 1848–54*, pp. 490–519. He was prudent and had an eye for every financial detail; for instance, one set of his budget memoranda consisted of 267 folios, see BL GP Add. MSS. 44741 ff. 1–267.

¹² For example: E.J. Feuchwentager, *Gladstone* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 84–5; Philip Magnus, *Gladstone* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1954), p. 113; Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. III*, p. xl; David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, p. 83.

¹³ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 125 (18 April 1853), cc1350–427.

¹⁴ Hirst, *Gladstone as Financier and Economist*, p. 118.

¹⁵ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. V*, p. xxxiii.

opinion sided with the Turks.’¹⁶ As the crisis grew, British involvement in the war remained uncertain. Gladstone wrote to his wife: ‘I can hardly at this moment write about anything else than the Turkish declaration of war. This is a most serious event, and at once raises the question, are we to go into it? The cabinet meets on Friday, and you must not be surprised at anything that may happen. The weather may be smooth; it also may be very rough.’¹⁷ In his Manchester speech on 13 October 1853, Gladstone distinguished the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire from France with England and regarded her sovereignty as

full of anomaly, of misery, of difficulty, and it has been subject every few years since we were born to European discussion and interference; we cannot forget the political solecism of Mahometans exercising despotic rule over twelve millions of our fellow Christians; into the questions growing out of this political solecism we are not now entering; what we see to-day is something different; it is the necessity for regulating the distribution of power in Europe; the absorption of power by one of the great potentates of Europe, which would follow the fall of the Ottoman rule, would be dangerous to the peace of the world, and it is the duty of England, at whatever cost, to set itself against such a result.¹⁸

One may argue that Gladstone’s assessments of Islamic identity and the principles of State governance –particularly the principles by which the Christian community were ruled –were his first public expression of the extent to which the Ottoman Empire showed a distinct lack of moral and ethical values towards her Christian subjects. In the light of this appeal to

¹⁶ Quinault, ‘Gladstone and War’ in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives*, p. 238.

¹⁷ Arthur Tilney Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, (London: Methuen Co. Ltd., 1936), p. 103, 4 October 1853.

¹⁸ *The Times*, 13 October 1853, p. 7, ‘The Chancellor of the Exchequer at Manchester’

Turkish maladministration, it is appropriate to regard Gladstone's concern marking an important stage for his latter endeavour but it seems likely to consider as an antipathy towards those appearing to follow Islam. Put differently, his deliberation was a matter of ecclesiastical cognizance related to the status of non-Moslem, particularly Christian nations. Instead of the political and military power of Ottoman Turks, as Quinault has put it, Britain and France took 'a very high moral position' due to their roles 'as the armed constabulary of Europe' against Russian aggression- 'the wanton disturber'- to substantiate 'the public law and peace of Europe.'¹⁹ In addition to his concern for peace in international affairs, Gladstone wrote, to Lord Aberdeen, that the audience's reaction to his speech at Manchester revealed 'the existence of a peace and a war party' in public opinion.²⁰ In reply, Lord Aberdeen assessed Gladstone's rhetoric and wrote that it had had 'a very beneficial effect upon the public mind' and promoted the cause of peace.²¹ Furthermore, Lord Aberdeen referred to Lord Stratford's note, that 'the only chance left for arresting the progress of war, is by a fresh Note to be presented to the Turks with a perfect union of the Four Powers, and a determined interference on their part...stating their desire to recognise and give effect to the principle which dictated the Treaty of 1841, by the preservation of the Turkish Empire.'²² On 11 November 1853, contained in his diary entry on the 'propositions on the Eastern Question', Gladstone revealed his reluctance to support the Turks (a manoeuvre he described as 'intolerable'), or to become party 'to the operations of a war [of] which we disapprove.'²³

¹⁹ Quinault, 'Gladstone and War' in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives*, p. 239.

²⁰ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p.483.

²¹ BL GP Add MS 44088, fols.201-2, 'Lord Aberdeen to Gladstone, 17 October 1853'

²² BL Aberdeen Papers (AP) AP Add MS 43070 fols.386-87, 'Lord Aberdeen to Gladstone, 17 October 1853' , fol. 386.

²³ BL GP Add MS 44742, fols.186-90, 'Propositions on the Eastern Question'

Due to his reluctance and intense misgivings as to the British position in the war, the decision of Lord Aberdeen for a forward policy in the Crimean War was not an easy one for him to take. In a letter to Lord Aberdeen, dated 12 August 1853 Gladstone wrote of how he regarded him to be the wisest person in the Cabinet, whose ‘calm reliefs, sole duty of judgement, knowledge of the Oriental question’ was aided by his ‘personal & official authority’. Gladstone continued to urge Aberdeen not to contemplate resignation from the leadership due to the ongoing international crisis in the Crimea.²⁴ Gladstone believed that Aberdeen had to maintain his position; if he did not, if Aberdeen resigned, the ensuing ‘embarrassments & dangers’ would threaten the ‘cordial internal relations of the government.’²⁵ He further added his misgivings over ‘another Papal Aggression’ being ‘contemplated’, and asked Aberdeen, as Prime Minister, to use his moderating influence.²⁶ With regards to the Eastern Question, Gladstone thought that the British diplomatic approach supposed to be conciliatory to both the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Church.²⁷ Despite the apparent certainty of British entry into the war, Gladstone kept reiterating to the Prime Minister that he should not withdraw from office, ‘the war does not become less defensive from our declaring it, or from our entering upon offensive operations. To retire therefore upon such a declaration, would be to retire upon no ground warrantable and conceivable by reason.’²⁸ When the conversation turned to the subject of a Turkish alliance, Lord Aberdeen asked Gladstone how he could bring himself to fight for the Turks. Gladstone stated that the British ‘were not fighting for the Turks’, but were ‘warning Russia off the forbidden ground’, and warning Russia against

²⁴ BL GP Add MS 44088, f. 187–90, fol.187, ‘Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, 12 August 1853’, Private & Confidential.

²⁵ BL GP Add MS 44088, f. 187–90, fol.188, ‘Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, 12 August 1853’, Private & Confidential.

²⁶ BL AP Add MS 43070 ff. 373–5, ‘Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, 12 August 1853’, fol. 374.

²⁷ BL AP Add MS 43070 ff. 373–5, ‘Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, 12 August 1853’, fol. 375.

²⁸ 22 February 1854, see Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859*, p. 493.

using aggression and oppression on the ‘wretched inhabitants of the Principalities’ where the ‘war had ensued and was raging with all its horrors’.²⁹ In short, the brutal war in Turkish territories would justify the humanitarian reasoning for military action in the Crimean War. It also comes clear from his emphasis that, as far as Gladstone was concerned, there was no possibility of him supporting Turkish military action against her Christian subjects.

Emphasising the moral dimension within his viewpoint, Gladstone wrote ‘That I, for one, could not shoulder the musket against the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and must there take my stand.’³⁰ Christian humanitarianism proved to be a consistent component in his understanding of Turkish affairs, and became more pronounced during the Near Eastern Crisis. Morley assesses the causes of the particular interest of public opinion in the Crimean war, and defined it as ‘a feeling and not argument that has plunged it into the *‘abyss of odium.’*’³¹ Thus Gladstone, who up until his ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet, had observed the Ottoman government and events in the East, began to understand the importance of popular judgement. As Morley has observed, ‘when we come to a period twenty years after this war was over, we shall see that Mr. Gladstone found out how little had time changed the public temper, how little had events taught their lesson.’³² Shannon, in that regard, explains how Gladstone regarded the British situation in the Crimean War, as ‘a morally responsible and leading member of the European Great Powers’ which was compatible with the public law of Europe. He later realised in 1887 that the policy of 1853, ‘represented an advance in civilization and a method of action favourable in itself of peace.’³³ It is therefore fair to argue

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, p. 496; W.E.Gladstone, The History of 1852-60 and Greville’s latest Journals’, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. II, (London: Longsman, Green, and Co. Ltd.), pp.281-302, p. 290.

³² Ibid.

³³ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809–1865*, I, p. 87.

that ‘the principal conviction that evoked his behaviour in 1876’ was beyond his regret or the justification of British involvement into the war.³⁴ In contrast to Shannon’s argument, Roy Jenkins embraced the idea that, ‘Gladstone never had his heart in it, brought no urgency in its winning, financed it only reluctantly and became an early advocate of peace without victory.’³⁵ Nonetheless, it was Lord Aberdeen’s final decision that ensured Britain’s involvement in the Crimean war – citing the failure of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe’s diplomatic endeavour to advise the Sultan to maintain a ‘moral resistance to Russian demands.’³⁶

It was Lord Palmerston who was doubtlessly the main war party leader. In July 1853, he urged to send the British fleet directly despite Lord Aberdeen's reluctance for Britain to enter into the Crimean War. This decision, therefore, illustrates the divisions within the Aberdeen government over the Eastern Question. The split between Lord John Russell and Lord Aberdeen in the coalition, gave rise to Palmerston’s popular foreign policy and his indelible personal association with the Crimean War. In the middle of December 1853, Palmerston’s objection to Russell’s reform bill proposals and the suspicion towards him, as Morley has it, ‘by some of his colleagues for raising the war-cry in hopes of drowning the demand for reform’, caused Palmerston to resign.³⁷ After a subsequent cabinet meeting, however, Gladstone’s hopes and ‘wishes’, to see Palmerston return were back again on the account of the Eastern Question.³⁸ Palmerston’s conduct in the Don Pacifico affair had already marked a turning point in Gladstone’s attitude towards him; a mixture of admiration and antipathy. Notwithstanding, Gladstone’s particular regard to see the return of Palmerston can be linked

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp.164–7.

³⁶ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 130 (14 February 1854), cc545–655.

³⁷ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859*, p. 490.

³⁸ ‘W.E.Gladstone to Sidney Herbert’ in Ibid; Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. iv.*, p. 578.

to his efforts to maintain Aberdeen's coalition in spite of his disapproval of Palmerston's methods in handling foreign affairs. David Brown argues that Palmerston, 'assumed a central role in the direction of foreign policy' prior to the crucial decision as to British entry into war 'fresh from his resignation triumph.'³⁹ Despite Aberdeen and the Peace Party's consideration that the only war aim should be the defence of the Ottoman Empire, Palmerston saw the struggle as an opportunity to stop the advance of Russian power and secure Britain's imperial and commercial interests. Gladstone viewed Palmerston's conduct with respect to the Crimean War, and realised how important foreign policy was not only for the course of party affairs, but also for the manipulation of public opinion. As for the criticism of Gladstone, it could be argued that he found Palmerston's policy distasteful due to the possible British alliance with the 'oppressive Turks' as well as Palmerston's *Realpolitik* approach which, so Gladstone believed, lacked morality whereas Gladstone's admiration of Aberdeen continued. Touching directly on the Eastern crisis, Aberdeen observed in a letter to Gladstone that 'after all it is the exclusion of Russia, rather than the preservation of the Turks, that we ought to have in view... if the war should continue, we shall infallibly see a rising of the Christian population in which indeed there is already some appearance. Do you think there are many who would urge us to fight on the side of our Turkish friends?'⁴⁰ Gladstone shared Aberdeen's point of view, and his reluctance to extend British support to the Turks was as a result of his high moral tone in foreign policy and not wishing to promise to defend Turkey without limitation. He opposed such a British unconditional compromise, and thus sided with the peace settlement accompanied by multilateral action.

³⁹ David Brown, *Palmerston and the politics of foreign policy 1846-55*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 190.

⁴⁰ BL GP Add MS 44088 ff. 215-18, f. 218, 'Lord Aberdeen to Gladstone on 5 December 1853'

Gladstone was much of the same opinion as Lord John Russell and the Duke of Newcastle. He was, however concerned with the manners of the war party by declaring that, 'I had been disappointed and pained at the recent course of his opinions about the war. At my house last Wednesday he (Duke of Newcastle) declared openly for putting down by force the Christians of European Turkey. Yes, Lord Aberdeen replied; but he thought him the description of man who discharges well the duties of that office. In this I agree.'⁴¹ As Aberdeen's resignation approached in 1855, Palmerston's conduct of foreign policy, during the affairs of 1854, 'suggested he was the figure best able to articulate and guide this national mission'.⁴² Ultimately, the divergence between Palmerston (alongside British public opinion) supporting the Turks, and the Aberdeen government losing favour, ended with Palmerston forming his ministry by popular demand. The major difference between Gladstone and Palmerston over foreign policy appears in their vision of a Turkish alliance, and the methods of political action. Brown argues that Palmerston's enthusiasm for the interests of liberalism abroad, 'were not always apparent to a population easily swayed by an emotive Palmerstonian rhetoric.'⁴³ To Gladstone, however, a humanitarian vision was always reflected in his eloquence, defending the rights of the oppressed people with righteous indignation. Regarding the Near Eastern Crisis, there was little doubt that, under Gladstone's leadership, 'the popular wheel will be found to make another and yet another revolution'.⁴⁴

On 6 March 1854, in a speech to the Commons, Gladstone introduced his war budget which laid the foundation for much of his subsequent reputation in economic policies; 'I do not hesitate to say that it seems to me, that if the economic and political reasons are strong for the

⁴¹ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, pp. 148–9, '22 February 1854'

⁴² Brown, *Palmerston and the politics of foreign policy 1846–55*, p. 216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 480.

adoption of that policy, not less strong are the moral reasons. The expenses of a war are the moral check which it has pleased the Almighty to impose upon the ambition and the lust of conquest that are inherent in so many nations.’⁴⁵ Gladstone’s morally infused economic policy was one of the enduring elements of his politics and was compatible with funding the war. Nonetheless, he was particularly concerned about the damage such a war could inflict not only on his fiscal policy but also its threat to world peace. On the day England and France jointly declared war on Russia, he profoundly expressed his concerns and doubts about the war in a letter to his wife, ‘war, war, war; that is the excitement and turmoil of the moment and I fear it will swallow everything good and useful.’⁴⁶ To Gladstone, ‘the computations for the decline and extinction of...[income] tax were defeated by the Crimean war and by the change in ideas as to expenditure which it brought with it.’⁴⁷ Yet, he still proposed to meet the situation by increasing income tax instead of recourse to loans over the years leading up to 1860. In his speech of 8 May, he made it clear that, ‘it was the duty and policy of the country to make a great effort from its own resources in the first instance and that effort we recommended the country to make; but we never attempted to bind our own discretion or the discretion of Parliament by any pledge of an abstract character with reference to a loan.’⁴⁸

From the Ottoman point of view, however, the strained financial circumstances of the Turkish government, and the need to meet the expenses of the Crimean War, produced the first international loan in 1854. The reason behind the Ottoman application for an international loan was the inextricable link between domestic and international affairs; the

⁴⁵ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 131 (6 March 1854), cc357–440.

⁴⁶ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 104, ‘28 March 1854’

⁴⁷ John Brooke and Mary Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, Historical Manuscripts Collection (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1971), Appendix 5, ‘Two Memoranda by Gladstone on the Income Tax’, p. 273.

⁴⁸ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 132 (8 May 1854), cc1413–94, Matthew, *the Gladstone Diaries*, vol. iv, p. 617.

Empire's deteriorating economic structure and the increasingly weakening State made averting a financial crisis impossible. The decision of the foreign countries to provide loans, on the other hand, led to lingering misgivings about the capability of the Ottoman government to meet the repayments. For instance, the reformist minister, Mustafa Reshid Pasha, gained support from the 'Turcophil' British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Ponsonby. He attempted to make arrangements with English bankers for a loan upon the security of the customs of Constantinople, Salonika and Smyrna. The proposition failed, due to the bankers demanding the British Government's guarantee.⁴⁹ Furthermore, free trade policies which had been established by the Anglo-Turkish trade agreement of 1838, contributed to the Ottoman Empire's economic crisis. 'Free trade imperialism', as John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson suggest, provided profitable areas in which Britain would invest, and this became the economic foundation for financially supporting the Ottomans.⁵⁰

Gladstone was sceptical about the loans; he had already set out his own financial principles and was committed to financing the war through an increase in taxation rather than loans. He insisted that, 'the wishes of the Ministry weigh exactly nothing in regard to a question of lending money to a Foreign State', despite Lord Palmerston and Sir Charles Wood's urge for 'certain men of money' to lend Turkey.⁵¹ Yet the decision for the Ottoman government to take her first loan in 1854 was not straightforward. Olive Anderson claims that the attempts of the Turkish ministers to effect a loan in London or Paris, Namik Pasha's in particular, encountered Gladstone's 'pillars' of financing the war: 'no loans - no subsidies'.⁵² Anderson

⁴⁹ Olive Anderson, 'Great Britain and the Beginnings of Ottoman Public Debt, 1854-55', *The Historical Journal*, VII, i (1964), pp. 47-63, p. 47.

⁵⁰ John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1953), pp. 1-15.

⁵¹ Anderson, 'Great Britain and the Beginnings of Ottoman Public Debt, 1854-55', p. 48.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 49.

argues that, to a certain extent, Gladstone's attitude to foreign loans influenced the British decision. Badem, however, presents alternate reasoning to Anderson, especially on Namik Pasha's 'amateurishness' to raise the loan. She, on the contrary, emphasises the obligation of a guarantee from the Ottomans for the allied governments under such circumstances of international conjuncture, and problems with the credibility with the Porte, instead of the Porte's instructions.⁵³ Despite the Ottoman attempts and the failure of Rothschild's offer to raise a loan, Gladstone 'insisted' that the Turkish 'need for financial help was not established.'⁵⁴

In 1855, the Ottoman government was issued £5 million second loan at 102.6 percent with an interest rate of four percent per annum, in order to 'enable his Imperial Majesty the Sultan to prosecute with Vigour the War against Russia in which He is at present engaged in conjunction with their said Majesties His allies; Her Majesty and Her Majesty the Emperor of the French.'⁵⁵ The loan was secured on the Egyptian Tribute with the customs of Smyrna and Syria to be remitted to the Bank of England, and the full amount of One Half Year's Interest and Sinking Fund on the whole amount of the said Loan to be raised under the conjoint guarantee of Britain and France.⁵⁶ Halil Inalcik regarded these loans, known as the Egyptian Tribute loans, to be 'secured on the most liquid and the least risky collateral the Ottoman Empire had to offer.'⁵⁷ From the British point of view, however, the objections to the guarantee raised by the opposition in the Parliament, according to Anderson, were due to

⁵³ Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War: 1853-1856*, p. 316.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ BL GP Add MS 44586, ff. 93-5, fol. 93, 'Turkish Loan, A bill to enable her majesty to carry into effect a Convention made between Her Majesty, His Majesty the Emperor of the French, and His Imperial the Majesty of Sultan, 21 July 1855'

⁵⁶ BL GP Add MS 44586, ff.93-5, fol. 94.

⁵⁷ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy, Collected Studies*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1978), p. 27.

‘ancient prejudices, financial, constitutional and diplomatic.’⁵⁸ ‘Voted in 132: 135 against Turkish guarantee: a significant division,’⁵⁹ as noted in his diary, Gladstone was reluctant to admit the loan under the terms of the 1855 guarantee. Gladstone’s objections to the loan were not founded on moral grounds, nor did they come from his antagonism towards the Ottoman Empire. His argument ‘was confined entirely to the terms, tenure, and construction of the treaty, and the effect of those terms upon the position of the relative parties to it.’⁶⁰ Gladstone’s chief objection, in addition to the political risks and legal difficulties, derived from the joint guarantee, and his anticipation of ‘the greatest dangers to the alliance with France.’⁶¹ Furthermore, since Gladstone began to hold large Egyptian bonds, the question as to whether his personal interest influenced his decision to occupy Egypt will be analysed in a later section.

With regards to the Turkish fulfilment of her engagement, Gladstone was, in fact, apprehensive about the Turkish proposal and ‘honesty of Turkey’. Austen Henry Layard, who would later be appointed as ambassador at Constantinople in 1877, referred to Gladstone’s Manchester speech in 1853; describing the Turkish Empire as ‘falling to pieces’ and that ‘it was a country which we could not support’ Layard continued to condemn Gladstone for ‘destroying the credit of Turkey’ in Britain, and ‘preventing his Government from obtaining the loan which it might otherwise have raised.’⁶² Gladstone rejected Layard’s critique and asserted that Layard’s statements greatly influenced the propagation of those erroneous ideas on Turkey’s condition. His duty, so Gladstone proclaimed, was to give the public more accurate information on the subject. He further declared with high moral tone

⁵⁸ Anderson, ‘Great Britain and the Beginnings of Ottoman Public Debt, 1854-55’, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v., p. 65, ‘20 June 1855’

⁶⁰ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 139 (27 July 1855), cc1463-513.

⁶¹ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 139 (23 July 1855), cc1283-313.

⁶² *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 139 (23 July 1855), cc1283–313.

Let Turkey fulfil her engagements and I dare say she will if she is able, hut that I look on as a matter of considerable doubt-let her, however, fulfil her engagements, and the Convention that we are now discussing will not be wrought out in less than thirty or forty or fifty years; and, consequently, for forty or fifty years, if you are to maintain this joint guarantee, we are to be in those relations with France which we cannot guarantee ourselves. It has been said by moralists that those who wish to avoid sin should avoid the occasion of sinning, so a nation that wishes to avoid a quarrel should avoid the occasion of quarrelling.⁶³

In January 1855, tensions over the handling of the war came to a head, the coalition government resigned, and Palmerston succeeded Aberdeen as Prime Minister. Gladstone had regarded the Aberdeen coalition ministry of 1852 as ‘a provisional Ministry’. One that would keep going until it was inevitably dissolved with a government which was merely ‘awaiting the sentence of the country’.⁶⁴ Yet Gladstone noted that even though Palmerston’s government was popular, they would still continue to ‘lament the difficulties they encountered’ regarding foreign nations.⁶⁵ Gladstone appreciated Palmerston’s conduct due to his support for the public law of Europe. ‘I cannot help repeating’, wrote Gladstone to Lord Palmerston, ‘the thanks I offered at an earlier period, for the manner in which you urged-when we were amidst many temptations to far more embarrassing and less effective proceedings-the duty of concentrating our strokes upon the heart and centre of the war at

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ William E. Gladstone, ‘The Past and Present Administrations’, *Quarterly Review*, vol.104, (London: John Murray, July & October 1858), p. 517.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 523.

Sebastopol.’⁶⁶ It is true that Gladstone’s main concern was Palmerston’s foreign policy. Confiding to his wife, once again, Gladstone wrote that

his condemnation must rest on other grounds...on his tenacious principle of peace, to the retention of it, the recollection of it, and the hope of it, and his opinions respecting to the Turkish Empire. But as to peace my sympathies have been in the main the same; and as to the Turkish Empire I believe that if not content with repelling Russian aggression we attempt to maintain the predominance of Mahometan institutions in Europe we shall undertake both a mischievous and hopeless task.⁶⁷

So long as this was the case, Gladstone believed the maintenance policy and Turkish reforms to be an immediate solution for the open-ended question of the Ottoman government. Despite expressions of despair for the Islamic government, he kept, intact, his principles of self-determination and freedom with the British intervention which he evidently sought twenty years later. Shannon further admits that Gladstone ‘had not yet made this question of personal study,’ therefore his belief was to follow the authority of Lord Palmerston but particularly Stratford Canning.⁶⁸ It becomes clear that Gladstone’s first Chancellorship (1852–55), and the culmination of the Crimean War accelerated his experience in the foreign affairs of the East. His experience of the loans crucially influenced Gladstone’s understanding of the economic implications of British support for the Ottoman Empire. Beyond the wider implications, Anthony Howe, argues that, ‘for although Gladstone initially at least supported

⁶⁶ ‘Gladstone to Lord Palmerston on 4 October 1854’, Guedalla, *The Palmerston Papers, Gladstone and Palmerston being the Correspondence of Lord Palmerston with Mr. Gladstone 1851–1865*, pp. 99–100.

⁶⁷ Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘Memorandum on Lord Palmerston’s accession to the Premiership, 4–5 February 1855,’ p. 169.

⁶⁸ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809–1865, Vol. I*, p. 88.

the justice of Britain's cause in the Crimea, the war also sharpened his sense that the potential benefits of free trade in terms of social and moral union of nations had been jeopardised.'⁶⁹

During the period of Tanzimat reform of 1839 and then the Crimean War, the maintenance of Ottoman territorial integrity and sovereignty was of especial interest to Britain; as part of a strategy, rather than *realpolitik*, to safeguard British commercial interests and block any forthcoming Russian bid for hegemony in the Ottoman Empire. Particularly in the aftermath of the Crimean War, Britain assumed the role of ultimate guarantor for the Ottoman Empire's survival – the core of British policy towards the Porte for the next twenty years. Subsequent to the Vienna Conferences, between 15 March and 26 April 1855, the protocols proposed stipulations which comprised of Britain and her Allies holding the right to insist upon other special and additional conditions.⁷⁰ With special attention paid to the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, all the protocols were based on the assumption of rejuvenating the Turkish system through, 'the exclusive right to interfere into a certain extent in the internal affairs of provisions belonging to the Turkish Empire' instead of Russia.⁷¹ Under the supervision and guardianship of the Powers, 'the pretensions of Russia officially to protect the Christian subjects of the Porte should be renounced and that the Powers should use their influence to obtain from the Sultan by an act of his sovereign authority, the confirmation and observance of the religious privileges of his Christian subjects.'⁷² Consequently, it was agreed that the Ottoman Empire became a part of the system of equilibrium, and Sultan Abdulaziz declared *Islahat Fermani* (also known as the Reform Edict of 1856) which promised equality for all

⁶⁹ Anthony Howe, 'Gladstone and Cobden', in David Bebbington and Roger Swift (eds.), *Gladstone Centenary Essays*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 117.

⁷⁰ BL GP Add MS 44586 fols.71–9, 'Foreign Office Circular after Conferences at Vienna, 17 June 1855', fol. 71.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² BL GP Add MS 44586 fols.71–9, 'Foreign Office Circular after Conferences at Vienna, 17 June 1855', fol. 72.

Ottoman citizens. According to Ottoman-Turkish historiography, there is a tendency to see the Crimean War as the long-awaited military success in an extensive series of conflicts with Russia, and to view the Ottoman inclusion into the Concert of Europe, subsequent to the Treaty of Paris in 1856, as an acknowledgement of its equality with European states.⁷³ Candan Badem opposes these two interpretations by stating that the Ottoman Empire was transformed into a European protectorate at the end of the Crimean war, ‘although in theory it had become a member of the European Concert or European Concert system.’⁷⁴ To some extent the Crimean War can be considered as a guarantee of Ottoman integrity by which she secured the political status quo of the provinces, yet this was based on a mutual agreement. The Ottoman Empire offered the allies an acceleration substitute for the modernization of her system, and therefore became liable to financial, military and political supervision from the European Powers. By the same token, it is quite clear that Ottoman statesmen had gradually formed the expectation that the European powers would support the Porte against any threat to Ottoman sovereignty. For instance, Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw refer to the statesmanship of Mustafa Reshit Pasha as a six times grand vizier, and three times foreign minister, who insisted upon ‘driving the reforms onward while firmly basing the empire’s survival on the friendship with England’ that he had established with the Anglo-Turkish trade agreement in 1838. He was therefore against ‘the Russian demands regarding the Holy Places and secured British support’ throughout the Crimean War.⁷⁵ As Roderic Davison has put it, ‘the Ottoman bargaining with the powers produced not a victory, not a defeat, but a

⁷³ Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *a Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Ataturk*, (Oxford: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), p. 168; Meltem Müftüler and Yannis A. Stivachtis (eds.), *Turkey-European Union Relations: Dilemmas, Opportunities, and Constraints*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p. 29.

⁷⁴ Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War: 1853–1856*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 403.

⁷⁵ Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. ii: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808- 1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 61

compromise which the Ottoman statesmen thought was the best obtainable.’⁷⁶ In that respect, the influence of the Crimean War was also in-line with the image held, by British public opinion of the Turk as a ‘stout ally and resolute soldier’ –until Gladstone’s novel and ‘politically-motivated’ departure with his ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet in 1876.⁷⁷ Kemal Karpat emphasises the importance of internal affairs, and argues that the Reform Edict of 1856, ‘granted “equality” to the Ottoman Christians, while giving England and France a certain moral mandate’ and the ability to enforce ‘the equality system between Muslims-Non-Muslims’.⁷⁸ The Reform Edict, however, split the Ottoman Muslim intelligentsia into two ideologically opposed groups. The first were the ‘modernists supporting the reforms to revive the state and win the friendship of England and France against Russia’; the second group were the ‘conservatives, or traditionalists’ who, regarded the Reform Edict as ‘an astute European-Christian device designed to undermine the Ottoman state from within.’⁷⁹ This contradiction gave rise to British suspicion as to implementation of the reforms, and to Sultan Abdulaziz’s administration of the state. In this vein, Stratford Canning telegraphed the policymakers to record the Sultan’s late Firman of Privileges in the Treaty of Peace. They also proposed ‘enforcement more than recognition’ that: ‘The Imperial Firman places the Christians and the Mussulmans on equal footing as to civil rights. It is believed that the Porte will never of its own accord will carry the provisions of the Firman seriously into effect.’⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Roderic H. Davison, ‘Ottoman Diplomacy at the Congress of Paris (1856) and the Question of the Reforms’ in *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms*, (Istanbul: the Isis Press, 1999?), p. 173

⁷⁷ Jeremy Salt, ‘Johnny Turk before Gallipoli: 19th Century images of the Turks’ in Rahmi Akcelik (ed.), *Before and After Gallipoli: A collection of Austrian and Turkish Writings*, (Melbourne: Australian-Turkish Friendship Society Publications, 1986), p. 20.

⁷⁸ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 75–6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁸⁰ ‘Stratford Canning to Lord Clarendon on 19 March 1856’, Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Life of Right Honourable, Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe*, Vol II., (London: Longmans & Green and co., 1888), p. 442.

There is the little doubt that the question of the status of the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire was one of the main concerns for the allies. The Turkish government was now obligated to protect and improve their rights. Following the conference in February 1856, the Paris Treaty provided a guarantee of Ottoman territorial integrity, given by Austria, France, and Russia with Britain. While the reforms were proposed to improve the Ottoman internal system, her sovereignty would be preserved in the international arena. Lord Palmerston was satisfied with the progress arguing that, ‘Turkey has within itself the elements of life and prosperity, and I believe that the course adopted by Her Majesty’s Government is a sound policy, deserving the approbation of the country, and which it will be the duty of every English Government to pursue.’⁸¹ However, Palmerston’s implication as to the future threats to Ottoman security meant a closer relationship with the Ottoman Empire. Supporting this argument, David Steele defines the economic and political aspects of Palmerston’s defence of the perception of the Turks during his ministry as ‘a holding operation’. One that particularly opposed Russia and France, ‘with an eye always on political and religious feeling in Britain which he knew might override the country’s concern for her strategic and economic stake in the ailing empire of the Caliph.’⁸² The Porte, on the other hand, had already convinced itself that Britain was the ‘truest friend’, especially as she had rescued her from Mehmet Ali’s threat in Egypt.⁸³ The British intervention in the Crimean on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, was a further manifestation of this alliance and British public opinion sided with Lord Palmerston who adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the Turks. Gladstone’s criticism of Treaty of Paris was that

⁸¹ Karl Marx, ‘The Turkish Question in the Commons’, *The Eastern Question, A reprint of letters written 1853–56 written dealing with the events dealing with the Crimean War* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1897), pp. 116–7.

⁸² David E. Steele, *Palmerston and Liberalism 1855–1865* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1991), p. 276.

⁸³ Lane-Poole, *The Life of Right Honourable, Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe, Vol. II*, p. 419.

this treaty of peace was an instrument which bound this country and our posterity, as well as our Allies, to the maintenance of a set of institutions in Turkey which you are endeavouring to reform if you can, but with respect to which endeavour few can be sanguine... I regarded the peace with satisfaction; but, on the contrary, I should look out for the most emphatic word in which to express my sense of condemnation of a peace which bound us to maintain the law and institutions of Turkey as a Mahomedan State. But I apprehend that with the internal institutions of Turkey we have no concern further than that it is our duty to countenance the improvement of them. At the same time, standing upon the firm ground of principle and precedent—pressing forward in the interests of humanity—we are bound to see that those who profess the same faith with ourselves are not trampled upon.⁸⁴

Indeed, this statement at the time was an emphasis of the role of treaty of Paris as a collective guarantee since Gladstone preferred to protect Mahomedan institutions as a part of guaranteeing the integrity of the Turkish Empire. Despite his line of thought, Gladstone affirmed his concerns and doubts as to the policy of the maintenance of the independence and recognizing Turkey as a European state. This interpretation can be extended at three significant points to Gladstone's state of mind. First of all, Gladstone was doubtful whether the Ottoman Empire's membership of the Concert of Europe was worth maintaining. With regards to the 'enormous cost' of British military establishments and the efforts of British nation, he felt not only responsibility but also sought to justify these sacrifices with Turkish endeavour. The second problem was the sustained confrontations between Muslims and Christians in the Ottoman Empire as to which he hoped the peace would 'bring that state of

⁸⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 142 (6 May 1856), cc17-136.

things to a happy and prosperous conclusion.⁸⁵ By the same token, the third problem was Russia's 'absorption of Turkey' endangering 'the peace, liberties, and privileges of all Europe which would bring upon Europe evils not less formidable than those which already existed.'⁸⁶

British policy towards the Porte was governed by economic and political underpinnings due to the aforementioned circumstances. Despite having growing suspicions towards the Porte, British attitudes were friendly regarding the Ottoman government's endeavour to push forward the reforms since the Crimean War. This foreign policy approach eventually yielded a consistent strategy of protecting the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity even though it was seen as the weakest ally amongst the Great Powers. To Gladstone, however, the Crimean War meant a set-back for his financial policies, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and had a huge influence on his stance during the Near Eastern Crisis in 1876. The events of 1853–56, while bringing an alliance with the Ottoman Empire, therewithal left a deep impression on Gladstone's opinions about Turkish misgovernment, on the acute problems of Ottoman finance, and created a certain lingering doubt about the future development of Ottoman reforms as to the rights and welfare of her subjects. One of the most important elements in his understanding was his awareness of the Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire, and of anti-Turkish sentiment which eventually became a torrent of Turcophobia. Despite the confidence exhibited by Stratford Canning and Lord Palmerston on the rejuvenation of the Ottoman Empire, Gladstone became convinced that the Ottomans were incapable of implementing and maintaining reforms, and his anxiety against the Ottoman Turks turned to anger.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

V. W. E. Gladstone and British policy towards the Ottoman Empire prior to the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-78

With respect to the period from 1855 to 1858, Gladstone owned his later regretted that he had been again to some extent in a false position: ‘on the one hand my opinions became progressively more liberal, while the ties that had bound me even to my original party retained force, and in some degree even resumed it.’¹ Holding his office as the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Palmerston’s ministry was, he lamented, ‘one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, error I ever committed.’² Following Gladstone’s resignation after three weeks from Palmerston’s ministry, his concerns about Palmerston’s handling of foreign affairs despite his reluctant commitment to unite with the war party, coincided with his criticism over the government’s implementations of fiscal policy. There is little doubt that Gladstone thought that the cause of peace should be rejoiced over, nonetheless, he regarded the return from war to a state of peace under ‘no ordinary circumstances’, which created particular problems with restoring financial stability. ‘The equilibrium of our finances has been of necessity entirely destroyed; and its re-establishment will involve many subjects of the utmost moment’³, he wrote in a long letter to Lord Aberdeen while indicating his return to office in the near future.⁴

In the years leading up to his decision to join Whig government in 1859, whilst he was out of office, Gladstone expanded his interests to Homeric Studies and ecclesiastical questions. Nevertheless, it is fair to argue that his considerations on the policies of Palmerston’s

¹ Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica*, ‘Second Stage of Parliamentary Life 1853-65’, ‘1855-58’, p. 80.

² Ibid, p. 81.

³ BL GP Add MS 43071 fol. 285, ‘Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen on 13 March 1856’

⁴ Gladstone further expanded his arguments in his article in the same year, W.E. Gladstone, ‘The declining efficiency of Parliament’, *Quarterly Review*, vol. 99, (London: John Murray, June & September 1856); for the full version of the letter in Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p.112-14, ‘13 March 1856.’

ministry determined Gladstone's liberal stance. Besides the ideological and fiscal interpretations, as Ian St. John argues, 'the years 1855-59 saw Gladstone launch a sustained campaign against Palmerston.'⁵ 'I think Lord Palmerston', he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, 'is the worst and most demoralising Prime Minister for this country that our day has known.'⁶ Continuing the argument, Shannon reinforces the idea that Gladstone 'denounced relentlessly Palmerston as the profiteer from the nation's calamity.'⁷ Beyond his criticism of Palmerston's administration, Gladstone's main concern was Palmerston's conduct of foreign policy which 'made the cup overflow.'⁸ As with the Don Pacifico affair, Gladstone sided with the Opposition against Palmerston's aggressive policy in China. Despite the defeat after the general election of 1857, Palmerston remained in power but the Conservatives and Radicals joined a coalition 'to blow Palmerston's immoral system.'⁹ Gladstone, however, wrote of his situation that 'I can neither give even the most qualified adhesion to the ministry of Lord Palmerston, nor follow the liberal party in the abandonment of the very principles and pledges which were original and principal bonds of union with it.'¹⁰ In February 1858, however, the rejection of Palmerston's Conspiracy to Murder Bill led to his resignation. Gladstone claimed that prior to the division 'Palmerston was actually rabid. The vote is a vote on censure on them, as well as a vote for English honour.'¹¹ Contrary to Conservative expectations due his criticism of Palmerston, Gladstone rejected Derby's offer to join his ministry. It was also at this point that Disraeli urged Gladstone to join Lord

⁵ Ian St. John, *Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Party Politics*, (London: Anthem Press, 2010), p. 73.

⁶ BL GP Add MS 44263, fol. 2, 'Gladstone to the Duke of Newcastle on 30 January 1857'

⁷ Shannon, *Gladstone: God and Politics*, p. xiv.

⁸ BL GP Add MS 44263, fol. 3, 'Gladstone to the Duke of Newcastle on 30 January 1857',

⁹ St. John, *Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 74.

¹⁰ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 566.

¹¹ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 120, 21 February 1858.

Derby's cabinet.¹² Matthew suggests that joining with Disraeli, 'in the Peelites' view' meant 'to place political morality at the service of chicanery', on the other hand, Gladstone's 'no great moral choice' was Palmerston who was having 'dishonour as the great characteristic of (his) government.'¹³ From that point of view, it becomes clear that Gladstone's attitude towards particular persons was significant in shaping his decisions. Because of his antipathy towards both statesmen, Gladstone's choice depended on the personalities. As Morley emphasizes 'the importunate presence of Mr. Disraeli was not any sharper obstacle to a definite junction with conservatives, than was the personality of Lord Palmerston to a junction with liberals.'¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is true that the substance of Gladstone's policy towards the Ottoman Empire created friction with Lord Palmerston and this developed into his indictment of Disraeli government's pro-Turkish policy.

In the years after the Crimean War until the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876, Gladstone periodically raised his voice with respect to the national uprisings in the Ottoman Empire. In regards to the course taken about the Principalities which 'grieved' him, his main reason to involve in Crimean war was to keep Russia out. Nonetheless, he lamented to Lord Aberdeen that, '...it now seems to be all but avowed, that the fear of danger, not to Europe, but to Islam,-and Islam not from Russia, but from the Christians of Turkey,-is to be a ground for stinting their liberties.'¹⁵ In considering Gladstone's rhetoric, it becomes clear that his apprehension was Islamic governance which he regarded as the main threat to Christian subjects' liberty and freedom. In 1858, the question of the union of Danubian Principalities turned out to be of crucial importance not only to the division in the House concerning on

¹² BL GP Add MS 44389 fols. 223-33, also in Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, pp. 587-90.

¹³ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. xxvii.

¹⁴ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 554.

¹⁵ John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, pp. 4-5.

Palmerston's foreign policy but also to Gladstone's determination of his future politics. There is little doubt that opposing 'unfair dealing with the popular voice in the Principalities on the Danube', Gladstone's sympathies were in line with his support of good government, freedom, love for righteous national action and emancipation of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ On 4 May 1858, suggesting the union of the Romanian principalities, Gladstone's motion was in favour of local liberty and practical self-government against Russian aggression. He, furthermore, regarded the best resistance to be offered to Russia, 'is by the strength and freedom of those countries that will have to resist her... a living barrier between her and Turkey. There is no barrier, then, like the breast of freemen.'¹⁷ In regards to British policy, he declared:

Let us consider what will be the effect of the union of the Principalities with respect to the interests of Turkey; and here, Sir, I do not enter into the question, what is the internal state of the Turkish Empire—I do not on this occasion inquire whether or not the Mahomedan power in Europe can be permanently maintained. What I assume is, that it is a great object of European policy to prevent the extension of the Russian power in the direction of Constantinople, and that the Power which now occupies that city is to be maintained as a matter of European policy, I give no opinion, I only recognize the obligations of treaties. The treaty of 1856 imposed upon the Powers of Europe the duty of maintaining the integrity of Turkey as against foreign aggression, and I therefore assume and assert that we are not to take measures for the purpose of invidiously weakening or destroying her.¹⁸

¹⁶ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 582.

¹⁷ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 150 (4 May 1858), cc44-106.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

It is arguable that Gladstone ‘half-heartedly’ approved the Palmerstonian policy for the maintenance of Ottoman territorial integrity. However, this raised a question from Seymour Fitzgerald as the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the duality in Gladstone’s declaration that ‘the Principalities were wholly independent of Turkey.’¹⁹ In that respect, it is to a certain extent true that Gladstone gave his full support to Romanian national aspirations and self-governance. Yet, in rejecting Palmerston’s policy, as Ann P. Saab argues ‘the implications were less anti-Ottoman than might at first be supposed.’²⁰ Along with the proven ability of Ottoman reforms over the years, Gladstone’s sustained defence of the rights of the oppressed people gave rise to his anti-Turkish sentiment which was an important aspect of his policy in 1876. By the same token, Gladstone’s belief in international law was not only indicative of his respectable liberal position but also laid down the main feature of his policy towards the Ottoman Empire during his second ministry.

Gladstone’s motion on the Principalities was defeated by a majority of 292 against 114. He noted in his diary with disappointment: ‘it goes another broken promise to a people.’²¹ Significantly, the parliamentary debate was remarkable in terms of reactions to Gladstone’s speech which indicates the positions of Disraeli and Lord Salisbury twenty years later. ‘The probability was’, Lord Salisbury stated, ‘that if the strong assistance of Europe is given in aid of the claims of Turkey, the Principalities will be handed over for the present to Turkey, the most oppressive and rapacious of all Governments... I trust that the House of Commons would show themselves upon this occasion to be the supporters of freedom.’²² Disraeli’s

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 66.

²¹ ‘Resolution that Britain should keep her promise to Wallachia and Moldavia as agreed in the Paris treaty.’ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 295.

²² *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 150 (4 May 1858), cc44-106.

stance was with Palmerston and he regarded Salisbury's opinions 'raw and cruel' by believing that:

they are not the opinions of anyone who has sufficiently thought on the subject on which he has spoken with so much authority, I must decline to follow his example. But that such opinions should be in any degree sanctioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University (Gladstone), a Member of the Cabinet that incurred the awful responsibility of entering into a war to maintain the integrity of the Turkish empire, is to me matter of deep astonishment.²³

To Gladstone, the Crimean War was a defining moment for his stance in the Eastern Question – and not simply because he was one of the Cabinet ministers. As Shannon argues, Gladstone 'could bear this responsibility with a clear conscience', which was a set-back for his critique of Lord Palmerston's policy and the implementation of Ottoman reforms.²⁴ Later in 1858, after having observed Palmerston during his ministry and the rise of the Danubian principality question, Gladstone declared that Palmerston's policy towards the Ottoman Empire was a 'diplomatic chimera', or a 'great frock-coat-and trousers question', based on the assumption that Turkey was a member of the European family and capable, therefore, of governing her Provinces.²⁵ Besides the attempts by Stratford Canning 'like another Atlas, carrying the world of the Turkish Empire on his shoulders; and the aggrieved subject, whether Turk or Christian', he assessed that 'the paper-securities for good government' as per the Reform Edict of 1855 were hopeless efforts.²⁶ The only realistic policy was to establish

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809–1865, Vol. I*, p. 87.

²⁵ William E. Gladstone, 'The Past and Present Administrations', p. 557.

²⁶ Ibid.

‘local and provincial self-government, varying according to the rights, traditions, and comparative maturity of the subjects’ which the Sultan allowed from his central government for the future security of Europe.²⁷ Given the Ottoman State’s unfairness towards its non-Muslim subjects, Gladstone emphasised that ‘absolute government does not like free institutions at its doors’ and, moreover, ‘there is a hopeless contrariety between the interests of Europe in the Turkish question, and the particular interests of Austria with regard to her methods of domestic and Italian government. Her system is at all costs to centralise. The true policy for Turkey is to decentralise.’²⁸ At the time, Gladstone considered the Turkish question to be ‘a volcanic movement’ which consisted of ‘smouldering Mahometan fanaticism’, and the threat of French supremacy over the territories instead of Britain.²⁹ It is, nevertheless, the case that Gladstone was indeed anticipating the facts correctly as to ‘the dangers of the Ottoman Empire’, and it suited him to compare Austria with the weakness of the central Ottoman government. The effect that the Bulgarian atrocities campaign had on Sultan Abdulhamid II twenty years later, as Gladstone foresaw, directed the Sultan to implement Pan-Islamist policies as the state’s official policy. Gladstone’s criticism of British policy under Palmerston was especially damning,

England, at least until within the last few months, has been the really powerful and effective foe, in recent diplomacy, of provincial freedom and of Christian progress in the Turkish Empire: and, incredible as it may seem, she has, by doing the work of Russia, given to that Power the double advantage, first of gaining the affections of the Christians of Turkey by supporting the union of the Principalities; and secondly, of having the ground made ready, through their discontent... when the time comes to

²⁷ Ibid, p. 558–9.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 556.

²⁹ William E. Gladstone, ‘The Past and Present Administrations’, p. 559.

enter and to occupy. But it is clear that, had the late Ministry continued to regulate our foreign affairs, the Principalities would not have obtained even the modified and rather stingy acknowledgement of their rights, which is offered them by the Convention.³⁰

Without question, this clarifies the hopes and expectations that Gladstone had for Palmerston's government to implement a policy towards the Ottoman Empire which would earn 'the gratitude of the country and of Europe.'³¹ But the time had yet not come and Gladstone was probably inclined to think that the circumstances needed to alter the policy were not conducive. There can be no doubt that Gladstone believed the Crimean War would hold 'no dishonourable place' in history as compared with the most previous wars.³² For its policy, 'it must be regarded *a parta ante*, although the inevitable fallibility of human judgements may be once again illustrated, in an important particular by its results.'³³ According to Karaca, Gladstone regarded the Crimean War as a conflict no more than a protection of a Muslim country for the sake of Europe.³⁴ Protecting Ottoman integrity and preventing Russian expansion and hegemony over Orthodox subjects was one of the main objectives behind British intervention. Indeed, it has been argued that Gladstone supported the maintenance of Mahomedan institutions in Turkey under the collective guarantee of the treaty of Paris. Yet his apprehension regarding non-Muslim minorities under Ottoman governance and Islamic rule remained, and illustrate how Karaca and Gurun's arguments

³⁰ Ibid, p. 559-60.

³¹ Ibid, p. 560.

³² Gladstone, 'The History of 1852-60 and Greville's latest Journals', p. 292.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Karaca, *İngiltere Başkanı Gladstone'un Osmanlı'yı Yıkma Planı: Büyük Oyun*, p. 118;

regarding his Islamophobic paradigm ought to be dismissed.³⁵ In 1887, after witnessing the Bulgarian agitation, Gladstone recalled his belief that Lord Palmerston and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's policy had not been supported by later experience and 'the experiment, so far as Turkey concerned, has not succeeded, and its ill success is visited upon the policy which obtained for it on trial and error.'³⁶

The heavy criticism of Palmerston in his article of October 1858, his philhellenic reputation, and his completion of his study on Homer were presumably what led the Conservatives to offer Gladstone the role of the Lord High Commissioner in the Ionian Islands. The Ionian interlude, which Gladstone regarded as 'the small question'³⁷ was amongst his interests in that he considered it to be a serious duty for British policy in the Islands.³⁸ Matthew argues, however, the real significance of this was not coming from its impact on Gladstone's place in politics.³⁹ Rather, as Brad Faught emphasises, it was 'a kind of rehearsal of the imperial and international themes that would come to dominate three of his four administrations.'⁴⁰ Gladstone was, indeed, certain that, 'this small question is the narrow corner of a very great question, one no less, in all likelihood, than the reconstruction of all political society in South-Eastern Europe.'⁴¹ Faught points out Gladstone's adoption of 'the tone of internationalism' with using 'personal feelings', 'school of freedom', 'liberty', 'popular rights' that 'would become such a clear part of his political rhetoric in the mid-1870s and

³⁵ Ibid; Kamuran Gurun, *The Armenian File The Myth of Innocence Exposed*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), p. 75.

³⁶ Gladstone, 'The History of 1852-60 and Greville's latest Journals', p. 290

³⁷ BL GP Add MS 44588, fol.101 also quoted in C. Brad Faught, 'Gladstone and the Ionian Islands', pp. 219-31, p. 219 in Ronald Quinault, Roger Swift and Ruth Clayton Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012)

³⁸ For the official report to the Cabinet see Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, pp. 351-8, '28 December 1858'; BL GP Add MS 44588, fols. 99-180.

³⁹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. xxvii.

⁴⁰ Faught, 'Gladstone and the Ionian Islands', p. 219 in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone: New Studies and Perspectives*.

⁴¹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 359, '28 December 1858'

remain so until the end of his career over 20 years.⁴² It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone was at a critical point in his career for his direct understanding and utterance of nationalism in the East which were particularly to dominate his second ministry.

In his memorandum, Gladstone made it clear that British protectorate and responsibility should remain ‘in the eyes of Europe, for the order and security of the islands’ in spite of the Ionian people’s ‘cries’ for union with Greece.⁴³ Having considered the impulses for the British Empire, Gladstone’s suggestion was to improve the efficiency of local government with constitutional, administrative and economic reforms. There is little doubt that Gladstone's solution of this problem was not practical and seemed difficult to put into practice. Without question, Gladstone empathized with ‘the abstract sentiment’ of Ionian nationalism and feelings; however his propositions were ‘likely to woo middle class Ionians from their Risospast (unionist) position.’⁴⁴ Furthermore, it becomes clear from his objections that he had already anticipated this outcome: ‘first, that the Ionian people are not fit for free institutions, and secondly, that if offered, they would not be accepted.’⁴⁵ Gladstone further explained his rejection of Ionian union: ‘Among the countries so endowed, it is important to bear in mind that one is the Kingdom of Greece, where the principles and habits of freedom are not yet fully developed but there is a machinery in use.’⁴⁶ It is, therefore, possible to justify Saab’s argument that Gladstone ‘was not yet well acquainted with modern Greeks.’⁴⁷ This was in spite of his deep sympathy for Greek culture, the Greek notion of civilisation as enthusiastically represented in his studies of Homer and his support for the Greek war of

⁴² Faught, ‘Gladstone and the Ionian Islands’, p. 227 in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone: New Studies and Perspectives*.

⁴³ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 359, ‘28 December 1858’, p. 354, 356.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. lxx.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 352.

⁴⁶ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 359, ‘28 December 1858’, p. 353.

⁴⁷ Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*, p. 68.

independence. Furthering this argument, Shannon regards Gladstone as ‘the man to handle the job’ who ‘told ministers what they wanted to hear: that *enosis* was no great problem; that the difficulties could be made by a judiciously liberal concession of self-government.’⁴⁸ In that respect, Matthew compared this to Irish policy remonstrating that Gladstone ‘never attempted set down in a similar detail his thoughts on Irish nationalism which, as he hints, were in his mind as he wrote the despatch’⁴⁹ in terms of Gladstone’s attribution of the meaning of ‘justice’ that he anticipated for Ireland. ‘Justice delayed is justice denied’⁵⁰, nevertheless was particularly manifested in the case of the Ottoman Empire with Gladstone’s humanitarian aspect in the direction of developing local-governments in the disturbed provinces. Overall, it is, nevertheless true that, when faced in a direct and practical way with the issues of nationalism and liberty, Gladstone’s understanding from both the British and Ionian point of views enhanced his liberal stance.

At this point, it is important to emphasise how important Gladstone’s visit to the Eastern Mediterranean was in that it expanded his range in Balkan affairs and in particular it improved his understanding of the Ottoman provinces. Arriving in the Ionian Islands, Gladstone was met with a demonstration where people were cheering ‘*Ζήτω ἡ Ένωσις*’ (Union with Greece), ‘*ζήτω ὁ φιλέλληνην Γλάδστων*’ (Long live Gladstone the Philhellene) and he received an enthusiastic support on the part of Greek people.⁵¹ Thereafter, indeed, his popularity remained high overseas and his strong reputation of supporting nationalist movements grew further in the 1870s. In that respect Edward A. Freeman, who appraised Gladstone’s attitudes and policies during the Near Eastern Question crisis, wrote his

⁴⁸ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809-1865*, I, p. 371.

⁴⁹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. lxx.

⁵⁰ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 190 (16 March 1868), cc1688-792.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 346, ‘10 December 1858’; Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 604.

observations while in Greece ‘you as just as popular as you are in England. ‘Ζήτω προστάτης’ (Long live protector) comes naturally to every Greek mouth’.⁵² In respect to the later entanglements in Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Sudan and Armenia, Faught, however, argues that Gladstone’s situation became ‘enmeshed’ due to ‘the competing demands of imperial strategy, international responsibility and national aspiration.’⁵³ Thus, the Ionian Islands were the precedent for Gladstone’s role for the equal rights of the nations. However, it was until his manifestation for six ‘Right Principles of Foreign Policy’ in the Midlothian Campaign of 1879 that Gladstone had made explicit and essential prerequisites of self-government to which he made it clear that the circumstances based on the legitimate authority of the government and the consent of the people.

Immersed in his Homeric studies, it seems logical to propose that Gladstone’s sympathy with Eastern Christians had developed as a result of his experience in the Ionian Islands and Ottoman provinces. During the 1850s and 1860s, Gladstone’s religious views were growing more liberal when compared to the High Evangelical Churchmanship that he principally adhered to during his early years. Morley emphasises ‘the fascination’ that Gladstone held towards the Orthodox Church in addition to his admiration of ancient heroes which seemed: ‘so peculiar and so irresistible for the Anglican school to which Mr. Gladstone belonged.’⁵⁴ In this regard, Gladstone’s ‘pioneering’⁵⁵ in ecumenicalism led him to explore ‘any form of Catholicism which was unsullied by Rome’ which also justifies the reasons for his growing interest in the Orthodox religion of the Eastern Churches.⁵⁶ Tatiana Soloviona supports this

⁵² BL GP Add MS 44454, fols. 224-25, fol. 224, ‘Edward Freeman to Gladstone on 22 June 1877’

⁵³ Faught, ‘Gladstone and the Ionian Islands’, p. 227-28 in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone News Studies and Perspectives*.

⁵⁴ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 596.

⁵⁵ Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, p. 228.

⁵⁶ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 158; See also on the whole subject, H.C.G Matthew, ‘Gladstone, Vaticanism and the Question of the East’, *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 15, 1978.

point of view in that the ‘growing horror of ultramontanism was certainly the reason for Gladstone’s interest in Orthodoxy.’⁵⁷ Furthering moral obligations to the subject races of the East and his hope for the reunion of Christendom, it is certain that Gladstone’s concept of ‘religious nationality’ was not only linked with various religious interests in the mid-1870s but also was one of the coinciding components for ‘the ground of common humanity’ during the Bulgarian Agitation campaign.⁵⁸ That is not to say, however, that his desire was a part of his initial calculations for his ‘religious crusading’⁵⁹ against Islam. However, as Matthew suggested that: ‘these Churches had no peculiar claim to universality or universal claim’ referring to the Church of England, Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe and Roman Catholic Churches, and ‘it was the notion of unity which emerges as the central theme of Gladstone’s religious preoccupations in these years.’⁶⁰ Gladstone concurred with the assessment of Archbishop of Syra and Tenos in the Greek Orthodox Church on the Bulgarian Schism resisting the ‘aggression of the Panslavist against the Hellenic element, either in religion or otherwise.’⁶¹ ‘But while as a Christian’, he added ‘I must cordially desire union of your Churches...We in this country are anxious for the peace of Levant. To this end, it is material that there should harmony between the Ottoman Porte & the Christian Churches with its dominions...for ‘the welfare both of Turkey & Greece.’⁶² Whilst adhering to the ‘feeling by his duty as Minister’, Gladstone published his two anti-Vatican pamphlets which,

⁵⁷ Tatiana Soloviona, ‘Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue in the 19th century and Gladstone’s interest in the Reunion of Christendom’ in Peter Francis (ed.), *The Gladstone Umbrella*, (Chester: Monad Press, 2011), pp. 50-72, p. 53.

⁵⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 261; William E. Gladstone, ‘A speech delivered at Blackheath on Saturday, September 9th, 1876: together with letters on the question of the East’, *Bristol Selected Pamphlets*, 1876, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Michael J. Winstanley, *Gladstone and the Liberal Party*, (London: Routledge Publishers, 1990), p. 3.

⁶⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 261.

⁶¹ BL GP Add MS 44541 fol. 179, ‘William E. Gladstone to Archbishop of Syra and Tenos A. Lykourgos 18 August 1872’

⁶² *Ibid.*

along with his enthusiasm on national Church, was a manifestation of his understanding of Christian unity following his retirement in 1874. Later in 1875, he again stated that:

At a period when the extraneous action of the Eastern Churches has been so beneficial to Christendom, I naturally feel an enhanced interest in their inward state and reciprocal relations. I trust that the Bulgarian Schism may have been less mischievous than seemed probable, and that means may be speedily be found of healing it. With regard to the ethnical division of Hellenic and Slavonic Christians, only misconduct or political scheming on one side or both can make it dangerous, because the principle of local circumscription, faithfully maintained by the Eastern Churches against the overreaching supremacy asserted by Rome, will provide with each country and people according to its rights, duties and necessities.⁶³

It is difficult to regard Gladstone as having sympathy for the Turkish culture and Muslims in spite of his receptive frame of mind and enthusiasm for Eastern Christians. Gladstone, in contrast to his philhellenic sentiments, was not oriental with his preoccupations as well as tastes. It is beyond any doubt that he had already made up his mind about the Turkish government and his suspicions were partially confirmed after his visit to Albania. ‘The whole impression is most saddening,’ Gladstone noted in his diary, ‘it is all indolence, decay, stagnation: the image of God seems as it were nowhere’⁶⁴ after his visit to Mosque and stay in Vali (civil governor of the province) Jaffier Pacha’s house in Philiates, an Albanian town nearly opposite Corfu. Whilst accompanying Gladstone in their tour to the provinces, Arthur Gordon, the son of Lord Aberdeen and a close friend, witnessed Gladstone’s desire to hear

⁶³ ‘William E. Gladstone to Archbishop of Syra and Tenos, October 1875’ in D.C.Latbury (ed.), *Correspondence on Church and Religion of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, (New York: The Macmillan Company), pp. 65-66.

⁶⁴ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 367.

the azan in the Mosque just as his calling on *Lacaita* to recite when he ordered his tale-teller to repeat a story to Pashas after dinner.⁶⁵ Despite Gladstone's unprejudiced consideration, when his hostess' asking him to recommend her son for a governorship after extravagant Turkish dinner and returning Corfu for a one hour postponement due to 'the Turkish ideas of time', contributed to make the matters worse.⁶⁶ It is, nevertheless, true to suggest that his experience confirmed his suspicions as to Turkish culture. His thoughts during his visit further give the indication that his impression was harbouring his friendly feelings towards Turks. Yet, this was not based on a critique of principles of Islam but Turkish cultural rituals.

Despite Gladstone's condemnation of and opposition to Palmerston's conduct of foreign policy throughout the 1850s, the question arises as to why he decided to join Palmerston's ministry in 1859. Five years afterwards, Gladstone's justification for agreement reflected not only his belief that he could still do 'useful work' in the field of finance, in addition to 'the overwhelming interest and weight of the Italian question', but of foreign policy in connection with his 'entire mistrust of the former government', that had led him to accept Palmerston's offer 'without one moment's hesitation.'⁶⁷ Deryck Schreuder and Matthew, however, are of the opinion that Gladstone's involvement was 'no great moral choice' and his explanation for this was 'unconvincing but limited'.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it is the case that Gladstone's criticism of Palmerston was not due to political considerations such as rivalry or party leadership. Rather, it was a statement of his moral misgivings. In retrospect, Gladstone had always supported Italian nationalism since his visit to prisoners in Naples and his consent to Italian unification was based on the notion that a united Italy would be 'a superior alternative to Austrian

⁶⁵ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 607-8.

⁶⁶ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. v, p. 367, '2-3 February 1859'; Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*, p. 70.

⁶⁷ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, p. 628.

⁶⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 107; Deryck Schreuder, 'Gladstone and Italian Unification, 1848-70: The Making of a Liberal', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No. 336 (July, 1970), pp. 475-501, p. 497.

misrule only after it had become *a fait accompli*.⁶⁹ In his article entitled ‘War in Italy’, Gladstone argued that Britain should slowly intervene in the Italian question and his opposition was against the ‘traditional’ policy that endorsed the Austrians, French and Pope due to their ruthlessness, expansionism and rule on the Papal States.⁷⁰ Instead, he suggested that for

The heroic struggle for national independence or existence, the power on concentrating the idea the whole energies of the soul is a power inestimable value. But, where is as likely to be more and the more case in European struggles, England is rather an arbiter than originally a party, what she requires beyond all these is the judicial power.⁷¹

The significance of the Italian question on Gladstone was profound, to which it had particular effect on his thinking upon the morality of foreign affairs. Bebbington, in this respect, assesses ‘the upsurge of Italian nationalism’ which had compelled him to ‘shift his outlook on foreign affairs.’⁷² Yet, it can be suggested that his denouncement of oppressive governments for liberty and justice for European stability remain important factors –with Gladstone in his later years which manifested themselves in his Midlothian speeches.⁷³

As chancellor, Gladstone indirectly intervened in foreign affairs and his interests in foreign policy accrued when the questions of morality and international justice arose concurrently. In this vein, Gladstone’s strong belief to Christianity for the acts international statesmanship

⁶⁹ Sandiford., ‘W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist Movements’, p. 30

⁷⁰ William E. Gladstone, ‘War in Italy’, *Quarterly Review*. Vol. 105, (London: John Murray, 3 March 1859)

⁷¹ Gladstone, ‘War in Italy’, pp. 529-530.

⁷² Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, p. 117.

⁷³ William E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879 with an Introduction by M. R. D. Foot*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1971)

began to coincide with his enthusiasm and moral energy of liberalism which comprised the substance of Gladstone's policy towards the Ottoman Empire. In 1862, the political crisis over concerns about King Otho's plan to revive the Greek Empire had prompted Palmerston's government to reconsider the British policy in the Ionian Islands. Having been concerned with the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece, Gladstone was disappointed by this development considering 'anti-Crimean policy' which was now happening in spite of his assertions in his 1858 pamphlet.⁷⁴ Despite their sharp clashes and differences, Gladstone sought to constrain defence on Palmerston's policy for the preservation and rejuvenation of the Ottoman Empire on the condition of rights for protection over all Orthodox Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. Yet, Gladstone's 'reluctant'⁷⁵ speech on Turkey and her dependencies defensively had appeased this policy's financial and management apprehensions. 'It is our duty, in compliance with the faith of treaties, to be loyal to the Turkish Government,' Gladstone argued in support for intervention in the Ottoman internal affairs and lined up with 'a critical financial eye with entire satisfaction' on the Turkish loan based on the fact that 'the disposition which has been shown by the Turkish Government to allow a full and fair investigation.'⁷⁶ Referring to Richard Cobden's defining term of the British as 'the orators of the human race' in international affairs, Gladstone's constant desires for the Christian minorities of the Porte remained; moreover, he added,

As far as I may venture to express an opinion, it seems to me that nothing can be more plain in the first place than the duty of all Governments friendly to the Ottoman Empire to uphold the civil rights of the Christian subjects, and, nay more, I will venture to say not altogether to exclude from regard the condition of the

⁷⁴ Shannon, *Gladstone 1809-1865, I*, p. 475.

⁷⁵ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. vi, p. 204 '29 May 1863'

⁷⁶ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 171 (29 May 1863), cc6-148.

Mohammedan subjects of that Government, with respect to whom the noble Lord opposite has very fairly stated that they bear no niggardly share of these abuses and oppressions. But, while upholding these rights, it is fair to recognize whatever improvement has taken place, and to endeavour to develop the energies and lead forward the spirit of improvement by gentle means, rather than by means of force; and, while not shrinking from a tone of decision, such as our traditional policy, the sacrifices we have made on behalf of Turkey, and our diplomatic engagements fully warrant, not holding language which can have no other effect than to render the existing authority in Turkey despicable in the eyes of its own subjects.⁷⁷

An important consideration of this statement is that Gladstone's recognition of the rights of Muslim subjects was not in the same manner with his alertness and sensitivity towards the Christian population. Rather, it was a remarkable statement in which he equivalently embraces Muslims with such enthusiasm. In this regard, Gladstone's wish was not to 'encourage a general crusade against Turkish Power' and assessed the consequence as 'a reversal of British policy'.⁷⁸ Indeed, at this stage Gladstone was still far from alteration of Palmerston's policy towards the Ottoman Empire but his humanitarian concern was sufficiently entrenched.

In 1865, Gladstone was saddened by Palmerston's death. He lamented to his wife, 'I think, it was you who had long said, "you will see he will go off suddenly."' This is an event that has made my brain spin.⁷⁹ There is little doubt that Palmerston dominated foreign policy as the central figure throughout his career. His death, therefore, marked a new epoch in British

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 167, '20 October 1865'

foreign affairs and was the beginning of the policy of isolation. It was Disraeli, rather than Gladstone, who modelled himself on Palmerston's traditional pro-Turkish foreign policy. This was evident particularly during his second premiership. Yet, even Gladstone regarded Palmerston's influence on him as important as he was amongst the names of Canning and Russell to which he sought the inspiration of foreign policy by a love of freedom and sympathy that 'will ever be honoured by those who recollect the erection of the Kingdom of Belgium, and the union of the disjointed provinces of Italy.'⁸⁰

The Cretan insurrection of 1866 against the ruling Ottoman Turks once more awoke international sympathy and likewise drew Gladstone's attention towards the East. It was, indeed, at the time when British policy still adhered to preservation of Ottoman territorial integrity while assuming a responsibility for its internal affairs. 'To defend the Sublime Porte', was what Rodogno defines as British policy during the period by referring to foreign secretary Lord Stanley's claim that the 'Ottoman government had the same right to put down an insurrection in Crete as England had in India, France in Algeria, or Russia in Poland.'⁸¹ This statement as a means of clarifying the conduct of foreign policy that prevent from attacking 'the government of the Sultan for doing that which every government in the world, including that of the United States, had done, and would do again when the necessity presented itself.'⁸² Aside from the humanitarian concerns, the Cretan revolt, however, 'raised the more fundamental issue of the very existence, or, at least, of the character of the Ottoman Empire.'⁸³ It is nonetheless, true that the Turkish government's handling of the Cretan affairs drew reaction and Gladstone warned the Turks that their mistreatment of the situation in

⁸⁰ W.E.Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879 with an introduction by M.R.D. Foot*, (Great Britain: Leicester University Press, 1971), p. 117.

⁸¹ Rodogno, *Against Massacre Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*, p. 220.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ 'Kenneth Bourne, 'Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt, 1866-1869', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No. 84 (December, 1956), pp. 74-94, p. 74.

Crete would ‘disgrace them in the eyes of Europe.’⁸⁴ A further consideration, which stressed the importance of the maintenance for Palmerston’s policy also reveals the decisive factor for Gladstone’s involvement:

I would not venture to say one word which would have the effect of encouraging the people of Crete to throw off the Ottoman rule. But as far as regards the stipulations of the Hatti-Humayoun, we are not only entitled from opposition to advise Turkey in her own interests, in her regard to humanity, in her sense of justice, in her desire to be a civilized European Power, to fulfil those engagements; but we are also entitled to say to her that her fulfilment of those stipulations is a matter of moral faith, an obligation to which she is absolutely bound.⁸⁵

Saab argues that the Cretan insurrection ‘closely paralleled which later developed in Bulgaria’, to which it might have been ‘an early opportunity’ for Gladstone to oppose Turkish rule on Christian subjects who were demanding freedom for the ‘oppressed.’⁸⁶ It is, therefore, fair to argue that Gladstone saw some obstacles to make a firm commitment to alter or adjust British policy towards the Ottoman Empire. He, thus, adhered to earlier arrangements and followed closely to the principles which to a slight extent set out his prevision for a ‘decentralization’ policy.⁸⁷ This interpretation can be extended at significant points to Gladstone; in terms of his disposition of mind and his basic reactionary attitude towards the Eastern Question on moral grounds. Preoccupied with domestic affairs prior to his first Premiership, his resignation in 1874 was not only an early opportunity to ease his

⁸⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 185 (15 February 1867), cc406-50.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*, p. 72.

⁸⁷ Gladstone, ‘The Past and Present Administrations’, p. 559.

way back to Ottoman affairs but also paved the way to pay close attention the Disraeli government's conducting the foreign policy.

What gives special significance to the Cretan question and to Gladstone's role in supporting the Ottoman government diplomatically was the recognition of another humanitarian crisis. In fact, both the British and Ottoman governments 'directly associated the Eastern Question for the first time' in order to 'save the dignity of the Sultan' which 'became a household phrase in European political and diplomatic circles.'⁸⁸ As being the first Ottoman Sultan to visit France and Britain, Abdulaziz's cultivation for the friendly relations with both France and Britain was an important feature of the Ottoman attitude at the time. Admittedly, Sultan's desire was to win European diplomatic support against the rebellions in Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Crete.⁸⁹ Henry Elliot, the newly appointed British ambassador to the Porte recorded the visit 'memorable' and he reported the Sultan's satisfaction with the reception in London.⁹⁰ It is surprising that Gladstone's meeting with Sultan Abdulaziz has been neglected by historians. It is noteworthy that Gladstone was 'much pleased with' Turkish Sovereign's manner.⁹¹ To his wife he confided;

Well, my prejudices not for the Sultan but I was decidedly pleased with his manner: I thought it intelligent, kind, quiet, dignified and firm. Of course, I speak with reference to the Oriental type. Madame Musurus⁹² died at half past one this morning. The account is that he and the poor family are as well as can be hoped. The Sultan was late

⁸⁸ Nazan Cicek, *The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (London: Tauris Academic Publishing, 2010), p. 71.

⁸⁹ Osman Koksal, 'The Celebrations Held because of the return of Sultan Abdülaziz from the European Voyage and a Poetic History', *Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Cilt:4 Sayı:1 (Haziran 2003), pp. 118-35, p. 119.

⁹⁰ Henry G. Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences*, (London: John Murray, 1922), p. 183.

⁹¹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. vi, p. 204 '20 July 1867'

⁹² Kostaki Musurus Pasha's wife who had been appointed as the Ottoman ambassador to London since 1850.

and the reason given was the shock of Madame Musurus' death which had only just been told him.⁹³

Morley assumes Palmerston's impression from Sultan Abdulaziz's ability to speak French as one of the reasons for Palmerston's Turcophile attitude and for his 'sanguine' opinion about Turkish civilization at his time.⁹⁴ Gladstone's feelings, however, was limited to a personal admiration and this did not help to eliminate his previous worries and fears about Turkish governance. Subsequent to the Near Eastern Crisis, the differences of opinion and personalities had fuelled the mutual antipathy between Sultan Abdulhamid II and Gladstone. In this sense, the importance of Gladstone's personal distaste for Abdulhamid II in determining his political approach has to be emphasised to as an important factor that helped to define how Gladstone engaged with the aspects of his Turkish policy during his second ministry.

In 1868, when Gladstone formed his first ministry after a victory against Disraeli, he had to deal with a variety of crises in domestic and foreign policy. In a later reflection, Gladstone observed the internal working of the Cabinet of 1868-74 with 'a great satisfaction' and pointed out the existence of several members who were senior to himself.⁹⁵ Given that, Gladstone's major concern was the implementation of economic and social reforms with a 'mission to pacify Ireland' which would occupy a leading place in his next three terms as Prime Minister. In this respect, Gladstone's non-interventionist approach to foreign affairs coincided with his leanings and sympathies towards peace. The time had come for Gladstone to act and directly influence foreign affairs. It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone's first

⁹³ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p.171, 20 July 1867.

⁹⁴ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica*, 'First Cabinet', p. 96.

ministry was dominated by the Franco-Prussian War, the Straits Question and the United States' Alabama claims against the British government. The significance of the first two events gave a clear indication of how significant Christian moralism and European stability were in Gladstone's understanding of international order in line with British policy. 'Even in his inflammatory anti-Turkish language (over the Bulgarians)' Schreuder argues, Gladstone had 'developed no 'axis of evil' to shape a crusading global foreign policy.' Continuing the argument, he defines Gladstone's international stance as 'the ideological enemy of *Realpolitik* with his concern for collective action by great powers.'⁹⁶ Despite their common belief to the principle of Concert of Europe, Gladstone promoted the system of alliance for settling the diplomatic disputes. By contrast, Otto von Bismarck embarked upon a more cautious approach to foreign policy as the guarantor of a secure European order. On the question of German annexation of Alsace Lorraine with Bismarck's Prussian circular, Gladstone's 'moral anger' was manifested in his article 'Germany, France and England' and with equal 'several confidential Cabinet memoranda with concern for the principle of nationality, which presented an even more powerful, damning, and caustic criticism of Bismarck's circular.'⁹⁷ Prior to the war, on the other hand, he had already defined French diplomacy as 'a chapter which for fault and folly taken together is almost without a parallel in the history of nations'⁹⁸ and therewithal 'to 'urge strongly the folly of retaining French territory' upon a nation in arms is a serious matter.'⁹⁹ It was, indeed, at this time that Gladstone's opposition derived from Bismarck's main premises with militarism, lack of

⁹⁶ Deryck Schreuder, 'Gladstone's 'Greater World': Free Trade, Empire and Liberal Internationalism', p. 268 in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone News Studies and Perspectives*.

⁹⁷ Deryck Schreuder, 'Gladstone as "Troublemaker": Liberal Foreign Policy and the German Annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, 1870-1871', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring, 1978), pp. 106-135, p. 111, W.E. Gladstone, 'Germany, France and England', *Edinburgh Review*, 1870 reprinted in *Gleanings of Past Years 1843-1878, Vol IV: Foreign*, (1878), pp. 197-257; GP Add MS 44 759, ff. 151-65, Gladstone memorandum, 25 September 1870.

⁹⁸ Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years 1843-1878, Vol IV: Foreign*, p. 222.

⁹⁹ BL GP Add MS 44112 fol.151, Gladstone to John Bright, 12 Sept. 1870.

political morality and his notion of the Concert as an instrument that operated for the sake of German interests. Later in his life, he justified the reasons for British non-interference, 'Had Napoleon acceded to our proposal, would the German powers have persevered? There was a chance they might not: Austria might have flinched: I do not think Bismarck would have been on that side; but he might have shrunk from isolation. Had they persisted, the matter would have been gravest as a question of military operations.'¹⁰⁰ It is therefore Gladstone's regret was not only for 'the whole course of subsequent European history' which 'in all likelihood' had been changed¹⁰¹ but also for the policy-making in matters affecting people's life.¹⁰² Certainly on the humanitarian side, Gladstone provides an interesting consideration in that 'nothing can compensate a people for the loss of what we may term civic individuality. Without it the European type becomes a politically debased to the Mahometan and Oriental model.'¹⁰³ This further illustrates Gladstone's ethical component and how he saw the necessity of the European government's guardianship of 'liberty both personal and national'¹⁰⁴ in comparison with the weaknesses of the governance on the Christian subjects based on the Islamic principles. During his second Premiership, furthermore, Gladstone's appeal to the Concert of Europe to take a collective action to place diplomatic pressure on Turkish government failed to determine a permanent policy for the Eastern Question. Along with Bismarck's expectancy for the failure, Gladstone noted Goschen's idea as Ambassador Extraordinary at the time, to which he noted that the 'Germans were extremely desirous to

100 Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica*, p. 91, '1864 The Danish Question'

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Gladstone lamented to his wife during the events that, 'I am very glad and you too will be glad that I am here for I have been able to quicken our movements in case of the utmost importance of humanity, as it involves the question of thousands of wounded men into proper quarters. Think of 7000 killed and wounded between Thursday and Sunday.' Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 178. Gladstone to Mrs Gladstone on 20 September 1870 (probably).

¹⁰³ W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years 1843-1878, Vol IV: Foreign*, (London: John Murray, 1879), p. 235.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. vii, p. xli.

avert any crisis in the East and they advised the Sultan in the sense of concession.¹⁰⁵ It is, therefore, logically possible that Abdulhamid had begun to rapport with Germany following the lack of confidence in his former ally, Britain. In this vein, it is also interesting that Lord Granville as the Foreign Secretary of the time had written to Gladstone during the Franco-German War to suggest– ‘It all looks, much as if Bismarck wished to pick a quarrel with us. He has always hated English, and at events no confidence can be placed with him.’¹⁰⁶

It is also fair to state that Germany played an ‘indirectly major role’ in the Balkan affairs as a part of the policy for European diplomatic system.¹⁰⁷ With the unification of Germany, Bismarck’s control of European diplomacy and stability lasted until the Bosnian-Herzegovinian uprising in 1875. The question of defending the rights of Christian subjects and the fate of the Ottoman Empire resurfaced and new negotiations for the European settlement took place in the Congress of Berlin subsequent to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Beyond these European entanglements, during the 1870s, Russian denunciation of Black Sea clauses of the treaty of Paris and unilateral action for the acquisition of Straits was another major area of interest for British foreign policy. In 1856, Gladstone had already anticipated aggressive Russian policy and the neutralisation of the Black Sea would produce a ‘far from being a satisfactory agreement.’¹⁰⁸ Yet, ‘the Colossus of the East’ as Gladstone defined, Russia was anxious with respect to the policy of a powerful Germany towards the Turkish Empire to the designs for the union of the great Slavonic family.¹⁰⁹ It is, nevertheless,

¹⁰⁵ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I’, p. 254.

¹⁰⁶ BL GP Add MS 44167 fol.149, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone on 15 October 1870’

¹⁰⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers and the Straits Question 1870-1887*, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 89.

¹⁰⁸ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, vol. II*, pp. 394-5.

¹⁰⁹ Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years 1843-1878, Vol IV: Foreign*, p. 199.

true that Russia was not only a 'solemn covenant'¹¹⁰ which claimed to rights of protection over the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox subjects, she accordingly expanded her economic interests in the Balkans and Mediterranean. This same reservation lay behind Gladstone's opposition to unilateral action during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-8 and he regarded the 'war became a necessary way of settling disputes once mankind had been divided into nations.'¹¹¹ Indeed, his future conduct in Turkish affairs would be determined by his earnest belief to Concert of Europe to maintain European peace.

Between November 1870 and March 1871, the London Conference marked an important stage in the European system which restored Turkey's sovereign rights in the Black Sea and ensured the admission of new French Republic while adjusting Russia's right to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea.¹¹² Lord Granville's position as foreign secretary, on taking the office after Lord Clarendon's death, was a milestone for his close relationship with Gladstone over foreign affairs. As a chief negotiator and 'a truthful exponent'¹¹³ of Gladstone's views concerning on foreign affairs, Granville was also particularly involved in the Eastern Question which would be his main preoccupation in Gladstone's second ministry. Sir Henry Elliot, as the British ambassador at the Porte, on the other hand, was severely criticized by Gladstone due to his consideration of the events. Prior to conference negotiations, Gladstone lamented to Lord Granville, 'I think Elliot ought not to pass judgement in his Dispatches on the cogency of the Ottoman Guarantee. His opinion may hinder, cannot help, and is wholly

¹¹⁰ 'The whole pith of the despatch was your's, seems to have had a great success... a little strengthening of the Mediterranean fleet have a good effect, I mean an addition not a transfer. It would have an effect on Russia, who cannot wish for war, and would not compromise us.' BL GP Add MS 44167 fol.175, Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, 18 November 1870.

¹¹¹ Quinault, 'Gladstone and War', p. 245.

¹¹² T.G.Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 69.

¹¹³ Agatha Ramm (ed.), *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1868-1876, Volume I, 1868-71*, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1952), 'Lord Granville to Gladstone 29 October 1870', p. 153.

out of place, as anticipating in a public document, the judgement of those who are to instruct him.¹¹⁴ In a similar vein, when Elliot enthusiastically reported the Grand Vizier's question for military help from Britain if Turkey attacked by Russia¹¹⁵, it was difficult for him to accept Elliot's looking to the Eastern Question from within the Empire.¹¹⁶ In regards to settling Turkish policy in his Cabinet, Gladstone wrote to Under-secretary of foreign affairs that:

the whole policy of the Crimean War is almost universally & very unduly depreciated; and the idea of another armed intervention on behalf of Turkey, whether sole or without allies, is ridiculed...On the whole, as I conclude, Turkey has been habituated to look to external aid, and there is now no prospect of it on which any sane man can rely. The question then arises can she rely for European Empire on the attachment of her own subjects, and if she cannot, what can she further do to bring that attachment up to the mark which may settle in favour the question of life and death. That is what I mean by the most critical moment of the existence of the Sultan's Empire; for in the Crimean War the Turk was but a secondary party, he now runs the chance of being not only primary but sole. This hurried effort sketch is necessarily void of due reserves & explanations.¹¹⁷

Granville considered the letter to be 'a very good one' but urged that it should be kept until the settlement of Cabinet's Turkish policy.¹¹⁸ In this sense, Granville was not only deputised

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 'Gladstone to Lord Granville on 19 November 1870', p. 160.

¹¹⁵ FO 78/2125 'Henry Elliot to Lord Granville on 6 October 1870'

¹¹⁶ BL GP Add MS 44539 fol. 63, 'Gladstone to Edmund Hammond on 28 October 1870'.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1868-1871*, I, 'Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone 29 October 1870', p. 153.

the Prime Minister but also urged him to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric that may cause a difficult matter between the Diplomats that would derive from such communications.

Having identified how crucial the British stance in the London Conference was to be for the Ottomans, as Gul Tokay rightly points out, ‘it was the last time the British cooperated with the Ottomans and safeguarded the latter’s interests and that the Ottomans played an active role at the Conference table.’¹¹⁹ In assessing the Turkish perception of the British, it is correct to note that friendly attitudes were inferred from British behaviour since the Crimean War. However, this inference meant a discontinuation from this policy respectively. Turkish objection against the proposals of the London Conference-‘query whether to keep the Article I (Black Sea remaining open to the Mercantile Marine) as it now is or take the Turkish proposition to have a discretion to let in the Puissances Armies or Allies’¹²⁰- particularly caught Gladstone’s attention. ‘But if somebody else throws over the Turk, not we’, Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, ‘I do not think it matters & I believe the redaction of your terms in the Foreign Office would in itself be quite satisfactory to the Cabinet.’¹²¹ It was therefore Gladstone’s confidence with Lord Granville’s handling of the affairs and a premonitory indication for British non-alignment with the Ottomans.

Witnessing the Cretan insurrection and the Straits question, on the grounds that Saab and Schreuder are of the opinion that 1870 ‘was to be a suggestive pointer for what was to come after 1876 on a greater scale in the major Bulgarian agitation.’¹²² Gladstone’s standpoint for

¹¹⁹ Gul Tokay, ‘Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone’, pp. 318-333, pp. 321-2 source: <http://ebox.nbu.bg/hist12/ne3/5tokay.pdf>

¹²⁰ BL GP Add MS 44639 fol. 8 ‘Cabinet Wednesday February 1871’

¹²¹ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1868-1876*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 2 February 1871’, p. 214.

¹²² Schreuder, ‘Gladstone as “Troublemaker”: Liberal Foreign Policy and the German Annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, 1870-1871’, p. 129; Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*, p. 73.

the Ottoman de-centralization remained but with a radical change in his methods and tone during the Near Eastern Crisis. It is in this sense he wrote Lord Clarendon where he proposed that: ‘As to the local autonomy under Suzerainty & tribute, my opinion has long been that this is by much the best arrangement in itself for Turkey & for the parties.’¹²³ It is also important to note that Gladstone’s theological reflections show a considerable effect on his attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. Up to early 1870s, his belief was not only a national ‘reconciliation between Christianity and the conditions of modern thought, modern life and modern society’ but an attitude that was focused on the directive of international responsibility.¹²⁴ There is little doubt that the fate of Church had always held a significant place in Gladstone’s mind. In line with his mission to pacify Ireland, Gladstone played the leading role in the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland with Church Act of 1869 which can be considered as a remarkable step towards religious equality in Britain. Despite the practical failure of the Irish Land Act subsequently, as Shannon noted, ‘Gladstone felt himself also obliged to undertake ‘to cap the great task, in which we are now engaged, in respect to the Irish Church, with another equally great task, ‘that of applying effective remedies to the occupiers of the soil in Ireland.’¹²⁵ Returning to the Ottoman front, in a similar vein, the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate by Sultan Abdulaziz’s ferman of 1871 was a defining moment for the emergence of the Bulgarian nationalist movement and an inspiration for the Greek majority for the union with Greece. ‘From the first I have deeply regretted the Bulgarian quarrel (schism)’ Gladstone wrote to Henry Elliot, ‘without knowing the rights of it & I still regard it as a quarrel dangerous to the East.’¹²⁶ It is therefore

¹²³ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. vii, pp. 12-3, ‘Gladstone to Lord Clarendon on 18 January 1869’

¹²⁴ BL GP Add MS 44249 fol.116, ‘Gladstone to Archbishop Henry E .Manning on 16 November 1869’

¹²⁵ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, (Great Britain: The Penguin Press, 1999), p. 67.

¹²⁶ BL GP Add MS 44541 fol. 179, ‘Gladstone to Sir Henry Elliot 18 August 1872’

Gladstone's correspondence with Edwin Freshfield¹²⁷ that not only emphasized his 'lively interest' to the Eastern Churches but also affirmed his standpoint on the condition of the Turkish Empire:

I cannot regard the Mussulman rule in Europe as normal or permanent, but I do believe that their administrative system is improved through their finance is not & in Asia I have ever supposed they had a greater chance of duration with a fairer field. I must own that no case can I desire to see this country taking charge of Constantinople. We have enough, to say the least, on our hands.¹²⁸

Gladstone gave a clear indication of his 'bag and baggage' fervour and what he foresaw for Turkish rule in Europe five years later. Gladstone's main concern for the British support to Turks coincided with the Islamic principles behind the Turkish governance on the Christian subjects. Implying Irish affairs as his ministry's main concern, he appreciated the establishment of the Bulgarian national Church. 'The Church of Rome we know, the Church of England we know, Protestant Nonconformists we know: but of an Eastern Church proselytizing in the West we know nothing' Gladstone asking Musurus Pasha to keep the affair under control for the 'sympathy' between the English Churchman.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, Gladstone's apprehension was 'the political danger' of the Bulgarian schism that 'will bring in Russia to meddle in the religious concerns of the Turkish Empire under the plea of

¹²⁷ Gladstone defined Edwin Freshfield as 'a member of a legal firm highly respected in Constantinople & one with which my family have long been connected as their confidential advisers.' BL GP Add MS 44541 fol 27, 'Mr. Gladstone to Constantine Musurus on 2 January 1872.

¹²⁸ BL GP Add MS 44540 fol. 162, 'Gladstone to Edwin Freshfield on 13 November 1871'

¹²⁹ Ibid.

ecclesiastical communion.’¹³⁰ He would keep this reticent stance until the ‘sheer shock’ of the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876 which would prove the validity of his humanitarian assertions.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Agatha Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1871-1876*, II, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1952), ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 2 January 1873’, p. 368.

¹³¹ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 278.

VI. W. E. Gladstone and the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-78

Defeated in the 1874 election by Disraeli, Gladstone resigned as leader of the Liberal party and it was generally assumed that he had retired. Later in his life, he recalled 'I was most anxious to make the retirement of the ministry. I had served for more than forty years. My age 65', he wrote with a desire for 'an interval between parliament and the grave.'¹ To Gladstone, however, retirement was not an indication of 'inactivity.'² Instead, he sought to concentrate on theological studies and reflection. Underlying the disputes between Liberal Party over Vatican papal infallibility, it seems logical for Gladstone as a believing Christian, with an intensity of religious commitment to set about to refute with the publication of the Vatican Decrees.³ 'The religious question generally, with the Church of England', Shannon notes was 'at the brink of a most serious crisis'⁴ which Gladstone feared would constitute a new danger 'strapping up of the relations between the party and himself.'⁵ This moral reproach revealed an intertwined evolution of Gladstone's religious and political views which was therefore the basis of empathy with Eastern Christians and spiritual attitude to the Ottoman affairs. In this respect, Matthew assesses Gladstone's position 'more defensive' and 'his political activity after 1875 took the form of a series of 'campaigns' each with its peculiar justification.'⁶ Gladstone also later admitted that 1874 was to him 'a sort of

¹ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 498.

² Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix, p. xxvii.

³ W.E.Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Political Allegiance: A Political Expostulation*, (London: John Murray, 1874) ; W. E. Gladstone, *Vaticanism: An answer to replies and reproofs*, (London: John Murray, 1875)

⁴ Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, p. 151.

⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1871-1876*, II, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1952), 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 7 December 1874', pp.461-2.

⁶ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix, p. xxiv.

compromise “without prejudice.”⁷ By contrast, the year 1875 was, in his view ‘an important one’ in establishing his freedom where he had made some progress by resigning the leadership.⁸

During his tenure in Downing Street, Disraeli’s vision of British imperial and foreign policies, including his attitude to the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78, differed significantly from that of Gladstone’s non-interventionist policies for the Empire and approaches to crucial issues in foreign affairs. Departing from Disraeli’s speech in Crystal Palace in 1872⁹, historians have tended to see Disraeli’s assertive imperial thinking associated with his official biographer’s definition as, ‘the famous declaration from which the modern conception of the British Empire takes its rise.’¹⁰ The scholarship, however, seems largely convinced that Disraeli’s imperial ideas did not go as far as ‘a forward policy’– which was ‘certainly no general policy of expansion.’¹¹ Even in his later years of administration this is evident the fact that he only shared the responsibility with his Cabinet for the Zulu and Afghan Wars.¹² Beyond the criticism of Disraeli’s views on imperialism, it is nevertheless true that when Disraeli became Prime Minister, his ‘major concerns were the Indian Empire and British foreign policy in the East.’¹³ What emerges from economic interests and actions overseas, the British had to take an exclusive position not only intervening in the Ottoman affairs but also applying *a fortiori* to British policy towards the Porte in the light of strategic considerations.

⁷ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 498.

⁸ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix, p. 92, ‘29 December 1875’

⁹ Thomas.E. Kebbel, (ed.), *Selected Speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, (London: Longsman, 1882), Vol. II, pp 529-534.

¹⁰ George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. V: 1868-1876, (New York: The Macmillan Company), pp. 196-7.

¹¹ Ian St. John, *Disraeli and the Art of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 206.C.C. Eldridge, *The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868-1880*, (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 179.

¹² Ian St. John, *Disraeli and the Art of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 206.

¹³ C.C. Eldridge, *The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868-1880*, (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 179.

Regardless of imperialistic expansionist aims in the Ottoman territories and adopting Palmerston's mantle, Disraeli was nevertheless a supporter of upholding the integrity of Ottoman Empire in order to safeguard the routes to India and Russian Pan-Slavism. This is especially apparent in the case of Egypt. In 1875 the French Government refused to interfere, the French association fell through raising the money, and the Khedive committed to sell his shares to the British Government for £4m.¹⁴ When, therefore, Disraeli had the opportunity to purchase of the Khedive's Suez Canal Shares, it comes clear that Disraeli dismissed the idea of British intervention of Egypt.¹⁵ On the other hand, this motive contributed to Disraeli's prestige and 'was just sort of gesture he enjoyed and served to symbolize Britain's commitment to its Indian Empire.'¹⁶

Yet, Gladstone received 'the amazing news of a purchase outright of the Suez Canal Shares' in spite of his apprehension for 'grave consequences if not done in concert with Europe.'¹⁷ Looking back on Gladstone's personal holdings of the Egyptian Tribute Loans of 1854 and 1871, it seems logical to approve his close attention to the Egyptian affairs.¹⁸ Gladstone accepted the significance of Egypt but he argued against British military occupation asking 'was it necessary to move'¹⁹ which would remain as the main irony for ordering a forward policy in his second premiership. In regards to the former state of things, he noted the company was doubly subject by law to Egypt with Turkey and 'the unsettling force lay in the maintenance power. They have ample means of action which led them. Nearly a united Europe represented the common interest. Sufficiency of control tried and proved the

¹⁴ Robert Blake, *Disraeli*, (London: Eyre & Spotswood, 1966), p. 583.

¹⁵ Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy, From Disraeli to Blair*, p. 27.

¹⁶ Ian St. John, *Disraeli and the Art of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 186.

¹⁷ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., pp. 83-4, '26 November 1875'

¹⁸ Matthew noted that Gladstone 'bought £ 45.000 of Egyptian Tribute Loan at 38, probably in October 1876.'
Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 266

¹⁹ BL GP Add MS 44664 fol. 25 'Suez Canal Shares Purchase' on 21 February 1876

guaranties of 1872.’²⁰ There were many persuasive reasons, nevertheless, to attract Gladstone’s attention. These included their ‘rights & liabilities as shareholders, reasons for proceeding, facts of Egyptian finance & prospect as to the 5%, policy of Government as to the status of Canal, cause of hast, justification of laws and mode of raising the measure.’²¹ His article entitled *Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East* published in 1877 was based on a criticism against the Conservative attitude to imperialism with the purchase of the Suez Canal shares arguing that ‘our first site in Egypt’ would turn out to be ‘the almost certain egg of a North African Empire’ in 1875.²² Despite Gladstone’s misgivings on the Egyptian self-government and nationalists, he nonetheless preserved his prevailing ‘sentiment of Egypt for the Egyptians’²³ that he bound in the international affairs. On 24 July 1882, he declared that ‘We should not forget the liberties of the Egyptian people’ while he was clarifying the British position on the vote of credit:

Our purpose will be to put down tyranny and to favour law and freedom; and we shall cherish something of the hope that it may yet be given to Egypt, with all her resources, and with the many excellent qualities of her peaceful and peace-loving and laborious people, to achieve in the future, less, perhaps, of glory, but yet possibly more happiness than she did once achieve when, in a far-off and almost forgotten time, she was the wonder of the ancient world.²⁴

²⁰ BL GP Add MS 44664 fol. 35, ‘Former State of things’ on 21 February 1876.

²¹ Ibid.

²² William E. Gladstone, ‘Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East’, *Nineteenth Century*, II (August 1877), p. 16

²³ Agatha Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, Volume I, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 326-7, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 4 January 1882’

²⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 272 (24 July 1882), cc1574-619.

Gladstone's aims for the British presence in Egypt within the frame of human rights and policy towards the Porte will be discussed in detail in a subsequent section. In 1875, however, it should be remarked here that Gladstone still adhered to the British traditional approach to Turkish sovereignty. For instance, when rumours began to spread that Disraeli's ministry planned to occupy Egypt following the news of the purchase of the Canal shares, there is an indication from his reading of Wolffers' study²⁵ in the same week that Gladstone was concerned about the possibility for the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. Besides, the purchase was one of the breaking points in both the nature and conduct of relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. Rather than the efforts to preserve the status quo at the Straits, the strategic importance of the Suez Canal to control it and protect the routes to India became the primary concern for the British policy towards the East. Along with new political circumstances subsequent to the Near Eastern Crisis, a redefinition of British foreign policy placed by Gladstone and Lord Granville took place in the 1880s. It was with this juncture that the strategic weight was given to the protection of Suez Canal and Egypt instead of a defensive policy for Ottoman territorial integrity.

Faced with exceptional economic and political problems inherited from the past, there is little doubt that the Ottoman Empire started to live through its gloomiest years during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875-8. The Turkish governors encountered not only financial crisis due the Sultan's bankruptcy in 1875 but also had to deal with nationalist uprisings which were perceived as the biggest threat to Ottoman sovereignty. It is, therefore, apparent that the alliance with the British was not a choice but rather a necessity for the salvation of the Ottoman Commonwealth. The Ottoman authorities, accordingly, welcomed the return of the

²⁵ Baron Fr. Von Wolffers, *Turkey's fall the decline of England: A suggestion and a warning*, (1875) in Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., pp. 85, '1 December 1875'

Conservatives to power and ‘viewed it as a sign of a return to their traditional policy.’²⁶ Of particular importance is the view of Disraeli as the Prime Minister who had believed the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was important for the European balance of power and he seemed to resemble Palmerston in Anglo-Ottoman affairs. His main goal since the 1850s was an effective foreign policy that supported imperial expansion subsequent to a period of liberal appeasement. In comparison with Gladstone and the liberals, Disraeli’s Turcophile policies not only in the East were derived from his sympathy to the Orient but also a continuation of values and principles of Palmerston. Unlike Gladstone, Disraeli’s sympathy for nationalist movements was very limited to which he regarded them as a threat to European order and ‘he did not think that every race or nation had right to self-determination while respecting indigenous rights and identities.’²⁷ Notwithstanding his adherence to uphold the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, however Blake, points out that Disraeli’s pragmatic approaches even reach over the ‘Ottoman partition as a possible solution in the interests of the great powers, not for the sake of the oppressed Christians.’²⁸ There is indeed a marked difference between Disraeli attitudes towards the Eastern Question which was far from Gladstone’s moral concerns inspired by Turkish maladministration for the national inspirations of Slav peoples. This difference between the two statesmen’s political views and sensibilities towards the Ottoman Christians is especially apparent throughout the questions of Danubian principalities, Crete and would become more prominent in the years immediately following the Disraeli’s second premiership.

In 1875, the insurrections in Bosnia-Herzegovina had hastened the slide of Ottoman bankruptcy and had further implications for attitudes towards the Porte. Despite earlier

²⁶ Tokay, ‘Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone’, p. 323.

²⁷ Quinault, *British Prime Ministers and Democracy, From Disraeli to Blair*, p. 27.

²⁸ Blake, *Disraeli*, pp. 579-80.

failures of the reforms, the uprising in Bosnia had showed the European powers of the difficulties of Turkish government in reforming her provinces which was still causing social instability and civil unrest. Apart from the Ottoman reforms, some memoranda and notes were created in order to reform the Ottoman government under the collective actions of the Great Powers. On 30 December 1875 Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, presented a Note to the Turks, which is commonly known as Andrassy's Note, that reminded the Ottomans of unfulfilled promises of reform and suggesting a series of practical concessions based on the consulate's recommendations.²⁹ Britain had supported the Note based on the balance of power in Europe and it seems clear that this preference was to prevent further complications and possible actions for the Austro-Hungarian and Russian action against the Ottoman Empire.³⁰ It is true all the same that Disraeli approached the Note pragmatically in order to prevent the expansion of the Dreikaiserbund rather than a desire for peace and regarded it 'as a dangerous breach in the spirit and the letter of the clauses of the Treaty of Paris which disclaimed any collective right of interference in the internal affairs of Turkey.'³¹ Notwithstanding this, he also assessed the context as 'embarrassing' as it included agricultural recommendations which 'bore unpalatable analogies to Irish demands' indicating autonomy.³² Gladstone on the other hand was adopting a strong and decided line with such hopes for the Concert of Europe and particularly concerned in the case of Christian subjects in Turkey. He pointed out the Porte failed to implement the 'promised' reforms after the Crimean War and added that

²⁹ Seton Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics*, p. 31.

³⁰ Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914*, pp. 102-3; Rodogno, *Against Massacre Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*, p. 252.

³¹ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation.*, p. 20.

³² *Ibid*, p. 20.

Europe, the Christian conscience, and the conscience of mankind will expect some other sort of security for the redress of great and dreadful grievances than mere words can afford; and however desirous we may be to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire, that integrity and independence can never be effectually maintained unless it can be proved to the world—and proved not by words, but by acts—that the Government of Turkey has the power to administer a fair measure of justice to all its subjects alike, whether Christian or Mahomedan.³³

Since the Crimean War, Gladstone's thinking about the Ottoman Empire had been consistent factor which reflected his underlying deep concern as to the rights of protection over all non-Muslim subjects. Gladstone's speech, in fact, was deemed to be a 'vindication'³⁴ of the policy that the Turkish government had failed to actively implement reforms which presents ample evidence of this distrust. He did, however, promoted the religious equivalent between Muslim-Christian subjects all over the Empire and this set of relevant background beliefs helped to justify Gladstone's approach to British policy towards the Porte. In his passion for religious freedom, Gladstone showed a sympathy not only to Christian subjects with biblical faith but also seemingly sincere to the Muslim community. Nonetheless, it became apparent that Gladstone was becoming increasingly irritated with the unresolved Ottoman problems; all the same, he adhered to the principle of preserving her territorial integrity and political independence. To Gladstone, Disraeli's rejection of the Berlin Memorandum was also a critical juncture which implied their disengagement from the Concert of Europe in respect of Ottoman affairs.

³³ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 227 (8 February 1876), cc52-114.

³⁴ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 103, '8 February 1876'

On 30 March 1876, Gladstone was particularly interested in Stratford de Redcliffe's appeal³⁵ in *The Times* on the British policy towards the Porte following the declaration of Turkish debt and the commencement of the insurrection in Herzegovina. Underlying his deep concern on the 'volcanic movement and destructive effects of the Eastern Question', Stratford de Redcliffe's suggestion was not to leave the Turkish Empire entirely alone but to enforce the Sultan 'to meet fair demands of the Christian Powers and to remove the grievances of its Christian subjects.'³⁶ It is, nevertheless, true that much of the inspiration for Gladstone's actions and thoughts on Ottoman affairs came from his mentor, Stratford de Redcliffe. Since the Greek question in the 1820s, it was Canning's humanitarian priority and desire for moral insistence of British to be decisive within the Concert of Europe which had greatly impressed Gladstone.

As the height of the crisis in Bulgaria approached, Serb insurrections in Herzegovina and Bosnia in 1875 'had already aroused sympathetic interest in England within the general question of the position of Christians under Turkish rule.'³⁷ Furthermore, it can be argued that these events inspired some Bulgarian groups to move towards the idea of freedom and an independent Bulgaria which can be considered as a late repercussion of the French revolution amongst the Ottoman nations. Without question, the establishment of the national Church in 1871 had also helped to foster nationalists' aspirations to which Bulgarian priests had played a significant role throughout the uprising. Indeed, the religious identity of the Bulgarian Agitation was an important factor that provided a greater cause for humanitarianism and impetus for Christian intervention against oppressing Muslims and Turkish misrule.

³⁵ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 105, '30 March 1876'

³⁶ Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe, *The Eastern Question; a selection from his writings during the five years of his life with a preface by Arthur Penryhn Stanley*, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1881), pp. 6-9; *The Times*, 31 December 1875.

³⁷ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, (Great Britain: Robert Cunningham and Sons Ltd., Longbank Works, Alva, 1963), p. 36.

Although, the outbreak began in early April, it was newspaper reports that arouse a great deal of public feeling about the incident and as a result caused a sensation. Immediately after the news of the Bulgarian insurrection reached London on 26 May, Lord Stratford urgently requested to meet with Gladstone and they had a long conversation over Turkey & the East.³⁸ Despite his growing doubts about the atrocities, it is highly probable that Gladstone's attitude towards the Eastern affairs was influenced by Lord Stratford's information. According to *The Times* report:

The Mussulmans are arming, or being armed in the towns, and the Christians are scared of them and compelled to take to the open country...The Government of the Porte, in the meanwhile, strains every nerve to stifle the Bulgarian insurrection by limiting it to its present locality...The Softas, in consideration of the efforts made by the government for the subjugation of the Bulgarian Insurgents whom they describe as the enemies of Islamism.³⁹

Disraeli's silence and impassive manner towards the atrocities, on the other hand, gradually led an indignant and emotional opposition attack from Gladstone on Balkan affairs.⁴⁰ As Shannon put it, 'Gladstone was indignant at Disraeli's evasion, but Lord Granville was not encouraging and the government's triumph on the withdrawal of the Berlin Memorandum sent Gladstone back to his Homer and theology.'⁴¹

Referring to a *Daily News* report on the 23 June, it was the Liberal William E. Forster who first brought the Bulgarian question to the attention of the Commons respecting 'the cruelties

³⁸ BL GP Add MS 44450 fol. 117, 'Stratford de Redcliffe to Gladstone on 26 June 1876', Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., pp. 128-9, '26 May 1876'

³⁹ 'The Crisis in Turkey', *the Times*, 26 May 1876.

⁴⁰ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 132, '9 June 1876'

⁴¹ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, p. 93.

alleged to have been committed by the Turkish troops in the suppression of the insurrection in Bulgaria.⁴² Six days later, Gladstone was more concerned with de Redcliffe's remark upon hearing the 'sad accounts of Turkish authorities in Bulgaria' on which Stratford was 'inclined to think them reliable enough to go before the public' but predicting the black clouds would bring thunder storm in the Eastern skies.⁴³ During these days, Gladstone devoted himself to a study of the issue, regularly reading the Eastern Question papers and discussing the Ottoman affairs with Lord Granville. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons on 31 July 1876 has a significant place in Gladstone's involvement with the Bulgarian issue.⁴⁴ In this session, he frequently referred to the Crimean War policy, in order to compensate for circumstances since Palmerston's time with the 'great ability of extinguished diplomatist' Stratford De Redcliffe in order to find 'an honourable solution'⁴⁵ to the Eastern Question particularly addressing the Turkish authorities' ineffectiveness and failures to reform during the nineteenth century. Besides, he declared hopefully to maintain the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire in the interests of general peace.⁴⁶ To Gladstone, the basis of British policy towards the Porte was the alliance with the 'morally responsible' European Powers as in the Crimean War and 'the real remaining question—is not whether the supremacy of the Porte can be established in its ancient form as a supremacy of administration, but whether its political supremacy in some improved... for measures conceived in the spirit and advancing in the direction of self-government.'⁴⁷ Nonetheless, there was an ambiguity and contradiction in his vindication of territorial integrity and the

⁴² *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 230 (26 June 1876), cc424-6, 'Turkey-Alleged Massacre of Bulgaria in Bulgaria-Question'; 'The Insurrection in Turkey', *Daily News*, 23 June 1876.

⁴³ BL GP Add MS 44450 fol. 219, 'Stratford de Recliffe to Mr. Gladstone' on 29 June 1876.

⁴⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 231 (31 July 1876), cc126-225, 'Resolution'

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

desire for the self-government to be given to the oppressed nationalities in the Balkans under the Ottoman rule instead of urging complete independence. Gladstone's idea for the self-government within the context of British Empire as in Transvaal and Ireland appear to run in parallel with the Ottoman case but with exceptions. In regards to imperial policy, Biagini proposes there seem to be 'a life-long preference for self-government rather than direct rule, and for conciliation rather than repression. He insisted that the Empire was essentially a community of countries held together by loyalty to British culture and by shared economic interests in a free trade world.'⁴⁸ Ian St. John agrees with this suggestion in that Gladstone believed that 'a unique quality of the British was their capacity for responsible self-government.'⁴⁹ There can be little doubt that Gladstone's mistrust to Turkish statesman, the social structure of the Ottoman society along religious lines, the financial strain on the empire and the humanitarian concerns were main reasons why Gladstone was anxious about Turkish leanings to preserve her own power in the provinces rather than granting self-government rights. It is evident that he certainly thought that 'the power of free government has been found perfectly effectual to deal with the difficulty', and believed that 'a survey of the whole circuit of Turkish Empire points out to us in the most distinct manner, that it is in the direction of free local government, and in that direction alone, that we can seek a remedy for the present disorder.'⁵⁰

Whilst paying particular attention to the British policy, Gladstone's anxiety and concern for the British attitude towards the Porte is also apparent in certain and significant passages of Gladstone's subsequent pamphlets and articles. For instance, in his *Bulgarian Horrors'*

⁴⁸ Eugenio Biagini, *Gladstone*, (London: Macmillan, 200), p. 85.

⁴⁹ St. John, *Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 225.

⁵⁰ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 231 (31 July 1876), cc126-22.

pamphlet, addressing the session on 31 July, he gave clear definition as to what the policy of Disraeli's ministry over Turkish affairs:

The Prime Minister promptly replied that territorial integrity would be found virtually to mean the *status quo*. Now the territorial integrity means the retention of a titular supremacy, which serves the purpose of warding off foreign aggression. The *status quo* means the maintenance of Turkish administrative authority in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria. Territorial integrity shuts out the foreign state; the *status quo* shuts out the inhabitants of the country and keeps (I fear) everything to the Turk, with his airy promises, his disembodied reforms, his ferocious reforms and his daily, gross and incurable misgovernment. This, then, is the latest present indication of British policy, the re-establishment of the *status quo*.⁵¹

Much later in life, Gladstone saw himself as 'the only person surviving in the House of Commons who had been responsible for the Crimean war' and regarded his criticism over the policy of the government as 'an opposition without hope' instead of a hostility as Disraeli assumed.⁵² It is, nevertheless, true that the existing literature does not emphasize enough Gladstone's attachment of special significance to the Crimean War. Gladstone, indeed, affirmed the priority of his concern for the Eastern Christians and proved that his decision to stimulate the public opinion arose when he 'learned from the announcement of a popular meeting to be held in Hyde Park that the game was a foot and the question was alive.'⁵³ In addition to Gladstone's demand for the self-determination, it is fair to analyse how significant the religious considerations were in his solution to the Eastern Question. For instance, he

⁵¹ Gladstone, 'Bulgarian Horrors and The Question of the East', pp. 36-7.

⁵² BL GP Add MS 44790 fol.112, 'Retirement'

⁵³ BL GP Add MS 44790 fols.112-3, 'Retirement'

compared the Principalities to Bosnia-Herzegovina and rejected to consider the situation as a question of religion. He, however, believed that it was ‘a mere difference of religion, if it stands alone, does not constitute a hopeless difficulty.’⁵⁴ Since there was a great difference of proprietary rights, which led to a sharp conflict in the Bosnia and Herzegovina society, Gladstone regarded the disturbances as a question of agrarianism rather than religion. Dealing with the land question, therefore, the law and regulations in respect to the Land Settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina was also particularly important for Gladstone’s second ministry.⁵⁵ Since the Turkish government adhered to Islamic law and principles, Gladstone strongly believed that the persistence of discrimination between Christian and Muslim subjects was a major concern for him. In the case of Bulgaria, however, Gladstone’s apprehension was regarding ‘the cruelties in Bulgaria’ and the responsibility of the government who he assumed, would ‘likely to go to the root of the matter.’⁵⁶ In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* on 27 October 1876, Gladstone clarified the reason why he rendered an act of justice particularly in the name of Christian subjects,

in my opinion the Jews in the Slav countries in Turkey were entitled to every right that may be conferred upon the general population, whether Christian or Mohameden: that I claimed his rights for the whole population, without any distinction or any race or creed on the basis of justice and not religion: than when I spoke or wrote of Christians I mean the inhabitants of disturbed Turkish provinces using the term Christians because they formed a majority, just as I might use the term Englishman for the sake of the convenience, including in it Scotch or Irish: that it was my

⁵⁴ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 231 (31 July 1876), cc126-225.

⁵⁵ BL GP Add MS 44625 fols. 145-151 Foreign Office papers 1880-82, Translations of Law and regulations regarding the Land Settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (Obtained from the Austrian Embassy, 6 December 1880)

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

intention to give expression publicly to these sentiments an opportunity serving, and that I would communicate in this sense with Bulgarian to prevent.⁵⁷

Until publishing his 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet on 5 September 1876, there is little doubt that many decisions had taken place in Gladstone's mind concerning the Turkish government and her relation with the non-Moslem minorities. It is nonetheless the case that the news of Turkish atrocities revived Gladstone's attention once more towards the Eastern affairs at the highest level. His correspondence with Aristarchi Bey, Ottoman diplomat⁵⁸ and J. Laffan Hanley, editor of *Le Journal Stamboul* at Constantinople⁵⁹ indicates Gladstone's interest in and sensitivity towards the rights of the Eastern Christians as well as newspaper information as a confirmation of the correctness of his decision on Turkish atrocities. It is clear that Gladstone, was not clearly convinced with the report by Edib effendi as the Ottoman official account of the events which he considered as 'a sheer & gross mockery'⁶⁰ or assurances from Henry Elliot.⁶¹ In July 1876, Disraeli had already declared that it was Bashi-bozuks, the irregular army troops, who were in charge of the massacres, not the Ottoman government, and Elliot 'was using his influence with the Turkish Government to prevent, as much as he possibly could these distressing scenes' in the ministerial report.⁶² Nonetheless, Disraeli's

⁵⁷ BL GP Add MS 44452 fol. 27, 'Jewish Community at Constantinople', *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October 1876

⁵⁸ Aristarchi Bey had asked Gladstone's support during the Cretan question. BL GP Add MS GP 44402 fol. 315 'Aristarchi Bey to Gladstone in 1864'; As the author of a corpus of Ottoman legislation and Aristarchi Bey was seen respectable by Gladstone as he summed up the hopes and aspirations of all non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte and forward his oversight to Sultan. BL GP Add MS 44451 fol. 11 'Gladstone to Aristarchi Bey on 29 July 1876'

⁵⁹ J. Laffan Hanley sent information and reports directly to Gladstone on the atrocities, BL GP Add MS 44451 fol. 38, 'J. Laffan Hanley to Gladstone on 10 August 1876'

⁶⁰ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 148, '18 August 1876'; Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1871-1876*, II, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 20 August 1876', p. 1.

⁶¹ In his letter, Elliot even admitted his position 'rather an advocate for autonomy in the Insurgent Turkish provinces' by pointing out 'but I do not think that those who brought forward that view have properly viewed the practical difficulties.' BL GP Add MS 44451 fol. 21, 'Henry Elliot to Mr. Gladstone on 5 August 1876'

⁶² *Ibid*, *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 230 (17 July 1876), cc1486-95, 'Ministerial Statement'

tolerance of the Bashi-Bozuks' suppression of the massacres where necessary, marked a British departure from the alliance with the Great Powers since the 1856 treaty and a lack of a long-lasting solution.⁶³ This development further raised unfavourable repercussions for the Disraeli ministry as well as for the diplomacy of the Ottoman Empire. Without question, the moral fervour for the recognition of obligations for the subject races of the Ottoman Empire as a significant aspect of Gladstone's human rights policy, primarily led him to take a part in these events. Gladstone, on the other hand, clearly felt fully entitled to declare economic and political factors such as the failure of the Turkish reforms, the Ottoman financial debt and Turkish maladministration as an opportunity to denounce the policies of Disraeli government. As it was in the 'Plenty of Work on Hand'⁶⁴ cartoon, Gladstone is shown, axe in hand (a reference to his tree-felling hobby), in front of a tree labelled "Turkish misrule". Three other trees are labelled drink, "lords", and "Welsh Church". Gladstone had become a liberator of the suppressed Ottoman nations and he was on a rescue mission.

The question still remains as to what extent Gladstone was an opportunist who sought to return back to active politics and whether his political practice during Bulgarian Agitation was very much in nature of an afterthought. Morley's depiction of Gladstone's role was naturally cast in the light of a heroic picture. It may be, as Shannon suggests, that the – 'Bulgarian Horrors was a consequence of opportunism, not of insight'⁶⁵, a popular politics point of view that highlighted Gladstone's ability to engage with the labouring masses which was largely shared by later historians. James Perkins, for instance, defines the agitation as 'a

⁶³ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 230 (27 July 1876), c1970.

⁶⁴ See Appendices, Figure 1, *Punch* caricature of years 1876-1877, Drawing, 'Plenty of Work on Hand' (a caricature of Gladstone) by Sir Francis Carruthers Gould, available at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O144529/drawing-plenty-of-work-on-hand/>

⁶⁵ Shannon, *Gladstone: God and politics*, p. 281

great moral crusade underpinned by a calculated political opportunism.⁶⁶ However, Karaca argues that Gladstone's retirement was just 'a depiction' and the news of the Bulgarian atrocities was a great opportunity to achieve personal power.⁶⁷ It is more probable to accept Saab's unique case in that emotional and political drives were prime motivations to Gladstone rather than inferring that his actions were opportunist calculations, which earlier historians have largely overlooked.⁶⁸ The only exception to this rule was A. J. P Taylor who defined Gladstone's attitude as the 'politics of emotionalism.'⁶⁹ What always pre-occupied Gladstone was the question as to the situation of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Gladstone was adamant because since he was greatly exercised over the whole Eastern question, he was involved in more than simply the question of whether the Bulgarian pamphlet would cause a great sensation. In that lies the key understanding of this thesis which argues that Gladstone's endeavour for Ottoman Christian minorities was not limited to Bulgaria. Furthermore, there was a much closer relationship between his role and foreign affairs with the Porte than historians have tended to acknowledge. On 6 September 1876, Gladstone's 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet did not only become a symbol of Bulgarian agitation propaganda but it was also a culmination point for his engagement with the Ottoman affairs. The pamphlet, in this regard, was the milestone in the British attitudes based on the logic of past with indignation and liberal dissent over foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire.

'On the ground of the Bulgarian Massacres and Disraeli government's conduct on them' and reflecting Lord Granville's suggestions, Gladstone was eager to participate in the affairs with

⁶⁶ James Andrew Perkins, 'British liberalism and the Balkans, c. 1875- 1925', PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2014, p. 50.

⁶⁷ Karaca, *Buyuk Oyun: Ingiltere Basbakani Gladstone'nun Osmanli'yi yikma plani*, p. 150.

⁶⁸ Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856-78*.

⁶⁹ A.J.P. Taylor, *The trouble makers: dissent over foreign policy, 1792-1939*, (London: H.Hamilton, 1957), p. 75.

a 'virtuous passion.'⁷⁰ Following his conversation with John T. Delane, the editor of *The Times* at Granville's house, he confided to his wife that, 'We, he and I, are much of one mind in thinking the Turks must go out of Bulgaria though retaining a titular supremacy if they like-between ourselves Granville a little hangs from this but he could not persuade me to hold back.'⁷¹ Lord Granville was mainly concerned with the content of the pamphlet that Gladstone 'was asking less than the entire principle of the self-government' so as was *The Times*. Gladstone, however, felt confident that all the papers recognised the pamphlet as a fact in the case.⁷² It was this fervour and moral exhaustion against the Turkish government which lead him to 'make tolerable play in writing Bulgarian Horrors' despite his bad health.⁷³

Gladstone's 'morally-based' rhetoric in his pamphlet was in line with his previous attitude as to the Turkish government but it was now more profound than ever. When the content of the pamphlet is analysed, therefore, it is obvious that he used racist tones in addressing the Turkish race and the 'deficiencies of Turkish Islam in mind.' Since he was pointing out 'the black day' that Turkish governance began to rule Christian communities in Europe, his definition that 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity' had played a key role in the humanist movement in the British society, but this turned out to be a strong anti-Turkish sentiment.⁷⁴ It is true that there is a contradiction between racist language in his pamphlet and Gladstone's humanitarianism. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that Gladstone had always had unresolved doubts as to the nature of Turkish rule and therefore the pamphlet was

⁷⁰ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 29 August 1876', p. 3.

⁷¹ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 218, '6 September 1876'

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 220, '7 September 1876'

⁷³ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 151, 31 August 1876'

⁷⁴ This sentiment was particularly accepted by Ottoman-centric approaches. Kemal Karpat, *the Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 142; Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 111.

the culmination of a traceable line of thought. A further consideration stressing the synthesis of Turkish race with Islam was that 'it's not a question of Mahometanism simply' he argued, 'but of Mahometanism compounded with the peculiar character of race.' This strengthens the idea that Gladstone regarded the belief as to capability of Turkish maladministration under Islamic rule for the non-Muslim minorities was a false premise from the beginning and the pamphlet had proved not only his anticipation over the years but was also a true manifestation of his humanitarian crusading.

Once this background has been established, the crucial question here is that, was it an acceptable tool for Gladstone to address the Turkish race in his rhetorical framework? It becomes clear that Gladstone's main criticisms were reserved for the Turkish administration. In order to secure the support of public opinion during the campaign, Gladstone had defined the Turkish race and explicitly referred to the history of the struggles to reform the governance of Turkey. He argued that the Turkish authorities were still ignorant as towards the rights of Christian subjects who were inseparably attached to the Ottoman Empire as a consequence of the Crimean War and of the Treaty of Paris of 1856. 'Indignation', he pointed out referring to Robert Bourke's assurance letter as the Under Secretary of the Foreign Office for Bulgarian agitation, 'indignation is froth, except as it leads to action; mere remonstrance is mockery.'⁷⁵ Gladstone set out this criticism against a broader background in relation with Disraeli government's intention of retaining the status quo or 'as you were policy'. Indeed, it was his considered opinion that:

The only two things that are worth saying, the Under-Secretary does not say. The first of them would have been that until these horrible outrages are redressed, and their authors punished, the British Government would withdraw from Turkey the moral and

⁷⁵ Gladstone, 'Bulgarian Horrors and The Question of the East', p. 35.

even material support we have been lending her against Europe. The other was, after crimes of so vast a scale and so deep a dye, the British government would no longer be a party to the maintenance of Turkish administration in Bulgaria.⁷⁶

By referring to the news coming from the new Sultan Abdulhamid II and the trustworthiness of reforms and constitutions, he criticised these constitutions, saying that they were not even ‘the oysters before dinner.’ Besides, it is fair to state that Gladstone generally referred to the story of the entangled Eastern Question and in the pamphlet he particularly attacks the insensitivity of the Disraeli government regarding Turkish misrule. Primarily, he made claims about the dependability, slowness and lateness of the correspondence from unofficial sources within the embassy at Constantinople and the network of consulates and vice-consulates of the British people. In respect of his claims about the Disraeli government, he legitimised himself with newspaper information; especially the *Daily News* correspondent. Gladstone addressed the reality of the atrocities and dependability of the sources coming from the Ottoman territories. By referring to the reports of the Turkish government and supporting the reliability of the reports from the *Daily News*, Gladstone disputed the claims in the reports of Turkish government. Gladstone stated that the *Standard* and the *Telegraph* were more favourable to Turkey in their coverage to Turkey in when compared to the *Times* and the *Daily News* which he regarded as supplying more accurate information. After he had identified the evidence, Gladstone widened his attack on Henry Elliot and Disraeli. In his words: ‘During this time, instead of preparing the papers and documents to be ready for instant presentation, whenever this might be permissible, they were left unprepared, so that after every reason and every pretext for withholding them had been exhausted, precious weeks were lost afresh in the necessary labours for, and of the press.’ He further stated that

⁷⁶ Ibid.

‘the efficient delivery of information’ and ‘improving the efficiency of the answers of the Prime Minister can be collected by Parliament and the public’, besides, ‘the responsibility that lays in the invaders of Bulgaria, to clarify the certain races Circassians and Bulgarians, to examine the ‘scenes’ like wholesale murders, rapes, tortures, burnings and crimes should be mitigated and softened.’⁷⁷

‘The pamphlet is alive & kicking’, Gladstone contentedly wrote to Lord Granville following publication, ‘four & twenty thousand copies were printed & they think it’s not at an end.’⁷⁸ The pamphlet was not only convincing but it also stirred the public against the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, evidence of a growing crisis of the public conscience began to multiply each day. Needless to say, Gladstone’s position was strengthened with ‘a sustained campaign of atrocity meetings’⁷⁹ and he progressively encouraged the public to unite around this humanitarian movement in order to react to the foreign affairs of Disraeli government and the tolerance to the Ottomans since the Crimean War. As Shannon notes, ‘the Bulgarian agitation developed suddenly and apparently spontaneously as the result of tragic events in a strange environment in countries remote from Britain; it was partly sponsored by men who did not normally take part in these agitations; it came remarkably quickly to the boiling point; and it influenced an unusual cross-section of opinion.’⁸⁰ In the autumn of 1876, a large part of Victorian public opinion assessed Lord Beaconsfield as the man responsible behind the ‘immoral’ policies of Britain in the Balkans. From the popular politics point of view, Milos Ković regards Gladstone’s role as a strategy at the demonstration was one of particular

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁸ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 7 September 1876’, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, p. 49.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. xi.

hostility ‘which Beaconsfield had provoked among the public’ instead of ‘British feelings’ and Disraeli’s control by the Jewish community.⁸¹

It is certainly true that, for whatever reason, Gladstone’s urge was the withdrawal of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. His moral fervour and conviction was a direct consequence of his famous and most memorable words, ‘Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.’⁸² The very depth of Gladstone’s indignation for the Turkish administration at this time has contributed to the development of a particular misinterpretation regarding Gladstone’s subsequent attitude towards the Turks. For instance, Sir Charles Adderley charged Gladstone of ‘turning the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe’ in his speech at Hanley.⁸³ Gladstone himself uttered words of a similar effect by saying that he meant to go no further than suggesting a long-lasting solution: ‘Charles Adderley simply fell into a gross blunder. The Turks to be removed from are mentioned in a list of civil and military employés. i.e Government officers. Just before, I speak of the Turkish executive power and of the future arrangements to be made with the ‘Mahometan minorities.’⁸⁴

Gladstone’s Bulgarian campaign and the rhetorical framework proceeded with public speeches and national meetings. There is little doubt that the Blackheath speech on 9 September 1876 can be considered as the culmination of his rhetorical intelligence and its repercussions amongst the audience. *The Illustrated London News* on 16 September 1876

⁸¹ Milos Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 147.

⁸² Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 554.

⁸³ BL GP Add MS 44452 fol. 87 ‘Mr. Gladstone and Sir Charles Adderley’, 21 October 1876.

⁸⁴ BL GP Add. MS 44452 fol. 82 ‘The Potteries’ 22 October 1876

published a photograph of Abdulhamid II taken during his visit to England following his proclamation by Messrs, W. and D. Downey of Newcastle and London as the New Sultan of Turkey together with a sketch from Gladstone's Blackheath Speech. This can be considered as the crossroads of two statesmen in the process of the determining Anglo-Ottoman relations.⁸⁵ Gladstone also appeared as a defender of the political concept of Victorian version of international civil rights and he stated that, 'the laws of justice know no distinction of country, of race, or of religion; and we ought to be satisfied with the proof of these atrocities, before we presume to denounce them.'⁸⁶ It is therefore he queried the actuality of the events in Bulgaria with the realism of the information from the press, while he publicly declared that the *Daily News* was the main acceptable and reliable source of news for up-to-date information of Turkish atrocities on her Christian subjects. With regards to Gladstone's discourse, Shannon notes that 'the real significance of the Blackheath speech, as far as Gladstone's personal relation to the agitation is concerned, lies in what he did not say, or refused to say.'⁸⁷ This raises an important point as to Gladstone's earnest sincerity in denouncing these atrocities but also calming down his strong language in order not to aggrieve Muslim community.

Gladstone began his speech by calling the public to unify under the banner of stopping the Bulgarian atrocities: 'I would venture to say it is important that we should be united; and those who may think that more might have been asked will perceive that in the Address it is the cessation of the atrocities, and the absolute prevention of their repetition, which are

⁸⁵ 'Abdulhamid II, The New Sultan of Turkey', 'Open-Air Meeting at Blackheath to hear Mr. Gladstone on Turkish Atrocities', *The Illustrated London News*, 16 September 1876, p. 273. Please see related sketch in Appendices, Figure 2.

⁸⁶ W. E. Gladstone, 'A speech delivered at Blackheath on Saturday, September 9th, 1876: together with letters on the question of the East', Bristol Selected Pamphlets, 1876, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, p. 116.

recognised as the paramount objects. Everything else is secondary...'⁸⁸ His words 'Let us speak only our own'⁸⁹ revealed the idea that the British nation should not be an accomplice to the Turkish atrocities. Rather the nation should oppose them in the name of humanity. He warned that 'the Turkish authorities in Bulgaria ought to be stopped; and those who do not stop them, if they have the power, will be responsible for them.'⁹⁰ As he defined 'the dimensions of the movement truly national,'⁹¹ he denied that a connection with the character of the movement with a political party was irrational. From these remarks, no matter what the reason behind his appeal, it is apparent that this sincerity showed he was far from any political boundaries as a public man and eager to fight for the struggle of global justice. In his words, 'For they feel that this question has a breadth and a height and a depth that carries it for out of the lower region of party differences, and establishes it on grounds, not of political party, not even of mere English nationality, not of Christian faith, but on the longest and broadest ground of all-the ground of our common humanity.'⁹² As Morley puts it, 'humanity was at the root of the whole matter; and the keynote of this great crusade was the association of humanity with a high policy worthy of the British name.'⁹³ It becomes clear that Gladstone was fully aware of giving assurance to the public in his speech. For example, he referred to the events in Crete and the ways how he had stirred up public sentiment over the issues surrounding the unification of Italy. He also tried to encourage the British public as well as the European states which included Russia, Germany, Austria, France and Italy to become

⁸⁸ Gladstone, 'A speech delivered at Blackheath', p. 6.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 13.

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 8.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 556.

and act as one.⁹⁴ In that respect, Gladstone's call to Europe to act together showed how important the Concert of Europe was in his Eastern Question policies. Furthermore, he called for Anglo-Russian cooperation in order to stop vital troop supplies by questioning the necessity of the Crimean War as he had done previously in his pamphlets. Most important of all, Gladstone tried to address the minds of the spectators in an intelligent manner and appeal to their hearts of the audience morally. This dual perspective enabled the audience to empathize with the Gladstonian way of thinking and help to greater understand his main intimate appeal. William T. Stead, editor of the *Northern Echo* and as one of the admirers of Gladstone's oratory, describes the strong impression that Gladstone's speech had upon him as follows: 'In eloquence, in lofty spirituality, in keen sagacity, and in earnest sympathy, Mr Gladstone's speech at Blackheath reveals the marvellous combination of qualities which have made Mr. Gladstone the idol of the popular heart, the heaven-sent leader of Englishmen whenever they have any serious work to do that must be done.'⁹⁵ Needless to say, his speech demonstrated his capability as the leader of Bulgarian Agitation campaign.

Gladstone concluded his speech, as an emotional crusader, who was determined to fulfil his humanitarian mission in Bulgaria until the end. Particularly, it is also fair to state that imposing the idea of the Concert of Europe instead of a Turkish alliance and intimacy with Russia meant the beginning of a departure from the traditional protectionist policy of the Ottoman Empire. Gladstone's definition, moreover, revealed that the Blackheath speech was the official announcement of this collective motion in Victorian society: 'As it has been a national movement in contradistinction from a party movement, so it has been a popular

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 24-25.

⁹⁵ W.T.Stead, *Mr. Gladstone, Part I*, (The Review of Reviews, vol. V, April, 1892), pp. 345-362 in <http://www.attackingthedevel.co.uk/reviews/glad1.php> accessed on 6 April 2014.

movement in contradistinction from an aristocratic movement.’⁹⁶ Gladstone’s diary entry after participating this extraordinary meeting made clear that the speech was a phenomenon.⁹⁷ In the aftermath of the Blackheath speech, the *Daily News* report on 11 September 1876 can be defined as extremely apprehensive particularly towards the Ottoman government. The Turcophobic discourse was now turned into a very favourable opinion of the Bulgarian Campaign:

At Blackheath Speech on 9 September like the pamphlet (which has been just published) his speech was vigorous invective against Turkish misgovernment in the Bulgarian provinces, against genocide as an instrument of repression and finally against the complicity to which the Tory government had acceded by its withholding of information from the British public, and by its offering of substantial support to the Sultan.⁹⁸

It is important to note that *Daily News* used strong language, as seen in the term ‘genocide.’ Along with this promotion, the appeal was heard by the Christian minorities as well as the British public. Gladstone’s attribution of religious elements and his enthusiasm for Balkan nationalist movements paved the way for the revolutionary movements and accommodating demands such as self-determination. Nonetheless, as Matthew states ‘Gladstone’s role in encouraging Balkan nations against ‘the unspeakable Turk’ was more ambivalent than his famous speech ‘bag and baggage’ suggested.’⁹⁹ It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone was always in favour of establishing local liberty and practical self-determination against Russian

⁹⁶ Gladstone, ‘A speech delivered at Blackheath’, p. 13.

⁹⁷ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 153, 9 September 1876.

⁹⁸ ‘The Turkish Atrocities in Bulgaria- Great Meeting at Greenwich’, *Daily News* on 11 September 1876; ‘Gladstone to the Front’, *Northern Echo* on 7 September 1876.

⁹⁹ Colin H.G Matthew, ‘Papers of the Prime Ministers of Great Britain Series Eight: The Papers of W. E. Gladstone’, Research Publications, An Imprint of Primary Source Media, conclusion.

aggression defending Ottoman territorial integrity along with the promotion of the emancipation of Christian subjects. Implicit in such a view is the concept of logical and consistent arguments. However, an examination of the events and public conscience, in effect, reveals that Gladstone's solution was unadaptable. It is true that he continued to keep his earlier arguments in terms of principle but Gladstone's Turcophobic discourse weakened his solution while Balkan people's national aspirations was in favour of full independence from Turkish rule. Besides that, he strengthened the key point that the British should cooperate with the European Powers for an intelligent and long lasting solution of the Eastern Question. His mentor Stratford de Redcliffe assured him that:

Your first idea of obtaining of beginning of a kind self-government for all the Turkish provinces embodied in an international document and marked by the right of an 'surveillance' on its proper execution would. I believe after all the best if properly combined and the Porte would accept it in preference to any other arrangement. The Turkish population is greatly separated against the Russians and with them against all Christians. They have been too much fanatised in the beginning of this war and now even the Sultan and his ministers are afraid of this feeling and of some communication against the Christians and do not go far beyond concessions demanded by Europe.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, the curious dichotomy in Gladstone's belief for self-determination in international law and the desire for the independence of Balkan nationalities is open to criticism. 'Public conscience' as Shannon coins the term merged with Gladstone's concern for Turkish

¹⁰⁰ BL GP Add. MS 44452 fols.88-89 'Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to Mr. Gladstone' 20 October 1876 from Constantinople.

maladministration during the Bulgarian agitation.¹⁰¹ It is also important to underline that there is, too, a marked parallel between Gladstone's deep involvement in Balkan affairs and his attitude towards Irish nationalism. Pointing out Gladstone's close link between 'politics of humanitarianism' and moral discourse in a similar vein, Biagini argues that the Bulgarian agitation became 'a trial run for the 1886 campaign for Home Rule.'¹⁰² After trying a number of approaches towards the Irish question since 1868, Gladstone's experience with the Eastern Question had sharpened his belief in self-government. There appear to be two main reasons why there was, nonetheless, no re-union in Irish and Balkan affairs. First reason relates to the Gladstone's mistrust towards the Turkish administration. Since 1858, he had argued that 'the true policy for Turkey is to decentralise'¹⁰³ for the greatest possible self-government within the framework of Ottoman authority. The Bulgarian atrocities had once more outraged his concerns about Turkish rule to which it had awakened his inspiration from Aristotle's virtue 'capacity to govern'. Gladstone anticipated the disintegration of Turkish rule in the Balkans but he still adhered to the principle of Ottoman territorial integrity. In the case of Ireland, Home Rule also meant not independence but autonomy from British government. In reviewing Gladstone's mind in 1885 and 1886, it was not 'oppression' of the British government unlike the Turkish but rather there were various factors in the context of liberal faith and party considerations. The second difference between the situation in Balkans and Ireland was simply the element of nationalism. While Gladstone 'romanticised Irish nationalism believing that Irish society was an 'organic whole', which could be guided to social reconciliation by its national leaders'¹⁰⁴, his sympathy to the Balkan nationalist awakening since his early career was associated with a question of Europe and humanity

¹⁰¹ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, p. 42.

¹⁰² Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, p. 40.

¹⁰³ Gladstone, 'The Past and Present Administrations', p. 556.

¹⁰⁴ St. John, *Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 342.

rather than nationalism. The spread of nationalist ideas and these self-destructive actions provided the greatest threat to the Ottoman sovereign and implicitly to international peace. To Gladstone, therefore, under the collective guarantees of the Concert of Europe, self-government for the Balkan peoples within the Ottoman system was perceived to be the best solution for the Eastern Question, likewise Home Rule for Irish affairs.

It was not only Gladstone's measures with respect to self-government and nationalism but also his attempts to address Irish grievances in relation to religion. Gladstone's synthesizing moral commitment and peaceful approach in foreign affairs was the key component in understanding for his attitudes along with a deep sense of religion. The belief as to British moral duty in Ireland was similar to Porte's obligation to introduce further reforms leading to full equality for non-Moslem population. There is, however, a marked difference in each case according to nature. Gladstone's so-called moral crusade on behalf of Eastern Christians was always perceived as to be antagonism against Islam and Muslim community. It is true that he continued to argue his concerns in terms of principle as to the question of sovereignty of Mahometan masters over the Christian races. The Bulgarian atrocities had strengthened the power of his earlier convictions. Gladstone stretched his criticism on the Sublime Porte's Islamic character of the state and his remark in 1853 as to 'the political solecism of Mahometans exercising despotic rule over twelve millions of our fellow Christians.'¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, this was not an inspiration of 'anti-Islamic bigotry' in spite of the fact that 'the protest was often couched in 'orientalist' language (contrasting 'the fatalism of Turkey' with 'the progressive [European] races of her Empire').¹⁰⁶ Gladstone further highlighted his ideas

¹⁰⁵ *The Times*, 13 October 1853, p. 7, 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer at Manchester'

¹⁰⁶ Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, p. 36.

relating to the Islamic character and the principles of governance in his article entitled 'Russian policy and the deeds in Turkestan.'¹⁰⁷ In this regard he observed:

The difficulty may in part be traced to the nature of Islam. The Anglo-Indian government exercises sway over a vastly larger number of Mahometans than inhabit all Turkistan: but they form a minority fused and scattered in the different portions of an enormous population...In Turkistan, Islam may be said to reign alone. It is virtue and moral subordination, as in India, nor in a forced and unnatural ascendancy as in European-Turkey. Of all the facts that can be applied to the same spirit and capacity of a Religion... It would be very unfair to judge of the social character and the capacities of Islam from an instance where it holds a position so radically false. Upon the whole history seems to show that the system has developed itself best and most congenially among the Slav races. Such was the case in Turkistan, the Russians seemed to have availed themselves the fall of the moral stringency by which in certain respects it is distinguished.¹⁰⁸

It was, indeed, at the time that Gladstone reflected his sincere feelings and conscience about the formation of an Islamic government with these comparisons. Most controversially, Gladstone pointed out that the structure of the Turkish rule which was facilitated with 'Mahomedan fanaticism' and 'oppression.' Gladstone's writings on Islam in his pamphlets have been largely ignored by historians who tend to concentrate on his Turcophobic rhetoric in his 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet.

¹⁰⁷ BL GP Add MS 44695 fols. 185-214, William E. Gladstone, 'Russian Policy and Deeds in Turkistan' *The Contemporary Review*, XXVII (November, 1876).

¹⁰⁸ BL GP Add MS 44695 fols. 186-7, 'Russian Policy and Deeds in Turkistan'

Stratford de Recliffe not only congratulated Gladstone for his ‘Turcoman pamphlet more than interest, with instruction and satisfaction in the principles of humanity’ but also had informed him that ‘Russian demand does include self-governing powers for the three Provinces; Bosnia, Montenegro and Montenegro.’¹⁰⁹ It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone’s Russophile tendencies raised questions and concerns by his contemporaries. Gladstone was much more aware of Russian imperialism but also accepted arbitration. The most logical explanation for Gladstone’s sympathy towards Russia was due to his enthusiasm for national aspirations of the Slav peoples against Turkish rule. Gladstone was much more aware that ‘by the Treaty of Kainardji, Catholicism not only intended her limits to the Danube, but Russia obtained the right of interfering in the Danubian Principalities of making representations about the Churches and Holy Places, and of intervening on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Porte.’¹¹⁰ Matthew suggests that Gladstone was ‘by no means an out-and-out Russophile’ and as to the policy in the Straits it was clear that ‘British interest independent of that Europe played into the hands of Russia, for it left Britain the prisoner of the Turks, which allowing Russians as the sole champions of Christians in the Balkans.’¹¹¹ In this regard, Gladstone strongly believed in concerted action and observed that

The first was that the abolition of the power for interference which previously existed, and which was lodged in the hands of Russia. If you wish for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the peace of Europe, for the sake of the obligations this country has

¹⁰⁹ BL GP Add MS. 44452 fols.126-28, ‘Lord Stratford De Recliffe to Mr. Gladstone’ on 14 November 1876, BL GP Add. MS 44452 fols.88-9 ‘Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to Mr. Gladstone’ on 29 October 1876, Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1871-1876*, II, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 2 November 1876’, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ BL GP Add MS 44664 fol.112, ‘Auta Fraus’

¹¹¹ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, pp. 276-7.

incurred, to close the Eastern Question it cannot be satisfactorily done except by action which shall be both united and real.¹¹²

Gladstone was sure with the policy towards the Porte that had declared by the country with 'great national attention.' However, he was ready to 'take the pride in British sole action when it was a question of favouring the Turkish Government against its Christian subjects and in being nothing of this necessity: pride was taken in our sole action...'¹¹³

Drawing what logic can be inferred from Gladstone's retrospective analyses and articles, it can be inferred by December 1876, when Gladstone was relatively clear about the emancipation on behalf of the Slavonic subjects of the Ottoman Empire. In his 'non-polemical' article¹¹⁴ 'Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Question'¹¹⁵, he stated his concerns about four Christian races under the dominion of the Porte: The Slavs, Wallachs of Rumania, Armenians with particular attention to Hellenic Provinces of Turkey. This was a constant desire of Gladstone since his mission in Ionian Islands:

I am firmly convinced that the antagonism of interests between them (the Hellenic Provinces) and the ruling Power, which many assert and assume, does not in truth exist. The condition of Turkey is bad as matters now are: what would it have been if the festering sore of the Greek Revolution had been permitted to pass, by neglect, into a gangrene I believe that Suzerainty over a large range of country would then have been better for both parties, than independence in a very small one: but that either the

¹¹² William E. Gladstone, 'Mr. Gladstone's resolutions and speech on the Eastern Question in the House of Commons', 7 May 1877, Bristol Selected Pamphlets, p. 24.

¹¹³ BL GP Add MS 44452 fol. 11, Gladstone to Sir J. A. Giles, 7 October 1876.

¹¹⁴ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 November 1876', p. 20.

¹¹⁵ BL GP Add MS 44695 fols. 416-61, 'Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem', W.E.Gladstone, 'Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem', *Contemporary Review*, December 1876.

one or the other was better than the doctrine that we have no more to do with a quarrel between the Sultan and his subjects than with any other similar quarrel, and then a practice in accordance with that doctrine. Why should we be alarmed at the sound of Suzerainty? It is a phrase of infinite elasticity. Even in the present Turkish Empire, Suzerainty exists in half-a-dozen different forms, as over Tunis, Egypt, Samos, Rumania, and Servia. What it implies is a practical self-management of all those internal affairs on which the condition of daily life depends, such as police and judiciary, with fixed terms of taxation, especially of direct and internal taxation, and with command over the levy of it. Where these points are agreed on, there is little left to quarrel about.¹¹⁶

Implicit in such an observation, it may be noted that in Gladstone's view: 'the Turks never could have established their dominion in Europe.'¹¹⁷ Gladstone, however, had always had great sympathy towards the Hellenic race. Along with 'the moral influence of French Revolution', Gladstone appreciated Greek national aspirations and the 'improvements effected in their language by progressive approximations to the ancient standard.'¹¹⁸ He was not only an enthusiastic follower of George Canning in the Greek struggle for freedom but also regarded his policy with 'the full significance of the step; and entered upon perhaps the boldest and wisest policy which has been exhibited by a British Minister during the present century.'¹¹⁹ Gladstone did admit, however, that his mission to the Ionian Islands gave him serious anticipation as to the assignment of Thessaly and Epirus to Greece, subject to the conditions of sovereignty and tribute. Along with his concern with the affairs of the Ionian

¹¹⁶ BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 457.

¹¹⁷ BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 424.

¹¹⁸ BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 430.

¹¹⁹ BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 435.

Islands that had put his mind into ‘a receptive and retentive attitude’¹²⁰ which led him, to remind Lord Granville that ‘When Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell proposed to the Cabinet in 1862 to give up the Protectorate of the Ionian Islands they also proposed that Turkey should be asked to give Thessaly and Albania, or Epirus to Greece, as tributary States- and the Cabinet without difficulty to agree to all.’¹²¹

Returning to his criticism as to British policy towards the Porte, Gladstone’s considered opinion related to Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston’s belief for ‘the obligation of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Power as paramount to the duty of granting to her afflicted subjects simple, broad, and effective guarantees for their personal and civil liberties.’¹²² He regretted this but accepted it as an undeniable feature ‘during the lifetime of his fellow-labourer to redeem’ which enabled him to undertake a belated defence. There appear to be three main reasons why Gladstone was anxious and head the reaction against such a policy: ‘the judgement of the Ottoman government, the Russian Pan-Slavism and the preference of Christian subjects from England with hope.’¹²³ In the case of Hellenic races, Gladstone became convinced that ‘the desire of the people was to be Greeks in polity, as they were Greeks in blood and feeling, but that as long as they could not be politically Greeks they preferred an association with the British Crown to any other association whatsoever.’¹²⁴ Indicating the religious links with Russia, he wrote to Lord Granville: ‘But I, and I believe you don’t agree with Lowe’s doctrine that to obtain proper guarantees from Turkey as to the government of its Christian subjects, is to break up the Treaty of 1856, whereas to take away

¹²⁰ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 19 November 1876’, p. 22.

¹²¹ Ibid, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 8 November 1876’, p. 18.

¹²² BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 448.

¹²³ BL GP Add MS 44695 fols.456-7.

¹²⁴ BL GP Add MS 44695 fol. 458.

two principles & give them to another power would clearly do so.’¹²⁵ That is, however, by no means a wholly British control instead ‘a cause of advocate’ relating to the freedom of Hellenic provinces. Gladstone, therefore, made it clear that he regarded his article ‘a contribution to the case but not to the controversy.’¹²⁶ The implications of his thoughts were more apparent for his future position as a Prime Minister in 1880. Along with Gladstone’s intense interest in the case, the concerted naval demonstration in Smyrna for the territory question of Thessaly marked a fundamental change in British policy towards the Porte.

It would be fair to state that the Bulgarian Agitation was immediately turned into a sentiment that connected the various strata of the British public in the light of Gladstone’s vision. ‘I have not your responsibilities to the party’ Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, ‘but I have for the moment more than your responsibilities to the country, in this sense that I feel myself compelled to advise from time to time upon the course of that national movement which I have tried hard to evoke, and assist in evoking.’¹²⁷ An anti-Turkish feeling in government policies towards the Porte was substantially high and Gladstone had to endeavour to explain this willingness publicly. For instance, Gladstone observed in Liverpool ‘when Othello was being acted, and the words were reached ‘The Turks are drowned,’ the audience rose in enthusiasm and interrupted the performance for some time with their cheering. These things are not without meaning.’¹²⁸ Since it turned out as a national question with St. James Conference, it was a manifestation of the sympathies of British public opinion and to Christian world. The Conference on the Eastern Question held on the 8 December 1876 organised by the Eastern Question Association, aimed ‘to consider the best means of

¹²⁵ BL GP Add MS 44171 fol.11, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone’ on 14 November 1876.

¹²⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 27 November 1876’, p. 24.

¹²⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 7 October 1876’, p. 13.

¹²⁸ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 628.

promoting the favourable progress of the Eastern question through the concert of the Powers and nations of Europe.’¹²⁹ While Gladstone was the main spokesman and regarded the meetings ‘great, notable and almost historical’¹³⁰, Anthony Trollope, Edward Freeman, Thomas Hardy, James Bryce, Thomas Carlyle, James Froude, and Charles Darwin¹³¹ were key figures from the Victorian intelligentsia. Beyond the members of the Houses of Parliament, it was reported that professors, tutors, the fellows of the Universities and public grammar schools, authors, artists, barristers-at-law, gentleman of scientific eminence, mayors, magistrates of counties and boroughs, members of corporations, trade-unionists and labourers, with ministers of religion of various denominations, were present at the conference in large numbers.¹³²

At this meeting, Gladstone assessed the features of traditional British foreign policy to the Ottoman Empire by addressing the misinterpretation of the Disraeli ministry whom he defined as ‘much more Turkish than the Turk itself.’¹³³ By referring to Disraeli’s speech in the Parliament on 31 July 1876, he stated that ‘it was under those circumstances that the country began to think it was time for them to take the matter into its own hands, and to throw if possible, some light into those minds which appeared to direct the Government.’¹³⁴ In that respect he highlighted the essentiality of public diplomacy in order to reverse traditional foreign policy which was also one of the purposes of the conference. He further stated that:

¹²⁹ BL 8028. AA, Eastern Question Association: Report of Proceedings of the National conference at St. James Hall, London: Direction of the Committee by James Clarke & Co., 13&14 Fleet Street, p. a-2.

¹³⁰ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 176, ‘8 September 1876’.

¹³¹ A list of the conveners and provincial towns represented in the conference published in a pamphlet of proceedings. See BL 8028. AA, Eastern Question Association: Report of Proceedings of the National conference at St. James Hall, London: Direction of the Committee by James Clarke & Co., 13&14 Fleet Street.

¹³² *Ibid*, p. a-2.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 99.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 98.

In the first place, I think it will completely undeceive those who have, no doubt with great conviction, been preaching to the country that, although that three months ago the people of England accidentally fell into a state of momentary excitement, yet their good sense almost immediately afterwards resumed its reign, and the people are now unanimously, or all but unanimously, contented to pursue what is called the traditional policy of this country in support of Turkey, to cherish all the most violent jealousies that an inflamed imagination ever has suggested with regards to Russia, and to rest perfectly contented with the declarations on this subject at different periods by certain members, particularly by the head of Her Majesty's Government.¹³⁵

Gladstone found such a situation morally to be affronting and declared that he had the public approval on the road to the humanitarian popular policy. By referring to *The Times* article on 18 November 1876, Lord Granville had already written to Gladstone as to 'contrasting the dangers of European war with the palliatives proposed to avoid it and writing of the folly of encouraging the Turkish hopes that Britain would fight for her.'¹³⁶ On the other hand, Gladstone's discourse might be considered as considerate to a certain extent. However, it is also important to bear in mind that it was also full of sarcastic references to the traditional protective British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Most important of all, his address to Stratford Canning's policy demonstrated his arguments in diplomatic dimensions: 'We walk of traditional policy. It is the traditional policy of this country to support Turkey. I know not where that traditional policy was in the year 1826, when Mr. Canning formed his association with the emperor of Russia. I know not where it was in 1827, when the battle of Navarino was fought; but this I know- that there is a higher and broader traditional policy.'

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 93.

¹³⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone on 18 November 1876', p. 21.

The traditional policy of England is not complicity with guilty power, but is sympathy with suffering weakness.’¹³⁷

Dorothy Schullian suggests that there was no influence on the pro-Turkish, anti-Russian policy of Disraeli’s Conservative government by the St. James Conference, and Gladstone had been criticised for being ‘too moralistic, too pro-Russian and a political opportunist’ by some intellectuals.¹³⁸ Nonetheless, it is fair to consider that the deep-rooted influence of this conference went beyond the instant consequences and had a lasting impact. In this vein, Shannon argues that ‘the Bulgarian atrocities provoked the most convincing demonstration of the susceptibility of the High Victorian public conscience; and the agitation can be understood only in relation to the development and refinement of that public awakening.’¹³⁹ From that point of view, it is reasonable to state that this awakening turned out to be the trenchant voice of the public in diplomacy on the determination of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire along with the impressions made by the national conference on the public consciousness.

The conference participants were also notable citizens who lent weight to his criticism of the Ottoman Empire. Since the beginning of the Bulgarian agitation Gladstone had had a sustained correspondence with Madame Olga Novikov who accompanied him during the speeches and meetings on the Eastern Question.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Charles Darwin had donated £15 to Bulgarian relief, which was one of the relief organizations established in the wake of

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 119.

¹³⁸ Dorothy M. Schullian, ‘Notes on William Gladstone, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Klimet Timiriazev, and the “Eastern Question” of 1876-78’, *Journal of the History of Medicine*: Vol. 38, April 1983, pp. 178-187, p. 179.

¹³⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁰ For further reading on M. Olga Novikoff, see William T. Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff*, 2 vols (London: Melrose, 1909).

Gladstone's *Bulgarian Horrors* pamphlet.¹⁴¹ After meeting with Charles Darwin during the Bulgarian atrocities campaign, Gladstone notes how favourable an impression Darwin's appearance¹⁴² made upon him and, in the same vein, Gladstone's premiership in 1880 pleased Darwin.¹⁴³ William T. Stead, as the editor of the *Northern Echo* subsequent to the *Darlington Echo*, represented the press support for Gladstone's campaign. Prevost defines Stead as someone 'who had always been a Radical and was then 'a thorough-going Gladstonian' who believed that Disraeli had stolen power from the Liberals in 1874 because of the voters' 'soulless inertia''¹⁴⁴ James Bryce, a Liberal member of the Parliament and the founder of the Anglo-Armenian society in 1876, was one of the leading politicians in the Bulgarian agitation and who went on to lead the Armenian question twenty years later in 1894-96 and maintain this question with historian Arnold Toynbee in 1915 to an extent. What is also interesting in regards to the impulses of one of the participants of the conference, Malcolm Mirza Khan as an Armenian and Persian Minister who was 'a man already dragged into the whirlpool' according to Gladstone. 'What is the meaning of 'Islam' Lord Granville ambiguously asked, 'I thought it meant Mohammedism, or rather the congregation of those who hold the creed. Malcolm Khan appears to apply it only those Mohammedans who own themselves to be subjects of the Sultan, denies that the great body of Mohammedans acknowledge the Sultan as a religious head. I am extremely curious to know what was the suggestion of Khan an

¹⁴¹ Charles Darwin's Account book, Darwin Papers, Cambridge University Library quoted in Schullian, M. D., *Ibid*, p. 180.

¹⁴² '12 March 1877 'saw Mr. Darwin (1809-82.) whose appearance is pleasing and remarkable.' Matthew, (ed.), *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX, pp. 199-200.

¹⁴³ In a letter to his son William, Darwin wrote, 'I have not been so much pleased for years.', Darwin Papers, Cambridge University Library, Box 112, (n. 25), p. 2 quoted in Schullian, M. D., *Ibid*, p. 182.

¹⁴⁴ Stephanie Prevost, 'W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question (1875-1911); or, How to Rouse England and Why?' *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 16, (2013), p. 12 website: <<http://19.bbk.ac.uk>>

Armenian and Persian Minister made to the Porte with any hope of acceptance.¹⁴⁵ Since Malcolm Khan endeavoured to clarify the misunderstandings as to ‘the wisdom of Islam’ in the East particularly in the 1890s, what underlay his role on Gladstone and Lord Granville was something deeper than the political calculations or ambitions in the agitation. These intentions to learn Islamic principles behind the Turkish governance however had not been constantly engaged in the future debates.

There is little doubt that the influence of newspaper correspondents was also essential in the formation of foreign policy together with public opinion. Opposing reports from Walter Baring as Her Majesty’s second Foreign Secretary at Constantinople who was in a position to know and relay the facts, Antonio Gallenga, the special correspondent of *The Times*; the *Daily News* correspondent Janurios MacGahan and the American journalist Eugene Schuyler were well-informed to as the most authoritative endorsement on the Bulgarian Atrocities but also the main evidence upon which Gladstone’s propaganda rested. It is worth remembering that Gladstone had a profound mistrust towards of capacities of Ottoman Commissioners and reports as to the atrocities. He regarded the charges of Schuyler and the *Daily News*’ correspondent on 14 September 1876 as ‘the most atrocious charge that has been raised in connection with the conduct of the Commission’ on Selim Effendi.¹⁴⁶ The accusation was ‘before the trials he had visited the prisoners in their gaols and made use of charge to procure from them such evidence as he desired.’¹⁴⁷ In response to Gladstone’s reference on the 14th November to *the Daily News*, Selim Effendi wrote to defend his innocence by denying the allegations presented against him. Gladstone continued to assert

¹⁴⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 19 December 1876’; BL GP Add MS 44171 fol.34, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone’ on 24 December 1876; ‘The St. James's-Hall Conference’, *The Times*, 9 December 1876.

¹⁴⁶ William E. Gladstone, ‘Lessons in massacre, or, the conduct of the Turkish government in and about Bulgaria since May, 1876: chiefly from the papers presented by command’, Bristol Selected Pamphlets, (1877), p. 41.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

what Selim Effendi's actions belied by asking him to consider the accusations and produce evidence as proof of his charge.¹⁴⁸ Since Selim Effendi continued to preserve his silence even after the letter, Gladstone was once more disappointed at the ineffective contribution that Selim Effendi had made to the current proceedings.

Following the St. James Conference, the Constantinople Conference, which was held between 23 December 1876 and 20 January 1877, can be considered as the final reinforcement for the Ottoman Empire before the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. 'It looks a firm stand were being made at Constantinople' Gladstone contentedly wrote to his wife, 'and Salisbury (for the second time, the first in 1867) providing his manhood.'¹⁴⁹ Gladstone had already admitted that 'the appointment of Lord Salisbury as 'an improvement and afforded hope for the future' in his speech on the national Conference of the Eastern Question Association. In this regard, Mithat Aydın argues that 'England's political stance lasted during Ottoman-Serbian, Montenegrin wars and right before the Istanbul Conference that was gathered to solve the "Eastern Question" was going to be moved to a more radical line with England's conference representative Lord Salisbury whose main opinion was to divide the Ottoman and to make a deal with Russia.'¹⁵⁰ Sir George Campbell whose speech at St. James discriminated between the Turkish people and the impossibility of the Turkish good government, represented the diplomatic atmosphere as follows:

Turkey had been arraigned as a culprit before the bar of Europe at the Congress of Constantinople. In that congress nobody defended her. England was her only friend, and England joined the other Powers in condemning her government as 'profoundly

¹⁴⁸ BL GP Add MS 44452 fols. 253-4, 'Mr. Gladstone and Selim Effendi' on 16 December 1876

¹⁴⁹ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 220, 3 January 1877.

¹⁵⁰ Mithat Aydın, 'İstanbul Konferansı (1876)'na giden yolda İngiltere'nin "Doğu" Politikası/ England's Eastern Policy on the road to the Constantinople Conference (1876), *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2005/2, Sayı:17, Denizli, 2005, pp..69-78., 2005, p. 69.

vicious'. England had ridiculed her pretended constitutional reforms, and pronounced her promissory notes as nothing but inconvertible paper. Finally, England had threatened her with the invasion of her ancient hereditary enemy, and had emphatically warned her that she would not be defended in the impending struggle.¹⁵¹

Although there were no well-aimed decisions at the end of the Constantinople Conference, the outcome of the meeting can still be considered amongst the components which modified official British policy towards the Porte. It is fair to suggest that the concerted stance of the Powers had by no means satisfied Gladstone against Turkey losing both its 'dignity and decency in the proceedings.'¹⁵² Arguably, the most conspicuous side of the Constantinople Conference was the development of Britain's Eastern Policies in two directions. Despite the Conservative government's assumption for the interests of British independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, they were also concerned about the failure of the traditional pro-Turkish policy as well as the rising anti-Turkish trend manifesting itself in the politics of Salisbury as the British representative at the conference.

During January 1877, Gladstone devoted himself to a book entitled *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*¹⁵³ which was written by Georgina Mackenzie and Paulina Irby, after reading many books on Islam and showing particular interest in George Sale's translation of the *Koran*¹⁵⁴, writing copious letters to a range of parties, and holding long

¹⁵¹ George John Douglas Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, 'Our Responsibilities for Turkey, Facts and Memories of Forty Years, (London: John Murray), 1896, p. 61.

¹⁵² Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 220, 4 January 1877, 5 January 1877.

¹⁵³ Georgiana Mackenzie & Audeline P. Irby, *Travels in The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, (London: Daldy, Isbister & Co, 56, Ludgate Hill), 1877.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., p. 185, '14 January 1877', George Sale, *The Koran: commonly called the Alcoran of Muhammed*, (London, 1822)

discussions with the ‘Eastern sympathisers’.¹⁵⁵ He lamented to Lord Granville that ‘I do not know whether you have ever read Miss Mackenzie & Miss Irby’s joint work on the Slavonic Provinces in 1867. I am sorry to say it is only now that I have read it. It is immeasurably the most faithful and instructive description of the actual life of the Turkish provinces that I have ever seen.’¹⁵⁶ Following the 1875 outbreak of events in Bosnia, Adeline Pauline Irby became a British heroine in the eyes of the public for her aid to the Bosnian Christians. Following the publication of her memoirs with Miss Mackenzie, Miss Irby became the leading figure in Bosnia similar to Gladstone’s position during the Bulgarian agitation. Furthermore, it can be argued that Miss Irby and Miss Mackenzie were the humanitarian face of the war just as Florence Nightingale had been during the Crimean War. Whilst the context of the book was primarily composed of their memoirs and recollections from the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire, it substantiated the position of the existing condition of the Christian minorities from these witnesses. In other words, being neutral and not being a member of any political organisation, and being fearless and brave women, Mackenzie and Irby were the representatives of the humanitarian nation. Hence, these were the main reasons why Gladstone addressed their work as it supported his arguments which were evident in the preface of their book. As he noted in the preface: ‘I do not mean to disparage the labours and services of others when I say that, in my opinion, no diplomatist, no consul, no traveller, among our countrymen, has made such a valuable contribution to our means of knowledge in this important matter, as was made by Miss Mackenzie and Miss Irby, when they published, in 1867, their travels in some of the Slovenian Provinces of European Turkey.’¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ See *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. ix., pp. 183-91.

¹⁵⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 2 January 1877’

¹⁵⁷ William E. Gladstone, preface, p. ix. in Mackenzie & Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*.

Furthermore, by giving instances from this book, Gladstone illustrated daily events in order to be simply understood. During the times of the Crimean War and the heroic stories of Florence Nightingale, these two travellers were connected to Christian communities in the Balkan territories. In contradistinction to Nightingale's accomplishments in the field of medical aid, Miss Irby and Mrs Mackenzie's assistance was mainly focussed on education of refugee children. Josh Irby, one of the relatives of Miss Irby, also revealed her friendship with Nightingale and stated that 'with the help of Adeline Irby's friend Florence Nightingale, they began raising money in England, creating the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Fugitives' Orphan Relief Fund' and appealing for funds in *The Times*.¹⁵⁸ Josh Irby further argued for the motivation and the values of these two travellers in order to accomplish these facts as women in Victorian Britain. He stated that 'the motivation can be best understood through the perspective of her Protestant faith. Within the Anglican church in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a movement of philanthropic-minded evangelicals for whom humanitarian work and the spread of the gospel were not mutually exclusive.'¹⁵⁹

It is fair to argue that there was a resemblance and connection between Gladstone's own values and these ladies. The concern for humanity and loyalty to Protestant Christianity combined the same purposes under the leadership of Gladstone. As he stated:

The work of Miss Irby, with the chapters she has added, widens our perspective. I have myself stated, months back, to the public that, while we were venting indignation about Bulgaria, the Turk was doing the very same foul work, though not on the same imperial scale, in Bosnia. *The Manchester Guardian* has rendered

¹⁵⁸ For the meeting details see 'The Wounded in Serbia', *The Times*, 16 August 1876; One of the relatives of Paulina Irby. For his blog and more memoirs on Paulina Irby: Josh Irby, 'Adeline Paulina Irby, Bosnian Heroine, Noble Humanitarian, Protestant Believer', p 4 of 7, <http://tr.scribd.com/doc/47249400/Adeline-Paulina-Irby>

¹⁵⁹ Josh Irby, 'Adeline Paulina Irby, Bosnian Heroine, Noble Humanitarian, Protestant Believer', p 5 of 7, <http://tr.scribd.com/doc/47249400/Adeline-Paulina-Irby>

important public service with respect to the same afflicted region, through its very valuable correspondence. Miss Irby, after her long and self-sacrificing experience, speaks with a weight of dispassionate authority, to which neither I nor any correspondent of a public journal can pretend. She now discloses, and that down to the latest date, upon information which she knows to be trustworthy, a state of things which exhibits a greater aggregate of human misery flowing from Turkish rule, than even the Bulgaria of 1876 could show.¹⁶⁰

In that respect, it becomes clear that Gladstone strengthened the humanitarian aspect of his rhetorical framework in the Bulgarian Agitation campaign with the support of the missionaries. The emphasis of the Balkan travellers to the Ottoman lands ‘within a meta-narrative of British liberal support for ‘oppressed nationalities’ on the European continent’, as Perkins argues, was a strong encouragement to ‘overcome well-established prejudices in British society regarding the capacity of the subjects of the Porte to govern their own affairs.’¹⁶¹

In considering Gladstone’s attitude on the Eastern question the impact that the Negroponte affair had upon should not be understated. The vagueness of his opinion as to the union of the Porte and Christians with the ‘sheer shock of the Bulgarian atrocities’ which he had explicitly pointed out in his Hellenic article paved the way for the Greek imagination to view him Gladstone as a national hero. In response to Greek merchant Negroponte’s demanding letter, as Matthew notes, Gladstone ‘reinforced his stance and stressed the importance of not only Greek but also Slav grievances.’¹⁶² He argued that:

¹⁶⁰ Gladstone, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey*, p.xii.

¹⁶¹ Perkins, ‘British liberalism and the Balkans, c. 1875- 1925’, p. 43.

¹⁶² Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 278.

I am occupied incessantly with the question of the East and have done nothing by withdrawn of what I have written in favour of the Hellenes of the Hellenic problem in the *Contemporary Review* last month. But I am no more than a private person, without the reasons of giving effect to my ideas. Further, I have only a very imperfect and somewhat vague knowledge of great number of factors which touch me on the outside of the speak, the Slav question properly so-called, now planning the subject of discussions at Constantinople. For me, the question of the East is not a question of Christianity against Islamism. It is, however a question of the Christians against the Porte and the governing Ottomans, because all the grievances of Mussulman and Jewish subjects, and much without doubt they ought to disappear in the act of applying on efficacious remedy to such grievances of the Christians, who form the men of the oppressed. I do not thus recognise any plurality of causes-for me, the cause is one only, and I cannot commend either Greeks who refuse their moral support to the Slavs, and the Slavs who repeat it to the Greeks. I find in the development of local liberties of all much provinces as are proved to be suffering in order to put an end to evils which have made the world shudder, to arrest the selfish intrigues (if such exist) of any Power whatever, and to afford to Turkey the means, or at least the possibility, of a repose that she will never obtain under the actual conditions, nor under what is called her Constitution.¹⁶³

This letter helps to clarify Gladstone's vision about the struggle of Eastern Christians against the Porte and to explain the consistent aspect in his behaviour to Islam. In that lies the key to understanding so much of what he said and argued for the pursuit of morality and rightness. It

¹⁶³ BL GP Add MS 44454 fols.20-2, 'Mr. Gladstone to Negropontis at Constantinople' on 9 January 1877, translation made on 13 September 1877.

also puts into proper perspective the effect of his idea of 'Islamism' in the policies of Turkish government towards the non-Muslim subjects. As a reputed scholar of Oriental and Islamic studies of the term, it is worth noting George Percy Badger's belief on the 'abuse of Islam' which more likely influenced Gladstone.¹⁶⁴ What is also interesting to point out that Colin Matthew preferred not to push the point of Gladstone's profound remark that 'the question of the East is not a question of Christianity against Islamism' and made this assertion only as 'the question of the East is not a question of Christianity.'¹⁶⁵ It could be argued that this emphasizes the basic weaknesses in the studies which disregard his basic attitudes to Islam and neglect to clarify the impression that Gladstone was viewed as launching an antagonist onslaught against Islam.

The second consideration as to the Negroponte affair is the question of whether Gladstone incited the Greeks to rise against the Turks which was claimed by the *Daily Telegraph* and supposedly briefed by Henry Layard, the new appointed British ambassador to the Porte. According to the newspaper's report:

Important papers have just been made known showing that Mr. Gladstone has been trying to stir up the Greeks against Turkey. About two months ago Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to a Greek merchant in Constantinople urging that the countrymen of the latter should unite with the Slavs in an attack upon the Turks. M. Negroponte replied to the effect that the interests of the Greeks were all together different from those of the Slavs, that the best policy of Greece was rather to fight the Russians than the Turks, and that Greece, if she were wise, would remain tranquil. Mr. Gladstone, in answer to this, wrote a second letter, very curtly worded, saying that he had given his opinion and was astonished to find the Christians of the East so disinclined to make

¹⁶⁴ BL GP Add MS 44455 fols.140-5, 'George Percy Badger' on 5 October 1877.

¹⁶⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 278.

common cause against the Mussulmans. He again urged the Greeks to attack the Turks. M. Negroponte, in reply, stated that Mr. Gladstone's was not good advice, and there the correspondence at present rests.¹⁶⁶

A real difference of opinion occurred between both political sides over the issue. On 12 March 1878, the Negroponte affair had prompted a resolution to the House of Commons put forward by Liberal MP for Poole Evelyn Ashley which was defeated by a majority of 74.¹⁶⁷ In his memoirs, Layard regarded himself a 'scapegoat' and observed that the debate was 'a good deal of violent declarations against himself and too much representation of facts.'¹⁶⁸ He pointed out the same impression of the 'sensational telegrams' upon him and his colleagues in the Foreign Office to whom they were shown. 'Turcophile' Layard's comment concerning on Negroponte's abuse of Gladstone's reputation and authority combined with his 'apprehension to the effect they might have upon the Greeks.'¹⁶⁹ With regards to Gladstone, Layard not only addressed the indications in Gladstone's 'Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem' article but it also reminded that 'it was scarcely for the author of the *Bulgarian atrocities* to repudiate with indignation the suspicion that he was inciting the Greeks to attack the Turks.'¹⁷⁰ Gladstone, however strongly denied that he had urged the Greeks to revolt.¹⁷¹ He further stated that 'I may appear to be the central personage. I have done it first become affected the sufferings of population, and secondly harm I hope that my effort may tend to

¹⁶⁶ 'From our special correspondent, Pera', *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1877.

¹⁶⁷ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 238 (12 March 1878), cc 1156-217.

¹⁶⁸ Sinan Kunalp (ed.), *The Queen's ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1878-1880*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009), pp. 320-1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ For the accounts see BL GP Add MS 44455 fols. 98-104, 'Apology'

purity in a particular instance, the sources of intelligence.¹⁷² Supporting this point of view, Negroponte wrote to the editor of *The Times* that this incitement was nothing more than a mere suggestion: ‘Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to incite the Greeks against Turkey advising them to join with the Slavs in fighting against the Turks and that I had written in reply the best policy that Greece can and ought to pursue would be to declare war against Russia rather than Turkey.’¹⁷³ His letter to Lord Tenderden about Layard’s ‘accusations’ also reveals his disapproval of ‘charges to attach his own name and responsibility.’¹⁷⁴ Throughout this affair that Gladstone followed a decidedly consistent line in his attitude towards Christian subjects of the Porte. He did not really seek the disintegration of the Turkish Empire as a part of ‘the destruction plan.’ Rather, he earnestly sought to promote the solidarity between Slav and Hellenic subjects of the Porte along with gaining the support of public opinion and European Powers.

The importance of Gladstone’s personal distaste for Layard is clear when it is realised that the first task of Gladstone’s second ministry was to recall Henry Austen Layard who was previously the British Ambassador in Constantinople during the Ministry of Palmerston. Nevertheless, it is true that this would be a manifestation of new official British policy towards the Porte. Layard, on the other hand, had always had a reputation as a Turcophile and had strong relations with the Turkish officials. When Abdulhamid II came to the Ottoman throne on 7 September 1876, the uprisings in the Balkan provinces were at their peak. Gladstone had published his famous article entitled ‘Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East’ only two days prior to his coronation. It had been argued that this article was considered as a symbol of the Eastern Question and also attracted a great deal of

¹⁷² BL GP Add MS 44455 fol. 103, ‘Apology’

¹⁷³ BL GP Add MS 44455 fol. 33, ‘Mr. Gladstone to the editor of *the Times*’ on 7 September 1877.

¹⁷⁴ BL GP Add MS 44456 fols. 73-6, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Tenderden, 28 January 1878 on Layard’s accusations’

attention very quickly within Great Britain. Although Abdulhamid had to give priority to the new Ottoman Constitution proclaimed in December 1876, his response was a collection of photographs of wounded Mussulman women and children at Adrianople asking A. Henry Layard to convey on 23 August 1877 as victims of Russian and Bulgarian atrocities.¹⁷⁵ Layard wrote that the purpose of the collection was as follows: 'His Majesty wishes to afford proof of those atrocities to Europe, as he is inclined to think that they are not believed in, or, that having been committed by Christians upon Mussulmans, they are not considered worthy a compassion or notice.'¹⁷⁶ Notwithstanding, Layard pointed out that those suspicious of the Sultan 'will be removed as far as England is concerned by the humane and benevolent interest for these poor creatures.'¹⁷⁷

Yet, Gladstone's correspondence with Layard in 1878 indicates his thoughts on the 'cruelties and atrocities' suffered by Mussulmans from the Russians and Bulgarians. In response to Layard's presentation to Parliament and the publication of reports, Gladstone specifically denied the charge that 'those who denounced the Bulgarian atrocities and incited in the case of humanity one of the most unrighteous of wars are now silent.' Gladstone asked for clarification:

I am obliged to believe that considerable part of the reproach conveyed in this passage is intended for me; the true so, as I am aware that indications in a characteristic of your modes of accusations. I therefore beg leave inquire, 1. What ground you had for believing that I had, for some time presumes you had for believing that I had for some time from your Dispatch been in possession of evidence of outrages committed by

¹⁷⁵ TNA FO 78/2583 A. H. Layard to The Earl of Derby, photographs include 30 photographs depicting: sepia-coloured portrait photographs of wounded Musulman women and children at Adrianople victims of 'Russian and Bulgarian atrocities'. Enclosure in Mr Layard's report No 987, 23 August 1877.

¹⁷⁶ TNA FO 78/2583 A. H. Layard to The Earl of Derby, 23 August 1877.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Bulgarians in any way approaching that for which I waited in 1876 nearly four months before condemning the outrages of Turks? 2. On what declarations of mine you found the assertion that I incited the Russo-Turkish war? 3. On what authority you stated officially to Lord Salisbury that I had been silent as to outrages committed by the Christians on the Mussulmans?¹⁷⁸

In Layard's response, dated 5 September, he pointed out that the Blue Book (Turkey No 1878) was a key of evidence 'which contained accounts of the atrocities committed by the Bulgarians and have seen by a large number of eyewitnesses while daily accounts published on the horrors.'¹⁷⁹ While addressing 'the Bulgarian atrocity movement' for the cause of incitement, Layard's third justification is particularly important. 'Living at this distance from England I may be mistaken but I have not seen any notices in the public journals of such meetings on more hold two years ago at Blackheath, St. James Park, Hull and elsewhere', Layard wrote to Gladstone by pointing out 'your matchless eloquence would promptly contribute to protect the unfortunate Mussulman population from further outrages and persecution.'¹⁸⁰ Gladstone's recognition of Layard's offer was 'a purpose of humanity':

Standing them as, I will not say the accused but the challenged party; I feel that I have done in regard to the outrages of Christians on Mussulmans, all that I was called upon to do or could do with advantage: my work in the matter being, that life, property or honour of the Mussulman population might to be protected as it may need that I might do all ways little that may in power to this end. The first came my knowledge was on the Greeks. In the Bulgarian cases I had waited silently through months for

¹⁷⁸ BL GP Add MS 44457, fol.219 'Mr. Gladstone to Layard 22 August 1878.'

¹⁷⁹ BL GP Add MS 44457, fol. 255 'Layard to Mr. Gladstone' on 5 September 1878.

¹⁸⁰ BL GP Add MS 44457, fol. 256 'Layard to Mr. Gladstone' on 5 September 1878.

responsible official information. In the Mussulman case, I did not wait as many days. I had a public occasion I used it not to plead as I might have done that Christian misdeeds were the natural fruits of interstate oppression, but to declare that they were more than the misdeeds of Mussulman. I likewise waited that one of the statements forwarded with authentication of any sort was definite.... On the Mussulman crimes after Gourko Raid¹⁸¹ had been driven out I questioned him minutely as to quantity in the quality of the crimes respectively. I found from him that Christians had been largely guilty of murder with treachery as to the imperative extent of the crimes. He told me that the scale of the subsequent Mussulman outrages was in his judgement magnified enclosed-did not include to the indulge men of bestial courts. 'Bulgarians of borgas' I anonymously published and dispatched to London newspapers. I have acted upon evidence clearly in the case of Christian than in the case of Mussulman crime. But I have now done with defensive part of this letter. I have the strong opinion that it is the duty of the Power, whether their Consuls agree in whether they disagree to sacred facts from the very bottom & then to consent what steps to take upon them...The main thing is to deal properly with the authorities, if they higher or lower, who promote or conceive at them. I have no power to give effect & my opinions but I shall be do what I can that they not to be misunderstood within the limited circle.'¹⁸²

Gladstone admitted that his thoughts about the 'atrocities committed against Christians' was in a constant state of struggle. However, what made Gladstone's behaviour appear in this letter was that this engagement was not act of antagonist onslaught against Islam. Gladstone declared himself to be eager to abandon the false position that he was placed for his attitude

¹⁸¹ Greek resident at Constantinople and Gladstone's close friend. He considered Gourko as the highest English authority at that question.

¹⁸² BL GP Add MS fols. 285-87, 'Mr. Gladstone to Layard on 17 September 1878'

towards ‘Mussulman outrages.’ The high quality of Gladstone's speeches on the Bulgarian atrocities has led historians to assign him a central role in the affair as an act of religious mission. As Matthew points out, ‘the personal commitment which the Eastern Question called from him was self-confessedly a new order: ‘When have I seen so strongly the relation between my public duties and the primary purposes for which God made and the Christ redeemed the world.’¹⁸³ It is true that Gladstone’s intense religious faith was one of the key driving forces in his moral crusade on behalf of Christians. Yet, this act was by no means an attempt to stir up religious hatred. His understanding of international civil rights had no dependence on his religious opinions. It should be, however, noted that Gladstone’s lack of interest in the Muslim community gave serious, reasonable and severe criticism of his thinking towards Islam.

On 10 March 1877, Gladstone’s second sensational pamphlet ‘Lessons in Massacre’¹⁸⁴ can be considered as a detailed review of the allegations with the full version of the facts. He began writing his pamphlet titled ‘Who are the criminals?’ and then altered the name to ‘Lessons in Massacre, or the conduct of the Turkish Government in and about Bulgaria since May, 1876, chiefly from the papers presented by command.’¹⁸⁵ The reason why he decided to describe these experiences as ‘the lessons,’ might be linked with the consistent charges that he made against the Porte and the official information supplied by British agents:

All the acts or non-acts of the Turkish government, before the rising when we know them scantily, during and the since the lamentable scenes, when we knew them but too fully, stand forth to view in a dark and fatal consistency. It matters not who was

¹⁸³ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 286.

¹⁸⁴ William E. Gladstone, ‘Lessons in massacre, or, the conduct of the Turkish government in and about Bulgaria since May, 1876: chiefly from the papers presented by command’, *Bristol Selected Pamphlets*, (1877).

¹⁸⁵ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol.IX.*, p. 196.

Sultan or who was Vizir. Rushdi was as Mahmoud and Midhat was as Rushdi, and Edhem was as thus far is as Midhad...The acts of the Porte, through nine long months, demonstrate a deliberate intention and a coherent plan. That purpose has been to cover up iniquity; to baffle inquiry to reward prominence in crime; to punish or discourage humanity among its own agents; to prolong the reign of terror; to impress with a steady coherency upon the minds of its Mahometan subjects this but too intelligible lesson for the next similar occasion, *do it again*.¹⁸⁶

As the ‘bag and baggage’ phenomenon was evident in the Bulgarian pamphlet, Gladstone’s motto was ‘do it again’ by referring to the Turkish Government’s acts on an ongoing basis.¹⁸⁷ The arguments he advanced to the Porte were the culmination of a traceable line of thought. So frequent are the references to compromise that the administration was much troubled throughout the years. In this respect, he regarded the ‘Bulgarian outrages are not the Eastern Question but a key to the Eastern Question.’¹⁸⁸ This statement was the most representative pronouncement for the immoral failure of Turkish rule on the Christian subject races. ‘I ask of England, that we redeem the pledges that we gave to the subject races by the Crimean War and by the peace which followed it’¹⁸⁹ with a share of responsibility of the Crimean War upon him by attacking the Turkish authorities and eagerness for the change of British policy with the public support. In his Hawarden speech on 17 January 1877, Gladstone had already argued the hopelessness of Ottoman promises about economic and social equality of the Christian minorities:

¹⁸⁶ Gladstone, ‘Lessons in massacre’, p. 7.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 73.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 80.

At the end of the Crimean War, the Ottoman government gave an engagement, perhaps the most solemn ever contracted in the history of the world; for it was an engagement sealed with blood and tears; sealed in the blood and tears harmony connected with English family; to set all these rights and establish full civil and social equality on behalf of its Christian subjects. Twenty years of tranquillity followed, except so far as the misgovernment of Turkey caused rebellion or massacre.¹⁹⁰

He refused to accept outdated policies with 'a natural hope' but he anticipated the case of Greece under Canning's guidance that 'the disease of Turkey was curable: that the mild and gentle tone which the spirit of our Century has infused into so many Governments, may find access even to the hard heart of the Porte.'¹⁹¹ This statement was again an important indicator of the concerted European policy instead of the British traditional alliance with the Ottoman Empire.

During the weeks prior to the Russo-Ottoman War, Gladstone devoted great energies not only reading tracts on the Eastern question but also to the studies by Malcolm Maccoll, Henry De Worms, Miss Irby & Mrs Mackenzie's Bosnia, writing to Henry Drum Wolff on the Cretan Insurrections and the observations of travellers to Montenegro such as Edward Freeman.¹⁹² It was, therefore, expected that Gladstone would continue to acquiesce in the conduct of foreign policy remaining in the hands of a Government that was generally acknowledged as Turcophile. On receiving the news of the war, Gladstone suggested that 'is not the moment now come for raising the rather stiff question whether a policy, or a substantive motion is to

¹⁹⁰ 'Gladstone on Christian Population', *Daily News*, 17 January 1877.

¹⁹¹ Gladstone, 'Lessons in massacre', p. 76-7.

¹⁹² See the diary entries, Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. IX*, pp. 203-15, Baron Henry De Worms, 'England's policy in the East', (London: Chapman and Hall, 1877), Malcolm MacColl, *The Eastern Question its facts and fallacies*, (Longmans, Green, 1877), E. A. Freeman, 'Montenegro', *Macmillan's Magazine*, xxxiii, 275, (January 1876), BL GP Add MS 44453 fol.229, 'Mr. Gladstone to Henry Drum Wolff' on 23 March 1877.

the submitted to the Parliament.’ He wrote to Lord Granville that ‘it is perfectly plain that Salisbury is at discount and the Government grow more Turkish every day.’¹⁹³ It had been Gladstone’s intention to present a set of resolutions to the Commons which were an appeal for the British policy towards the Porte throughout the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78. Gladstone’s main objection to Disraeli and the Government was that they had acted with the Turkish government. His resolutions were:

1. Dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on the 21st of September, 1876 and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria.
2. The Turkish government have lost all claim to receive either the material or moral support of the British Crown with respect to the such conduct and the promises have failed.
3. The earnest desire as to the influence of the British Crown in the councils of Europe for the early and effectual development of local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of Turkey.
4. The promotion of the European concert in exacting from the Ottoman Porte, by their united authority, such changes in the government of Turkey for the purposes of humanity and justice for effectual defence against intrigue and for the peace of the world.
5. According to the tenor of the foregoing Resolutions, be prepared and presented to Her Majesty.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 27 April 1877,’ pp. 34-5.

¹⁹⁴ William E. Gladstone, ‘Mr. Gladstone’s resolutions and speech on the Eastern Question in the House of Commons’, 7 May 1877, Bristol Selected Pamphlets, pp. 3-4.

There is little doubt that this was the essential declaration that change was taking place in the conduct of British foreign policy. Following his speech, the question presents itself as to whether this was ‘a vital or material alteration’ of the declared British policy. Without question, Gladstone did not imply a complete overturn in British policy but rather one that connected itself with major changes. Gladstone in that respect once more endorsed Lord Salisbury’s manner at the Constantinople Conference. ‘We had not changed our traditional policy’ as Lord Salisbury particularly pointed out to *The Times* that ‘we still cling to the hope that some alteration would occur in the councils of Turkey which would bring both alliances to the same state as it was before.’¹⁹⁵ He was, nonetheless, making the remark that it was vital to use ‘peaceful persuasion to stop the prospect of a war between Russia and the Porte... that our moral influence on the Porte rested.’¹⁹⁶ Salisbury further stated that he had warned the Porte against this ‘terrible danger which may involve the loss of your empire to fall on you’ unless the Turkish government deny to take some decisive measures to grip the situation and ‘we shall accept no responsibility for the future if you if you treat our advice with disdain.’¹⁹⁷ Three years afterwards, Gladstone continued to maintain pressure on the Porte since he declared the strength of such a policy would also ensure the security of the country, British interests in the East and moral pressure on Turkey with respect to the promises for the subject races.¹⁹⁸

There is, therefore, serious evidence that Gladstone justified his own conduct on the grounds of humanitarianism during this period. In hindsight, Gladstone carried on giving several speeches in various areas of the country and his main concern was the Eastern Question

¹⁹⁵ GP Add MS 44454 ff. 191-2, f. 191, ‘Lord Salisbury to *the Times* on 22 February 1877’

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ GP Add MS 44454 ff. 191-2, f. 192, ‘Lord Salisbury to *the Times* on 22 February 1877’

¹⁹⁸ Gladstone, ‘Mr. Gladstone’s resolutions and speech on the Eastern Question in the House of Commons’, pp.11-4.

which aroused interest, curiosity, or even admiration. Along with the reflections of the Conference, Gladstone's concern over the Ottoman Empire continued to increase along with the huge amount of supporters. As he noted in his diary on 23 January 1877: 'All along the road one and the same feeling prevailed about the Eastern Question, of which I am made the local symbol. At Glastonbury above all the sympathy was enthusiastic. A triumphal expression escorted us through rain and mud. I could not get out and thank them in a few sentences.'¹⁹⁹ Whilst the parliamentary debates proceeded, Gladstone made several visits to different regions of the country in the second half of 1877. For example, during his visit to Exeter on 13 July 1877, despite heavy rain, the majority of the public and the newspapers showed deep interest in his speech.²⁰⁰ By addressing the public awareness of humanitarian acts and the foreign policies of the Disraeli government, Gladstone urged his supporters to use their influence at every opportunity for the promotion of honour, for the performance of duty and for the discouragement of selfishness. He stated, addressing the Disraeli ministry, that there were men in the English government who were well disposed on this question, and there were others who were not.²⁰¹ In the twelve months from September 1876 to December 1877, Gladstone received both national and international letters relating to the Eastern Question and he replied most of them with an effort to strengthen his position. The young Oscar Wilde was not only impressed with Gladstone's manner but also presented his sonnets 'on the account of the massacres of the Christians in Bulgaria.'²⁰² While 'the Bulgarian Mother's lament' represented the sisterhood between England and Bulgaria, Edward Freeman's impression was on Gladstone's popularity in Montenegro and Greece on the basis

¹⁹⁹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX, p. 188, '23 January 1877'.

²⁰⁰ His entry on 13 July 1877, 'To an Assembly of many thousands, most patient under inhospitable rain.' Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries...* vol. IX., p. 235.

²⁰¹ Mr. Gladstone on our Eastern Policy', *The Dundee Courier & Argus* (Dundee, Scotland), 14 July 1877.

²⁰² BL GP Add MS 44454 f.126, f.124 'Oscar Wilde to Gladstone on 14 May 1877'; BL GP Add MS 44454 f.126, 'On the account of the massacres of the Christians in Bulgaria'; BL GP Add MS 44454 ff. 138-9, 'Oscar Wilde to Gladstone on 17 May 1877'

of the idea that ‘the government of England should stand alone in forbidding the acts of humanity.’²⁰³ In regards to British policy towards the Porte Mr. Schuyler was particularly satisfied that ‘...the friends of the Christians in the East regard the changed tone of the English government as seem to appears by yesterday’s telegrams- a change shown in the debate on your resolutions.’²⁰⁴

Major turning points occurred in Gladstone’s life during this period. The disputes over Egyptian policy and the Armenian question would form the main themes of Gladstone’s foreign policy in the 1880s and 1890s which were taking shape in his mind. In his August 1877 article, ‘Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East’,²⁰⁵ Gladstone argued against British acquisition of territory in Egypt. As he stated, ‘I nevertheless incline to believe that every scheme for the acquisition of territorial power in Egypt, even in the refined form with which it has here been invested, is but a new snare laid in the path of our policy.’²⁰⁶ He stated that English hands were ‘overfull and that in general it would be a mistake to acquire new territories.’²⁰⁷ Despite the necessity of the Suez Canal in Egypt, the Bosphorus in Constantinople and securing the routes to India, Gladstone’s idea of imperialism is conducive to the interests. Ironically, the occupation of Egypt five years later would cause a contradiction in his imperialistic approach at this time it has been viewed as one of the events that determined the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations.

²⁰³ BL GP Add MS 44454 fol.188 ‘The Bulgarian Mother’s lament’; ff.224-5, GP Add MS 44454 ff. 224-5 ‘E. Freeman to Gladstone 22 June 1877’, BL GP Add MS 44454 fol.332 ‘Edward Freeman to Mr. Gladstone on 15 August 1877.’

²⁰⁴ BL GP Add MS 44454 fols.133-5, ‘Eugene Schuyler to Mr. Gladstone on 16 May 1877’

²⁰⁵ William E. Gladstone, ‘Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East’ *The Nineteenth Century* (August 1877): pp. 149-166.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 155.

²⁰⁷ ‘I object to them, further, because we already have our hands over-full. We have undertaken responsibilities of government such as never were assumed before in the whole history of the world.’ Ibid, p. 157.

His correspondence with the Armenian Patriarch reveals his future pre-occupation with Armenian affairs but also indicates his endeavour to reasoning some of his views:

Your Holiness does me by far too much honour in supporting it to be likely that I can influence the future doctrines of the Armenian people. My active intervention in the Eastern Question has arisen out of the obligations which I conceived to be binding upon me in consequence of the participation as a minister in prior to policy & arrangements. In capacity, I have come under the teaching of facts, to the conclusion that the Turkish Government has no chance of honourable or secure existence in the future, unless it be through the effectual emancipation of the subject non-Mahometen provinces of the Empire from its Execution contrast. I think myself to be not the enemy of Turks but their friend: I think the party in this country known as the Turkish party to be not their friend but their enemy. Experience- perhaps early experience will know who is right who wrong or most right or who most wrong in this great business. I need hardly say that in the subject non-Mahometen provinces I include Turkish Armenia that I shall continue steadily to act as I have acted in the part. But my action is to contribute to more to the general result than a drop of water contributes to stir up the volume of the sea.²⁰⁸

It was indeed at this time that Gladstone aimed to promulgate his considered view on his involvement to the Eastern affairs. Since he was deeply concerned with the conditions of the Christian subjects of the Porte, it would be difficult to admit that he was in a position to alter the situation as he might have liked. Gladstone showed his willingness over the years to subordinate his acts to humanitarianism and religious freedom. With regards to taking responsibility about ‘the character of the Bulgarians & their liberation’, he pointed out his

²⁰⁸ BL GP Add MS 44454 fol. 361, ‘Mr.Gladstone to Armenian Patriarch on 29 August 1877’

reply was ‘for the sake of justice and humanity, for the sake of British interests.’²⁰⁹ For him, therefore, the crucial question of how far the Turkish Government to remain or averse to motion in regards to this emancipation. Furthermore, Gladstone’s entry in his diary on 1 September 1877²¹⁰ summarised his thoughts and the events that took place during the war. This entry also represented his opinions on the Turkish Government, the Concert of Europe, and Russian power. Indeed, it was an admission that there were mutual atrocities between the Christians and Muslims inside the Ottoman Empire. Further reflection led Gladstone to the conclusion that he was in favour of admitting the European Powers to co-operate for the restoration of populations regardless of religion. Furthermore, Gladstone’s belief was on the popular movement which would bring into a unity as to the policy towards the Porte. Despite the emphasis on British neutrality, public opinion again was divided, with those who sided with either Gladstone who represented ‘Peace’, or Disraeli as ‘the Anti-Russian and the War agitator.’ It was generally assumed that Gladstone was in great sympathy with Russia. Referring to his Liberal leadership, St. John assesses that his five resolutions were ‘embarrassing’ for Gladstone who ‘didn’t want to be pushed towards such strong and potentially pro-Russian views.’²¹¹ Nonetheless, Gladstone had pointed out that the concerted action was that ‘the first was that the abolition of the power for interference which previously

²⁰⁹ BL GP Add MS 44664 f. 194-200, f. 194, ‘Mr. Gladstone’s apologies for the remarks on Midhat Pasha on 23 November 1877’

²¹⁰ ‘What is clear;

1. The Turkish Government is not to be believed.
2. That wholesale outrage is committed by large portion of its forces.
3. That for these it has been officially censured-by Germany-alone.
4. That Captain Wellesley acquits the Russian army generally.
5. That the passions of war afford no palliation for cruelties for women & children.
6. That these cruelties, detestable in any case, are yet more detestable if committed by the Christians.
7. That there have been many of these cruelties committed by Christians: chiefly Bulgarians.’ BL GP Add MS 44763 f.93, ‘Notes on Granville’s speech’

²¹¹ St. John, *Gladstone and the Logic of Victorian Party Politics*, p. 238.

existed, and which was lodged in the hands of Russia. If you wish for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the peace of Europe, for the sake of the obligations this country has incurred, to close the Eastern Question it cannot be satisfactorily done except by action which shall be both united and real.²¹² According to Cunningham ‘the inspiration of such minimal agitation as there was Russophobia which showed itself to have little public appeal. In 1878 the agitation was to have a more different more potent inspiration: anti Gladstonism and Conservative nationalism.’²¹³ In this regard, it is fair to state that the war saw rising Jingoism and the growth of the patriotic feeling of the working classes. It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone hoped to awaken national opinion on peace through the Parliament and resolutions against the war party. Layard’s entry for British policy towards the Porte was notably indisputable:

Thus, ended the year 1877, a year memorable in history for the history, which befell the Turkish Empire and which, must inevitably lead to its dismemberment and fall. It was no less memorable for the change that had taken place in our ancient and traditional policy, a policy which had been advocated and pursued by our greatest statesmen down to the time of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire as an essential part of the balance of power in Europe and as absolutely necessary part of the balance of power to the vital interest of England... It was the more remarkable and memorable that policy was chiefly due to the attitude of the Liberal Party, which was once earnest advocate against the forces who were accused of leaning towards Russia and the despotic states of Europe being

²¹² William E. Gladstone, ‘Mr. Gladstone's resolutions and speech on the Eastern Question in the House of Commons’, 7 May 1877, Bristol Selected Pamphlets, p. 24.

²¹³ Hugh Cunningham, ‘Jingoism in 1877-78’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Jun., 1971), pp. 429-453, p. 432.

the enemy of Liberty. Led by Mr. Gladstone whose eloquence and passionate exaggerations had produced a fatal effect on public opinion.²¹⁴

Since the beginning of 1878, the debates in the British Parliament in respect to the neutral stance during the Russo-Ottoman War and sending the British fleet to Constantinople or the Dardanelles, lasted two months, until the peace of San Stefano (Yesilkoy) on 3 March 1878. The telegrams coming from Henry Layard as the new British ambassador to the Porte brought the possible news of a Russian takeover of the Ottoman capital. This was an influential development on the decisions of the Cabinet and especially on Prime Minister Disraeli. Thus, it would not be too ambitious to suggest that the Eastern Question was transformed into the Question of actively maintaining neutrality instead of Turkish alliance. Britain indeed was anxious over Russian advances in the Eastern provinces in the last period of war. Ensuring stability for domestic politics became a prominent issue for the Conservative government as was Britain's prestige and power in the international arena. While refusing even to be a negotiator between the war parties and despite the informal request of assisting the Ottoman Empire from Abdulhamid II, Lord Derby tried to represent the neutrality of the country in the replies of the telegrams coming from Layard.²¹⁵ However, on 23 January 1878, the Cabinet's decision to send the British fleet to the Dardanelles, including Constantinople and resolution for a Vote of Credit of six millions for increased armaments had extensive repercussions within the public and even inside the Disraeli Cabinet. Seton Watson argues that the decision to send the British fleet was based on the advice of 'trusted Layard' but 'in complete

²¹⁴ Kunalp (ed.), *The Queen's ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1878-1880*, p. 211.

²¹⁵ On 12 January 1878, Lord Derby to Layard 'To speak to me on the situation in which the Sultan found himself, and asked me whether Her Majesty's Government could do nothing to assist the Porte in its present difficulties. I said I feared not.' E. J. Ellis, 'The sequence of events in the Eastern Question, July 1875 to June 1878', *Bristol Selected Pamphlets*, (1878), p. 30.

disregard not merely of Turkish wishes.’²¹⁶ On 23 January Lord Carnarvon and Derby sent formal letters of resignation to the Prime Minister. While Lord Carnarvon ‘had the Queen’s consent provisionally,’²¹⁷ Disraeli had ‘managed to postpone Derby’s having the same.’²¹⁸

‘It seems scarcely to leave openings for future quarrel’, Gladstone noted in his diary on the day that the news of peace had arrived, ‘with the fearful feelings that have been entertained by some it is hard to feel any security. Instinctively I feel a weight taken off my shoulders: but with this, I suppose on the removal of tension, an increased sense of mental exhaustion.’²¹⁹ Gladstone was aware of the British dissatisfaction with the condition of the peace conditions but he never forgot the responsibility for Christian subjects of the Porte. In a meeting at Exeter Hall, he said that ‘speaking in support of another Resolution, to the effect that the Ottoman Constitution and Parliament should be supported by the British nation as the best means of securing that civil and religious liberty of which Russia is the most persistent and intolerant enemy.’²²⁰ With this statement, Gladstone once more had made not only his position clearer on Russia but also pointed out that the arrangements to be proposed to the Ottoman Porte shall rest on the guarantees of human rights. Nonetheless, the deep sense of disappointment as to the Ottoman Constitution can be clearly discerned in his correspondence with Mr. Christophorus R. Arguralris:

I have regarded the Turkish Constitution of 1876-7 from two points of view. First, it is a reality, secondly it is a benefit, if it is a reality. And on this second question, I must say that while the Constitution under the condition supposed, would be found on

²¹⁶ Seton-Watson, *Gladstone, Disraeli*, p. 316.

²¹⁷ Marvin Swartz, *The Politics of British Foreign Policy in the era of Disraeli and Gladstone*, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1985), p. 79.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 79.

²¹⁹ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. IX*, p. 295, 4 March 1878.

²²⁰ ‘The Public and the Peace Terms, Exciting Meeting at Exeter Hall’, *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 06 March 1878.

the whole beneficial to Ottoman subjects as such. I should regard it as decidedly injurious to the subject races in their relations to the dominant race and religion, and should view with regret the surrender of any autonomy, however defective, especially if having any sort of individual sanction, under the nation of obtaining an equivalent in the central representation.²²¹

As noted earlier, Gladstone had regarded the development of local liberties of all such provinces as the best solution since Turkey ‘will never obtain under the actual conditions, nor under what is called her Constitution.’²²² He, furthermore, trusted to ‘the voice of united Europe’ to preserve the peace of Europe as ‘the highest organ in the world available for purposes of justice, humanity and policy’ by maintaining the integrity and independence of Turkey ‘that the conclusions which is announced and which Turkey remain as they are.’²²³

Morley argues that sending the British fleet to Constantinople was Gladstone’s suggestion two years earlier but not for the same purpose: ‘the fleet should go to Constantinople as a coercive demonstration against the Porte; now, in 1878, the despatch of the fleet was a demonstration against Russia, who had done alone the work of emancipation that in Mr. Gladstone's view should have been done, and might have been done without war by that concert of the Powers from which England had drawn back.’²²⁴ Gladstone’s approach coincided with his thoughts in this period in that he said ‘No’ to ‘Occupy Bulgaria, Demonstration at Constantinople, call away your Ambassador and reduced conclusions be an

²²¹ BL GP Add MS 44454 fol. 278, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Christophoris R. Arguralris’ on 21 July 1877.

²²² BL GP Add MS 44454 fols .20-2, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Negropontis at Constantinople’ on 9 January 1877, translation made on 13 September 1877.

²²³ BL GP Add MS 44664 fol. 166.

²²⁴ Morley, *The Life of Gladstone*, p. 644.

ultimatum.²²⁵ In considering Gladstone's decision, it is true to suggest that his behaviour was logical since he believed in a continuous effort with the government, pro-government's press and in the House of Commons. When he became the Prime Minister in 1880, therefore, his endeavouring for a coercive demonstration and calling away the Turcophile British ambassador Henry Layard were significant attempts to formulate British policy. The Conservatives, on the other hand, represented a protectionist policy towards the Porte since Disraeli had declared that 'all intention of sending the Fleet in that direction was that it should defend the lives and properties of British subjects in Constantinople and take care of British interests in the Straits.'²²⁶

The arguments that Gladstone advanced on peace featured in his article entitled 'The Paths of Honour and of Shame' which appeared on 15 March in *The Nineteenth Century*.²²⁷ With 'a hope for suffering humanity,' Gladstone was asking 'shame or honour' while arguing for 'a war undertaken without cause is a war of shame, and not of honour.'²²⁸ He stated that on the 21st of last December, the Turkish ambassador in London, in conversation with Lord Derby, had hopes for 'the possibility of English Intervention.'²²⁹ From his perspective, the ambassador's rhetoric had already given signals of British aid to the Turkish Empire in the future. Gladstone also recalled the 'incompetence' of Henry Elliot during the Bulgarian Agitation as the former Ambassador at Constantinople and referred to 'Henry Layard, the present Ambassador at Constantinople, clearly desired to save the Turkish Empire from a complete dissolution.'²³⁰ Gladstone regarded this again as a 'a question of policy' by saying

²²⁵ BL GP Add MS 44664 fol. 164, 'Second policy', BL GP Add MS 44664 fol. 168.

²²⁶ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 237 (25 January 1878), cc435-54.

²²⁷ W. E. Gladstone, 'The Paths of Honour and Shame', *Nineteenth Century*, March 1878.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 12-14.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, p.10.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 11-12.

that ‘on censure and approval of the Government, on past opportunities used or lost, we may largely differ; but there can be little room left for difference as to the true pilotage of our course in the negotiations, after we have become practically sensible that we are no longer fettered by ‘Ottoman independence and integrity’ and that British interests in this case are not separate, but general and European.’²³¹ This statement raises two important points. Firstly, it became apparent that Gladstone was making a full commitment to the European concert instead of adopting the principles of traditional foreign policy towards the Porte. The second point is related to the very acceptance of Russia as a legitimate player for the emancipation of the subjects of the Porte. ‘A free and generous rivalry’ between Russia should be based on ‘the matter of equality, or rather proportion, of treatment, as between Greek and Slav.’²³² At this point, Gladstone had now convinced himself of the reconstitution of society in the East on the natural basis of self-government and argued that ‘freedom for the Christian provinces, requires freedom, freedom civil and religious, in them. Nor do I only speak, at this moment, of the large Mohammedan minorities who in Bulgaria should be justly cared for, and who in Bosnia can to a great extent care for themselves. I speak of dissidents of every kind.’²³³ For these reasons, along with his strong belief in the Concert of Europe since the Treaty of Vienna, he strongly denied Ottoman protection or aid due to the abortive Ottoman promises that were given in the Treaty of Paris 1856 by the Ottoman authorities promising reform. Hence, he urged that it was important to keep neutrality and stability not only for the sake of Britain but also for European peace.

It is true that the Berlin Treaty and the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1878 were the keys to understanding Gladstone’s approach to the conduct of foreign policy towards the Ottoman

²³¹ Ibid, p. 21.

²³² Gladstone, ‘The Paths of Honour and Shame’, p. 22.

²³³ Ibid, p. 24.

Empire. His Commons speech of 30 July was a great example of his tenacity. Prior to the Berlin conference in order to deal with the aspects and such parts of the Treaty of San Stefano, *the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 4 June*, also known as *the Cyprus Convention*, meant more than the British administration of Cyprus on the condition of British safeguarding to the Ottomans against Russian aggression. Despite the assurances of Disraeli to defence British interests in Central Asia, Gladstone regarded the agreement with Turkey as ‘an insane covenant’²³⁴ in his speech at Southwark which he later confided his regret for ‘largely’ entering ‘on the point that the nation ought to have something to say to its own responsibilities & engagements.’²³⁵ There appear to be two main reasons why there were ‘limits of all rational policy as to its contents and aims.’ The first is the failure of Turkey to perform certain great operations. By referring back to the series of reforms since 1839, Gladstone was able to declare that ‘we have never been able to reform Turkey at all.’²³⁶ The other reason relates to the ‘partition’ of the Ottoman Empire which he believed was a ‘concentration’ that enabled the Turkish government to manage its affairs in Europe more efficiently:

The Turkish Empire will be concentrated in Asia, as an effect of the concentration in Europe, and will be concentrated in Asia by the abstraction of the territory which Russia has taken from it. But that is not all. In Europe the concentrated territory is to be administered under great difficulty by a minority of Mahommedans among a majority of Christians, by a Government of the Turkish fashion, with Governments of a very different and far better fashion upon the frontiers at short distances. In European Turkey the Porte has constantly been troubled by revolts. In Asia, so far

²³⁴ ‘Speech at Southwark Liberal Association’, *the Times*, 22 July 1878.

²³⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 15 July 1878,’ p. 72.

²³⁶ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 242 (30 July 1878), cc644-763.

from her having greater difficulties to contend with, her difficulties are infinitely less. Who has heard of revolts in Asia Minor or in Mesopotamia? Who are the inhabitants of Asia Minor in its centre? I do not speak of Armenia; but even in Armenia the Armenians are in a minority. Who, I ask, are the inhabitants of Central Asia Minor? They are the best and most solid of the Mahomedan population in the whole of the Turkish Empire, except that of Mesopotamia and the extreme South-East.²³⁷

It was on this ground that Morley speaks of ‘the virtual ratification of the policy of bag and baggage’ which ‘became in fact an extensive partition of the Turkish Empire’ with the Treaty of Berlin.²³⁸ He respectively touched upon the issues of Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Bulgaria, Armenia, Crete and the British Plenipotentiaries for local autonomy during his speech. It also gives added importance to the Congress policy on the principles of Berlin Treaty by the consent of Europe. An important consideration here is that the Berlin Treaty internationalised the Armenian question which Gladstone had pointed out that ‘All the Powers that have signed that Treaty have taken from the Sultan an engagement for the good government of Armenia, and they are one and all entitled to enforce that engagement.’ As ‘a lower authority’ the consent of Sultan Abdulhamid II was also morally desirable for ‘good government in Armenia.’²³⁹ To an extent, it is true that Abdulhamid was by no means against the partition of his empire and began to concentrate power in his own hands which would eventually lead him to become an ‘absolute authority’. To Gladstone, however, it is difficult not to see the peculiar importance that he gave to the implementation of the Berlin Treaty in his second Premiership. By the same token, Shannon states that ‘the closing chapter of the

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Morley, *The Life of Gladstone*, p. 647.

²³⁹ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 242 (30 July 1878), cc644-763.

Eastern Question at Berlin; its ghost was not finally laid until the dismissal of Disraeli's government in 1880.²⁴⁰

In his subsequent pamphlet 'England's Mission', Gladstone maintained his thoughts in this regard. His criticism of the British Plenipotentiaries of Disraeli and Salisbury in Berlin was that they had 'from the beginning of the Congress to the end instead of taking the side of freedom, emancipation, and national progress, took, in every single point where a practical issue was raised, the side of servitude, of reaction, and of barbarism. With a zeal worthy of a better cause, they laboured to reduce the limits within which the populations of European Turkey are to be masters of their own destinies; to keep as much as they could of direct Turkish rule; and to enfeeble as much as they could the limitations upon that rule.'²⁴¹ He asked the content of the 'honour policy' which put down the principles of Canning and 'not only was there no implementation such as the liberation of subjects, saving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire but also that there was a breach of European law in a single Convention.'²⁴² He also called upon the divided nation to partake of its duty to rejoice whilst declaring the Empire's duties in terms of freedom and leadership among the Great Powers. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the *Eastern Question Association's* report on the Treaty of Berlin and the Anglo-Turkish Convention was in favour of supporting Gladstone's arguments. According to the report, 'bringing back peace' was not considered a success since none of the Powers assembled in Berlin mediated war against England and provocations to war were obviously an equivocal gain.'²⁴³ On the other hand, the Opposition aimed their criticism at his arguments on peace as in a report by the *National Union and Conservative*

²⁴⁰ Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation...*, p. 239.

²⁴¹ William E. Gladstone, 'England's Mission', *Nineteenth Century*, September 1878, p. 3.

²⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 2-3.

²⁴³ The Eastern Question Association, 'Report of Treaty of Berlin and the Anglo-Turkish Convention', Westminster, 2 September 1878, p. 24.

Associations. The report claimed that ‘opponents like Gladstone sought to mix up the recent proceedings in the earlier stages of the insurrection by relying upon the short memory of the public.’²⁴⁴

With this background, it also became clear that the importance of Gladstone’s moral distaste for Disraeli had turned out to be a breaking point in this rivalry over the direction of foreign policy. Disraeli alleged that Gladstone was asking ‘which words of his drove him to define ‘a dangerous and even devilish character.’²⁴⁵ Gladstone admitted in his draft letter that ‘by his side the responsibility attaching to the use of strong language but subject to his responsibility and the limitation that it is to touch measures only and not character’ particularly for ‘the demand of public liberty.’²⁴⁶ This correspondence between Disraeli, as Quinault argues, not only reveals an aspect of ‘the personalization of their disagreement’²⁴⁷ but also indicates that Gladstone asserted a stronger line against Disraeli’s Turcophile policy than he did in his previous statements. Since ‘the nest egg of the Suez Canal Shares’, Matthew refers Gladstone was seeing Disraeli’s aim for a ‘new Asiatic Empire’ through the Anglo-Turkish Convention of June 1878; and it had embarked on a forward policy in central Asia which led to punitive expeditions, the imposition of a ruler, Abdurrahman, in Afghanistan, and the possibility of a military presence there for the foreseeable future.’²⁴⁸

It becomes clear that Gladstone’s references in British imperial analogies would therefore appear to stem more from the Bulgarian Agitation. Gladstone’s considerable interest that emerges from events in Afghanistan was therefore not only against Disraeli government’s

²⁴⁴ The National Union and Conservative Associations, ‘The Treaty of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople’, Westminster, August 1878, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ BL GP Add MS 44457 fol. f.166-7, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Beaconsfield on 30 July 1878’

²⁴⁶ BL GP Add MS 44457 fols.172-82, fol. 178, ‘Mr. Gladstone to the Earl of Lord Beaconsfield, August 1878.’

²⁴⁷ Quinault, ‘Gladstone and Disraeli: A Reappraisal of their Relationship’, pp. 569-70.

²⁴⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 127.

military action but also evolved with a taste of his morality and human rights. The endeavour from Gladstone to show the relevance of Afghanistan, populated and ruled by Muslims, to the concept of international human rights was a move that went beyond the assumption that his struggle was only for Christian communities. Without question, Gladstone showed himself to be very sensitive in the matter of the consistency for defending the rights of the oppressed people with righteous indignation until his manifestation for six 'Right Principles of Foreign Policy' in Midlothian Campaign of 1879. In that respect, Quinault also defines below extract from his second Midlothian speech as Gladstone's 'moral observation' as the 'most telling humanitarian statement':

Remember the rights of the savage, as we call him. Remember that the happiness of his humble home, remember that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan, among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God, as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you together as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the law of mutual love; that the mutual love is not limited to shore of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilisation; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth.²⁴⁹

Gladstone's views, were likely to appeal to much of the British public due to the religious lines that he employed and the pride of the British Empire's role in colonialism against Russia. There is indeed a marked difference between the confidence in the case of Bulgarian atrocities and the misgivings in Afghanistan that his eloquence reveals. Quinault argues that it is hard to ignore that 'the Bulgarians were European Christians whereas the Afghans were

²⁴⁹ 'Gladstone on 26 November 1879, Second Midlothian Speech', William E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879 with an introduction of M. R. D Foot*, (New York: Leicester University Press, 1971), p. 94; Roland Quinault, 'Afghanistan and Gladstone's Moral Foreign Policy', *History Today*, Volume 52, Issue 12, December 2002, pp. 28-34, p. 28.

Muslim Asians who even Gladstone had described as the most warlike and the most fickle highland people in the world.²⁵⁰ It is true that Gladstone acknowledged equal rights for all nations and the love of freedom but it would logically prove difficult to include Afghanistan in the Concert of Europe and Christian humanitarian assistance. There is, too, a marked difference between Gladstone's views on the subject of Islamic governance. Quinault cites Gladstone's belief that the 'Quran had been an evil influence on the civil government of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, but his application of the same moral standards to both Bulgaria and Afghanistan illustrated his relative lack of Christian prejudice. When he returned to Midlothian, on the dissolution of the Parliament, in March 1880, he asked whether the Afghan War could be justified with government 'of a country which calls itself Christian.'²⁵¹ Apparently, Gladstone's consistent apprehension in the Turkish case was the Islamic governance as the central regulation which was the main paradox for Christian subjects' liberty and religious freedom.

To be precise, The Midlothian Campaign was the main venture that showed the mutual effects upon Gladstone and the Eastern Question. Gladstone's trademark passionate leadership with respect to a series of events in the Ottoman Empire was one of the most historic moments in British foreign policy. Equally, using the Eastern Question as the main campaign headline became a part of Gladstonian liberalism. Biagini argues that the rejuvenation of the popular support for Liberalism was dedicated neither to a party nor a government but to Gladstone's self-abnegation.²⁵² Moreover, Biagini defines this process in relation to 'a new generation that was coming of age: it was to know Gladstone only in his post-1876 version, and represented the majority of those who stuck to him with blind passion

²⁵⁰ Quinault, 'Afghanistan and Gladstone's Moral Foreign Policy', p. 33.

²⁵¹ Roland Quinault, 'Afghanistan and Gladstone's Moral Foreign Policy', *History Today*, Volume 52, Issue 12, December 2002, pp. 28-34, p. 33.

²⁵² Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 387

and unconditional loyalty until 1894.²⁵³ From another point of view, Campbell defines Gladstone's reputation as 'unrivalled' which was increasingly proven under his leadership of protest, 'on the ground for our common humanity', since 'the Bulgarian Horrors' (1876-7).²⁵⁴ Matthew further suggests that 'there was an indication that Gladstone was beginning to see himself as a political tribune of the people, a moral tribune; the Atrocities Campaign had already made him represent right behaviour against a Court and a Prime Minister increasingly seen as unconstitutional in their behaviour.'²⁵⁵ The majority of the scholarship seems largely convinced that Gladstone defined the Eastern Question and used the reporting of events to help construct the ideological parameters and this was particularly evident on the subject of humanitarianism.

During six years in opposition, there is little doubt that Gladstone passed the nationwide public examination with 'his main business': the Eastern Question. He became known as a 'public authority' on this subject in terms of defending the rights of 'oppressed' Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire and also a 'criticism authority' with regards to the pro-Turkish foreign policies of Lord Beaconsfield's government. Having said that, the legacy of Gladstone also became the core of the traditions and rituals in the Victorian society, party politics as well as the fundamentals of the Liberal Party. In contrast, it is true that he was the man who pioneered the end of friendly attitudes between the two countries but who pushed forward humanitarian moralism, even in its approach to Ottoman affairs.

²⁵³ Ibid, p. 387.

²⁵⁴ Kate Campbell, 'W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), pp. 20-40', p. 23.

²⁵⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 39.

Concluding remarks

In exploring the place of Gladstone in British policy towards the Ottoman Empire, this thesis up to this point has explored Gladstone's attitude towards the Porte and Christian subjects of the Porte since his early life until his second Premiership. The chapters have highlighted not only the key themes and consistent features of Gladstone's own thinking with respect to the Porte, but also the evidence has reinforced the idea that Gladstone's involvement in the Bulgarian Agitation in 1876 was not a sudden event. He possessed a constant concern for the direct government of Turks in a 'wretched system' despite the socio-ethnic structure in the society and the number of different -religious identities. In order to obtain a broader picture for his engagement with the Turkish affairs, it has been argued that besides the aspects of early life and political inspirations from Canning, his consideration of local self-government and freedom of religious faith intertwined with the principal reasons for his defence of the rights for Christian minorities. It is clear that Gladstone took a lively interest in foreign affairs, since the Crimean War, and the main significance of the Eastern Question lies not only in religious aspects but also in humanitarian needs and the economic outcomes for the British Empire – for instance, the costly venture of Ottoman loans and the Suez Canal shares. What becomes increasingly apparent is that Gladstone's endeavour was to use British policy for moral persuasion to appeal to the public and so with the Concert of Europe for the proposals for the Ottoman reforms.

It is equally clear that one of the significant aspects of British policy towards the Porte was the status of Christian subjects under the Turkish rule in addition to economic and political underpinnings. Subsequent to Crimean War, Britain had developed a strong intimacy with the Ottoman Empire which was based on mutual trust and friendship under the architecture of Lord Palmerston and Stratford Canning. Gladstone found Palmerston's policy distasteful not

only for the British alliance with the ‘oppressive Turks’ but also Palmerston’s weight on a *Realpolitik* approach which lacked a sense of morality. Despite his serious misgivings as to the Ottoman government’s ability to regenerate the Empire, it has been argued that Gladstone adhered to the principles of traditional British policy towards the Porte which comprised the maintenance of the policy of keeping Ottoman territorial integrity (with domestic reforms) and guarding Ottoman independence against the Russian threat in the international arena. Yet, Gladstone’s humanitarian vision since the Greek Question was occasionally reflected in his eloquence that defended the rights of the ‘oppressed’ Christian subjects as in the case of Crete, Danubian principalities and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Christian humanitarianism, indeed, was a constant component that consisted in his attitude to the Ottoman affairs since his engagement with the Eastern question over the subsequent fifty years.

Until his resignation from the Liberal party leadership in 1874, moral, economic and political considerations for the Turkish Government were the chief motivations behind Gladstone’s policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Turkish financial debt, the failure of the Ottoman reform efforts and his denunciation of oppressive governments for liberty and justice have a significant place in Gladstone’s thinking but they were subordinate to a more demanding moral consideration which was the fate of the Christian population. It has been shown that along with his sympathy with Eastern Christians, Gladstone opposed the role that religious identity played in the Ottoman Empire along with his criticism towards the principles of Islamic governance on the violation of religious freedom. Muslim rule with Turkish maladministration, whether the non-Muslims constitute a majority or a minority on the Christian community was a crucial aspect of Gladstone’s concerns. Nonetheless, what is clear is the lack of any reference to the rights of Muslims even when he visited the Eastern Mediterranean opens to discussion particularly for his future position as to Islamic paradigm. As to the nature of Islam and concerning on Turkish maladministration, ‘it would be very

unfair to judge of the social character and the capacities of Islam from an instance where it holds a position so radically false' he declared, which indicate that behind the uncertainties he stood committed to the continuance of Islamic governance.²⁵⁶ To Gladstone, Palmerston's Ottoman policy demonstrated consistent entanglements. In that lies the key to the understanding of Gladstone's ideas in respect to equal rights for the Christian subjects with self-governance under Ottoman autonomy to which the interests of European stability gave rise to criticism for his thinking of 'de-centralization' as 'the true policy of Turkey.'²⁵⁷ Despite his apprehension for the extent of adoption of revisionary reforms and Ottoman maladministration, he stood committed to the continuance of the Ottoman Empire. The implication is that Gladstone adhered to upheld Ottoman territorial integrity not only against the Russian bid for hegemony over the territories but also the British tie with the opening of Suez Canal which widened economic interests in the region. As for the deep-seated humanitarian aspect, Gladstone's observation and sympathy for nationalist movements' influence has been extensive and enduring.²⁵⁸

By analysing these different points of reference, these chapters have sought to explain why he experienced the 'righteous indignation' during Bulgarian Agitation and expressed anti-Turkish sentiments. There were certainly elements of continuity such as the failure of the Turks to live up their promises, Ottoman financial debt and Turkish maladministration. Overall, it has been stressed that Gladstone made these criticisms in the context of his attacks on the Disraeli government's foreign policy. It has been further considered that Gladstone had always regarded Ottoman nation states with ethnic-religious differences independently from the Sublime Porte's Islamic character of the state. Much has been said about

²⁵⁶ BL GP Add MS 44695 fols. 186-7, 'Russian Policy and Deeds in Turkistan'

²⁵⁷ Gladstone, 'The Past and Present Administrations', p. 556.

²⁵⁸ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 227 (8 February 1876), cc52-114.

Gladstone's strong religious beliefs as the main driving force for his involvement. However the analysis presented here has sought to point out that this was not due to Islamophobia. Gladstone had made it clear that 'the question of the East is not a question of Christianity against Islamism. It is, however a question of the Christians against the Porte and the governing Ottomans.'²⁵⁹ As discussed in the previous chapters, Gladstone's endeavour for the rights of Afghans, populated and ruled by Muslims, was a remarkable example of his promotion of equal rights among nations. Yet, this remained as a question of imperialism rather than one of religion. It is also important to remember that Gladstone's references in British imperial analogies would, therefore, appear to stem more from the Bulgarian Agitation. Gladstone's ideas about self-government within the context of British Empire as in Transvaal and Ireland appear to run in parallel with the Ottoman case but with exceptions. It has been argued that the objectives which he had so passionately defended since his early politics and arguments for the establishment of local liberty and practical self-determination in the Ottoman provinces is unadaptable due to the Balkan people's national aspirations in favour of full independence, the nature of a gathering system of Ottoman autocracy and his inspiration from Aristotle's virtue of the 'capacity to govern'.

²⁵⁹ BL GP Add MS 44454 fols.20-2, 'Mr. Gladstone to Negropontis at Constantinople' on 9 January 1877, translation made on 13 September 1877.

II. W.E.GLADSTONE'S SECOND MINISTRY 1880-85 and FINAL YEARS IN OTTOMAN AFFAIRS

Introduction

Up to this point, it is certain that there were, some events and activities during the Bulgarian Agitation, until Gladstone's second premiership in 1880 which, had some foreseeable effects. A feature in Gladstone's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire since his early life was the special place that he ascribed to the liberation of subject races of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the Eastern Campaign raised widespread expectations in public opinion from his strong position on Ottoman affairs. Although, Gladstone's role in these developments can be viewed as 'a national revolt against the Anglo-Turkish Alliance,'¹ Gül Tokay states that Britain 'was still Constantinople's closest ally despite the deterioration of relations between the Empire and Britain after the Congress of Berlin.'² Trevor Jenkins also agrees with this idea in that 'the Whigs did not necessarily approve of the "tone" of Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, but most could see that a dramatic change of policy by a Liberal Government was unrealistic.'³ Notwithstanding Jenkins point, the lack of greater examination of this area by historians is surprising since Gladstone's second Premiership was a culmination of his thoughts and efforts as to the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. It is especially apparent that British policy towards the Porte was at a critical stage and the change had already begun. The question still presents itself as to what extent British policy evolved in the

¹ 'Mr. Gladstone's position', *The Northern Echo*, 25 November 1879.

² TNA: FO 78/3166, Assim to Musurus, Constantinople, 4 October 1880 Tokay, G. 'Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone' p. 331. source: <http://ebox.nbu.bg/hist12/ne3/5tokay.pdf>

³ Trevor A. Jenkins, 'Gladstone, The Whigs and the leadership of the Liberal party, 1879-1880', *the Historical Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Jun. 1984), pp. 337-360, pp. 343- 344, p. 350.

light of these circumstances under Gladstone's leadership; what was the measure he brought forward as to liberty and freedom for the minorities of the Turkish Empire, what was Gladstone's stance as Prime Minister towards the Ottoman Empire and Turkish governors? Therefore, the aim of the subsequent parts of this thesis is to examine and critically explore Gladstone's further roles in the Eastern Question and analyse this turning point with its long term effects up to his role in Armenia and with the occupation of Egypt in 1882. The following chapters will, hence, consider British policy towards the Porte under Gladstone and Lord Granville which began to further push an agenda that was informed by humanitarian and moral objectives along with the vision for European order of nations established with international law in the 1880s.

I. The New Cabinet's First Mission: Revising British Policy Towards the Porte

After the Liberal victory in the 1880 general election, it is clear that the political and social situation of Great Britain had reached a certain degree of stability and the Eastern Crisis became a more critical concern. In addition to this, a new tradition was consolidated inside the British parliament in terms of foreign policy. It can be argued that the rights of Eastern Christians were a subject that was previously Gladstone's personal affair and struggle. However, by 1880 it had become transformed into an official parliamentary issue. By referring to Disraeli's supremacy on the Eastern affairs, H. C. G. Matthew defines the results of the four year period as a sacrifice of Bulgarians and Armenians, with a gain of imperialism with the annexation of Cyprus as a result of Gladstone's personalisation of foreign policies during the Eastern Question.⁴ It is in this connection that Seton Watson highlights, 'while, then, Disraeli clung to the very last to his illusions on Turkey and identified British interests with the artificial maintenance of a decadent state, Gladstone saw the future lay with the

⁴H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp 54-55.

nations whom Ottoman tyranny had so long submerged.’⁵ With regards to the role of public opinion in foreign-policy making, Rohan McWilliam suggests that, ‘where politics had principally been a local matter, Gladstone helped to create a national constituency that would be roused by his moralising politics.’⁶ By referring to Max Weber’s concept of charismatic leadership Eugenio Biagini argues that the amalgamation of charisma and liberal rationalism in Gladstone which appeared as a protection of the country ‘against any development of the authority of the leader towards authoritarianism, and brought the liberal creed-as people said in those days-to the millions.’⁷ In the Midlothian speeches, Gladstone’s main inspiration was Ottoman foreign affairs as he placed great emphasis on humanitarian concerns in foreign policy. Nevertheless, it is the case that Gladstone felt a particular responsibility due to his declaration of six fundamental and prospective principles of foreign policies along with his consistent concern over the rights of minorities in the Ottoman provinces.⁸ In that respect, it can be argued that three of these principles– maintaining the Concert of Europe, preserving peace and adhering to just legislation and economy– can be regarded entirely as an attack on Beaconsfieldism. ‘The special purpose of the administration of 1880’, as he later admitted, was ‘partly of correcting generally the over-sea policy of Lord Beaconsfield’s administration but also of giving effect to the Treaty of Berlin in certain points where its stipulations were beneficial and where they remained up to the date of our acceptance in abeyance.’⁹ On the other hand, by maintaining the Concert of Europe, avoiding needless engagements and acknowledging the equal rights of nations with a love of freedom, it could be argued that

⁵ Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, p. 570.

⁶ Rohan McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth Century England*, (London: Routledge Publishers, 1998), p. 49.

⁷ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p. 425.

⁸ Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879*, p. 40.

⁹ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I’, p. 252.

these features formed the basis of a draft plan for the new Ottoman policy. In this vein, it is obvious that Gladstone made a very conscious and determined effort to transform the government's Eastern policy at the beginning of his premiership. Along with his growing concern about the fate of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, he eagerly asserted conditions as to the British friendship to the Sultan which was mainly based upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment.¹⁰

Beyond his commitment to the concert, to Gladstone the defence of the rights of minority populations was to be the first priority in his policy towards the East. For instance, when his suspicions of Great Power's attitudes were fuelled by Austria's conduct in Bosnia & Herzegovina, he had already pointed out before the elections that:

It is a great mistake to believe that the great Liberal Party favours aggrandisement of Russia in the East... I do not for a moment ignore the value of the efforts that made by several Austria cabinets in paving the way to obtain progress. I am only suspicious in regards to its foreign policy... The liberated races should have the opportunity of building up a future for themselves and their territory must not be annexed by others. Whoever understands the English phrase of "Hands off" will be able to understand my line with the policy. What I stated in respect to the Eastern Question and the policy followed by Austria, I was in duty bound to state. I am the watchful dog that barks.¹¹

Gladstone's statement indicates and reinforces his role in protecting the liberty and freedom of subject races against any aggressively expansionist moves coming from Great Powers

¹⁰ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 10 June 1880', p. 134.

¹¹ 'Gladstone to James Bryce on 31 May 1880' in Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. IX.*, p. 532, 'Mr. Gladstone interviewed', *Reynold's Newspaper*, 18 April 1880.

which had become an essential part of his policy. Despite his belief to Count Karolyi's sincerity¹², he wrote in a letter written on 4 May 1880 that 'I will not conceal from Your Excellency that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan Peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan.'¹³ In another letter to Count Karolyi, Gladstone placed great emphasis on the current belief in the country that Austria intended to make her occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina a base of further annexations, to the detriment of the legitimate aspirations both of the emancipated and still enslaved races of European Turkey. In reply, the Austrian ambassador assured Gladstone that Austria had no intention of extending her frontier southward or interfering outside her present borders.¹⁴ Indeed, he was considered this to be an Austrian proposition that would give effect to the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin and respect the frontier of Montenegro.

After twenty-two years, Gladstone obstinately clung to the belief that the only realistic policy was to establish 'local and provincial self-government, varying according to the rights, traditions, and comparative maturity of the subjects' which the Sultan allowed from his central government for the future security of Europe.¹⁵ The strength of this belief is an important measure of his conviction that supported his persuasive goal in British policy towards the Porte. His explanation in regards to the role of Turkish Government provides the key to his understanding on this subject:

¹² Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 4 May 1880', pp.123-4.

¹³ BL GP Add MS 44624 fol. 93, 'Mr. Gladstone to Count Karolyi' on 4 May 1880.

¹⁴ BL GP Add MS 44624 fol.96, 'Mr. Gladstone and Count Karolyi' by Ignotus to the editor of *Daily News* on 15 May 1880.

¹⁵ William E. Gladstone, 'The Past and Present Administrations', p. 558-9.

That the only hope for the Ottoman Power is to be found in the model offered by the best examples of local autonomy: the Lebanon, Samos and Crete. That the Turkish Government if it declines, the decision of the Mediators is hurrying on to the ruin of the Empire. That a moral conflict, much more than a material collision, with the Powers will probably distort the peace throughout the Empire & that wherever it is disturbed the Sultan's authority may & in some cases certainly will never be restored.¹⁶

Under the Treaty of Berlin, liberty of conscience and civil rights were assured and the new Liberal policy towards the Ottoman Empire began to form within the idea that the British Empire should work with the other powers in order to maintain the harmony of the Concert of Europe. Agatha Ramm supports this view by asserting that the purpose of British cooperation with the 'so-called European Concert' was based on 'Gladstone's doctrine of limited liability [that] realistically set bounds to the responsibility which he had accepted.'¹⁷ Despite Gladstone's doubts surrounding the subject of Turkish governance, Matthew suggests that Gladstone's sincerity on Turkish domination was 'the best way of maintaining stability in the Balkans' on self-government for Christian states, and 'had disliked independence or partition.'¹⁸ Trevor Lloyd puts forward the argument that the reasoning behind Gladstone's actions was due to the actions of the Turkish government which should be kept in order to interfere with any possibility on 'massacring its Christian subjects' and gave countenance 'to give up some of its territory in Europe.'¹⁹ Admittedly, Gladstone, as the head of the Liberal Government, now needed to balance his previous arguments on foreign policy which he had inherited from Disraeli's ministry in order to operate a new or revised Ottoman diplomacy.

¹⁶ BL GP Add MS 44642 fol.60, 'Cabinet notes for 24 July 1880'

¹⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone*, p. 202.

¹⁸ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 130.

¹⁹ Trevor Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 41.

Needless to say, the major part of the popular politics was based on the nature of British foreign policy on the Ottoman Question and how the Eastern Question might be resolved. It was also Gladstone's conviction that the views with the 1880 government were 'less definite' than they had been in 1868.²⁰ In a much later reflection he observed that:

First and foremost, stood the foreign policy of the government. I shall always think the election of 1880 exhibits a noble example of the conduct of a people. By that election, they cashiered their subsisting administration because on behalf of the country it had exhibited not too little but too much self-assertion. With this firm national modesty was intermingled, doubtless a strong sense of humanity and a lively recollection of Bulgaria. The first object of all, was to change the tone of our diplomatic representation at Constantinople: and this, if I remember right, was effected when the government was not many days old, if indeed it was at the time fully constituted.²¹

It was now clear that the considered vision as to the Bulgarian Agitation and the consistency of his attitude towards the Porte throughout his life that Gladstone suggests in that passage is evidence for an adjustment of priorities and a change of policy towards the Ottoman Empire. It could be argued that Sir Austen Henry Layard represented the old Ottoman tradition of policies. The letter in which Layard referred to Gladstone's recollection that 'in the last resort to prevent the fall of Turkey, England would for her own interests have to interfere' would indeed deepen the mutual antagonism between two statesmen since the Negroponte affair in 1877.²² When considering Gladstone's view that he had never supposed that the British had

²⁰ Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica* 'Second Cabinet of 1880-5', 25 September 1897, pp. 256-6, p. 256.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 12 May 1880', p. 127.

given it to be understood that ‘we should interfere and support Turkey on any other ground’ referring to the Russo-Ottoman War, this offers a reasonable explanation for determining Gladstone’s thinking to recall Layard which can be considered as an official step for a new foreign policy.²³ As far as Layard was concerned with the progress in foreign affairs in opposition to his desire, he remained optimistic on the matters pending between the Embassy and the Porte.²⁴

On 6 May 1880, Layard was asked to inform the Porte that George Goschen would be the special ambassador and enquired about whether he could gain the Sultan’s consent on this decision.²⁵ As Gladstone and Lord Granville conceived of it, Goschen’s particular mission began with giving effect to the Treaty of Berlin which included the naval demonstration at Smyrna in the first place. In comparison with Layard, Kemal H. Karpat describes Goschen as ‘a rather abrupt person due to his usage of the British navy to force the sultan to cede Montenegro to Dulcigno.’²⁶ Indeed, his political movements under the directive of following ‘strong instructions from London’ and to impose as promptly, besides highlighting the speciality of article 61 of the Berlin Treaty ‘which charged the Ottoman government with carrying out reforms in East Anatolia under British supervision.’²⁷ This argument, nonetheless, emphasizes the basic contradiction between Ottoman-centric and British-centric historiography. It was not Goschen’s individual determination of policy but responsibility for the Liberal government’s expression of the British attitude in the East. It is clear that it was

²³ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 12 May 1880’, p. 127.

²⁴ TNA: Henry Layard to Earl Granville, Foreign Telegrams, 1 June 1880.

²⁵ ‘Inform the Porte that the Queen has appointed the right honourable G. Goschen to be the special ambassador from relieving you the duties of ‘Qualifying’ ‘Provoking’) on leave of closure.’ ‘I am afraid we have needed to ask whether Mr. Goschen could be agreeable to the Sultan. The mission is quite unintentional.’ TNA: Earl Granville to Layard, 6 May 1880, Foreign Telegrams.

²⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, (London: Library of Congress and Publishing Data, 2002), p. 502.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Disraeli's ministry that had refused to make certain moves in foreign policy and Layard was the last representative of old Ottoman tradition of policies. Layard's sudden departure was, therefore, not welcomed by the Ottoman side, particularly by Sultan Abdulhamid II. On the day that he left the office, Layard pointed out the Sultan's 'regret at his departure' by stating that 'His Majesty's principally owes to me that he was now on the throne. If it had not been for me, his fleet would have been given up to Russia and Buyukdere would have been occupied by Russian troops.'²⁸ Goschen, on the other hand, thought that Sultan Abdulhamid II was afraid of him and wrote to Lord Granville that, 'as you told the Queen I never fail to be perfectly courteous ... My manner leaves the impression on him that I thoroughly mean business, and that is what he doesn't like.'²⁹

In May 1880, Gladstone developed his points in conversations with Musurus Pasha and Aristarchi Bey. Indeed, it was his considered opinion that the 'idea that in the last resort the Ottoman power is a British interest to be sustained by our arms does not form the basis or any parts of our policy.'³⁰ When Musurus Pasha referred to the idea that the Crimean alliance was made to sustain this English interest, he pointed out his view 'according to the picture exhibited in the life of Prince Consort as a war made in support of European legality, which the Czar endeavouring to infringe in the case of Turkey.'³¹ Instead of British unilateral action, Gladstone's desire was to engage in the concert of Europe to which his aim was not to exercise of separate influence on the Porte. It is true that Gladstone continued to make the

²⁸ TNA FO 78 3108 Henry Layard to Earl Granville, Foreign Telegrams, 12 May 1880.

²⁹ Goschen to Granville, 2 July 1880, Thomas J. Spinner, *George Joachim Goschen the Transformation of a Victorian Liberal*, (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1973), p. 71.

³⁰ BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97'; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda* '14 May 1880 Conversation with Musurus Pasha, Turkish Ambassador in London', p. 55.

³¹ BL GP Add MS 56645 fol.95, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97'; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, 'W. E. Gladstone's memorandum on the conversation with Musurus Pasha', 14 May 1880, pp. 55-7, p. 56.

argument in terms of his principal aim to support the maintenance of Turkish Empire. Yet, at the same time, he eagerly set out his role of emancipation of the Christian subjects of the Porte. Gladstone admitted in his memorandum that

we did not wish to see separate and special influence exercised in Turkey by other powers, nor by ourselves: that we entertained a sincere good will towards the Empire and desired the supremacy of the Sultan to be maintained, but conditionally upon effective measures for the security and prosperity for the populations, for which the means ought to be efficacious, and the best means would be what we call administrative not political autonomy— with this the actual tie(lien) ought to be light.³²

Gladstone saw a direct connection between the Sultan's sovereignty and the local liberties of inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Nonetheless, his concern over the interaction of Turkish authority or any other influence that overshadowed this liberty, as in the case of Austria on Bosnia-Herzegovina, is easy to understand as a primary motivation in Gladstone's thinking. It was Gladstone's belief to laud the projects of Constitution for the provinces in the hope that the re-establishment of Turkish Parliament 'shall not override any of the concessions made by the Porte to any of the emancipated forces' in addition to 'impartial representation' between different religions.³³ It is worth remembering that such statements, in this context, also included his desire for the 'improved arrangements fiscal or political to the Turkish finances.'³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97' ; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda* '14 May 1880 Conversation with Musurus Pasha, Turkish Ambassador in London', p. 55.

³⁴ Ibid.

Gladstone kept Lord Granville closely informed of these proceedings and he particularly felt confident that ‘the foreign office was safe in Lord Granville’s hands.’³⁵ With regards to Granville’s key decision-making role with the Porte, Gladstone told Musurus Pasha with apparent confidence and earlier convictions that his opinion on ‘foreign affairs with Lord Granville said might be considered as coming from me—that if in my conversations there was anything not in accord with his, it would probably due to (an) accidental error on my part.’³⁶ It is true that Lord Granville had refused to make certain moves but it was prudent for Turkish governors and he endeavoured to make progress with the Ottoman Government. For example, he had expressed his anxiety to Gladstone that Musurus would not report the conversation to the Sultan.³⁷ Nonetheless, Lord Granville and Musurus Pasha equally played pertinent roles in improving diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the Ottoman government. When Musurus Pasha was recalled to Constantinople in view of Goschen’s arrival, he announced the Sultan’s satisfaction with British policy and his intention to cooperate in order to secure the execution of the stipulations with the Treaty of Berlin.³⁸ In this vein, the *Daily Gazette* on 3 June 1880 reported that: ‘At the last Cabinet Council, Musurus Pasha was present, it is understood that he expounded his views as to the actions of English Government and endeavoured to reassure the Ministry with respect to Mr. Goschen’s mission.’³⁹ As Tokay also suggests the status of Musurus particularly relished ‘a working

³⁵ Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *the Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume I: Autobiographica* ‘Second Cabinet of 1880-5’, 25 September 1897, pp. 256-6, p. 256.

³⁶ BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, ‘Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97’; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘W.E. Gladstone’s memorandum on the conversation with Musurus Pasha’, 14 May 1880, pp. 55-7, p. 56.

³⁷ BL GP Add MS 44172 fol. 57, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone’ on 13 May 1880.

³⁸ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 29 May 1880’, pp. 130-1.

³⁹ ‘Latest News’, *the Daily Gazette*, 3 June 1880.

relationship with the Liberals' and he determinedly tried to convince the Sultan that the British just desired 'to see the implementation of the Berlin Treaty.'⁴⁰

To a certain extent, the Berlin Treaty of 1878 was not only a peace treaty that ended the Russo-Turkish War. In fact, it can be argued that the treaty basically constituted the foundation of a new policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Convinced by its far-reaching consequences, Gladstone regarded 'the Treaty of Berlin as the legal and natural base' of British policy.⁴¹ In a similar vein, Lord Granville made a private explanation to Lord Dufferin that 'acting cordially with Europe and trying to hasten the fulfilment of the conditions of the Treaty of Berlin' was desirable.⁴² Therefore, it can be observed that the political implementation of the treaty meant unity with the Great Powers in the solution of the Eastern Question whilst also preserving and elevating British interests. W. N. Medlicott describes Gladstone's aim as 'to find a basis for a revived concert of Europe in joint pressure on the Turks, who had hitherto been able to resist the execution of many of the treaty clauses... and the powers had their hands full for the next twelve months with the execution of the clauses concerning the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers.'⁴³ Along with Lord Granville's instructions, Goschen's mission began by urging the Porte to implement certain points of the Treaty of Berlin. The instructions that were conveyed to the Sultan were 'essentially of a friendly character' despite the British invitation of 'the other Treaty of Powers in order to exercise

⁴⁰ Tokay, 'Anglo-Ottoman Relations and William Gladstone', p. 328.

⁴¹ BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97'; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, 'W.E. Gladstone's memorandum on the conversation with Musurus Pasha', 14 May 1880, pp. 55-7, p. 56.

⁴² 'Doc. 151. A private explanation of policy by Granville, 5 May 1880', Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy From Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.), p. 397.

⁴³ W., N., Medlicott, 'The Gladstone Government and the Cyprus Convention of 1880-85', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jun., 1940), pp. 186-208, pp. 186-87.

united pressure upon the Porte.’⁴⁴ When Goschen had been instructed to send someone to investigate allegations of ill-treatment of Moslems in Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, his ‘lively desire’ was also ‘to promote the general well-being of Ottoman subjects without distinctions on creed’ during his stay and his ‘efforts should have contributed to bring them a result.’⁴⁵ This is also evident in a telegram to Lord Granville, where Goschen pointed out that

England desired the Christian nationalities to be respected and to show themselves capable of self-government, discipline and strength, and that in the interests of these populations themselves. They must clear themselves of the charge that atrocities against the Mussulmans were treated certainly. I ceded that the Sultan and the Porte might complain with the justice of the Powers remained entirely passive, while such acts as those reported to us were going on and while the Sultan alleged that it was not permitted to intervene himself to protect those who were still his Mussulman subjects. His Excellency’s situation to the declaration made in Parliament on the subject by Mr. Gladstone. M. Novikoff said he had seen the reports of Mr. Gladstone’s observations. I pointed out of his Excellency that it was clear that his majesty’s government desired the investigation in a friendly spirit to the Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia but simply in the cause of justice and humanity...⁴⁶

An important consideration in this telegram is that the consultative and consensus-based process of foreign policy amongst the foreign secretary, the Prime Minister and the British Ambassador at the Porte had become a set of common norms and values. It is also worth noting that Gladstone had relied considerably on the advice of Lord Granville. Hence, it can be argued that the Ottoman minority policy of the Liberal Government was mainly based on

⁴⁴ TNA FO 78 3108 Confidential, Earl Granville to Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, Foreign Office, 18 May 1880, p. 4

⁴⁵ TNA FO 78 3108 G. Goschen to Lord Granville, 11 June 1880.

⁴⁶ TNA FO 78 3087 G. Goschen to Lord Granville on 30 May 1880.

the principles of humanity, freedom and self-government. At the same time, this policy also sought to pursue amicable relations with the Ottoman Empire. In the light of this appeal to the condition of Mahomedan population in Bulgaria, it is appropriate to view Gladstone's interest as how he emphasized the importance in his anxieties surrounding human life and suffering regardless of religion. However, Gladstone showed little willingness to place much more emphasis on the issue. Yet, at the same time, it is important to consider that it was Gladstone's wish to validate his position on behalf of Mussulmans with a high moral tone.

In one of his speeches to the Commons in May 1880, Gladstone went to great lengths to emphasize the 'cordial relations' between the Powers of Europe on the condition of the complete fulfilment of the Treaty of Berlin with respect to the effectual reforms and equal laws in Turkey had not yet been settled.⁴⁷ With regards to Afghanistan and South Africa, on the other hand, he also stated

My efforts will, however, be unceasingly directed towards the pacification of Afghanistan, towards the establishment of such institutions as may be found best fitted to secure the independence of its people, and to restore their friendly relations with my Indian Empire... I invite your careful notice to the important questions of policy connected with the future of South Africa. In maintaining my supremacy over the Transvaal, with its diversified population, I desire both to make provision for the security of indigenious races, and to extend to the European settlers institutions based on large and liberal principles of self-government.⁴⁸

It is true that Gladstone's thinking on civil liberty and self-government appears to run in parallel but opposite directions. Although Gladstone had stressed the need for the fulfilment of the obligations of Berlin Treaty for the effectual development of local liberty and practical

⁴⁷ BL GP Add MS 44624 fol.76, 'Gladstone's speech to the House of Commons', May 1880, Confidential.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

self-government under Turkish maintenance, it is evident that his proposition was a theoretical British oversight in colonial affairs.

In this regard, Gladstone declared that he had deemed it to be expedient to dispatch an Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of the Sultan. He defined the instructions of Mr. Goschen as an 'Identical Note' that needed to be presented to the Turkish Government.⁴⁹

Gladstone wrote Lord Granville that:

My words in the House of Commons have not in any way indicated a collective inquiry in Eastern Roumelia & Bulgaria, so that we are quite free & I can conceive that such an inquiry might seem like the setting up of a separate authority & might shake a young & feeble government...I would do everything to spare the reputation of the local Government in the face of its subjects but I think that as our friendship to the Sultan is conditional upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment, so we ought to make known to the rulers of the emancipated Provinces that our friendship and sympathy with them is contingent upon their making effective arrangements for defending the rights of the minorities & that the want of such arrangements may form an insurmountable bar to the extension of liberal institutions of Turkey.⁵⁰

In the same manner, Lord Granville declared his government's attitude to the Cyprus Convention and drew a general picture of British policy for the good government of Sultan's objects. What Lord Granville had tried to insist upon the Sultan was the concern for all the subjects of the Ottoman Empire since the Treaty of Paris and, whether England would remain bound by the terms of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, and 'continue to be an object of

⁴⁹ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 252 (10 June 1880), c1603 'The Instructions to Mr. Goschen, H.M Ambassador Extraordinary to the Porte'

⁵⁰ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 10 June 1880',

solicitude to her that such ameliorations should take place in the condition and administration of the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey as are requisite for the welfare of their inhabitants and creeds, without bringing them under subjection to any foreign Power.’⁵¹ More to the point, Lord Granville presented the outlook for the general policy of the Liberal Government in a memorandum by Gladstone on 23 September 1880,

Those of us who sit in the House of Commons (and we are in through agreement with the Ministers who are Lords) were certainly not returned to Parliament to carry forward the Foreign Policy of the last Government. And this was known throughout the country and beyond it. Nevertheless, sensible of the expediency of maintaining as far as might be continuity in Foreign Policy, we sought for a ground of action which might be common to both political parties... We had an international title; evidently a far better one than one title of the late Government to conclude the Anglo-Turkish Convention.⁵²

Since, Gladstone regarded this as ‘a matter of delicacy’, he had suggested to ‘safely giving up the stipulations on behalf of the subjects of the Porte throughout Asia upon consideration of Article 61 Berlin for Armenia & the Sultan’s will and intention for reform.’⁵³ It is also the case that Lord Granville was not confident about undertaking the solemn British responsibility for ‘a practical assurance’ by ‘the means and the intention of proceeding at once with the work of reform.’⁵⁴ It is this principle, to act with the Great Powers for the

⁵¹ ‘Doc. 154. Granville expounds the attitude of the Liberal Government to the Cyprus Convention and earns the disapproval of the Queen, 10 June 1880’, Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, p. 404.

⁵² Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, 23 September 1880’, p. 182.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 134.

⁵⁴ ‘Doc. 154. Granville expounds the attitude of the Liberal Government to the Cyprus Convention and earns the disapproval of the Queen, 10 June 1880’, Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, p. 404.

welfare of Sultan's subjects, that is the most marked and consistent feature in the new British policy towards the Porte. Such a remarkable change in this policy reflected these concerns and it can be argued that this significant development demands analytical consideration in respect to the maintenance of Turkish Empire. For instance, Gladstone regarded an attempt to precipitate the union of Bulgaria with Eastern Roumelia to be "most dangerous" and instead was searching for a possible solution to induce Turkey to view such a change, or such a development with good will.⁵⁵ In accepting this line of argument, Lord Granville desired to see a Union. However, he was also concerned with the 'dangerous consequences' to sound the Porte 'respecting anything but the fulfilments of the Treaty of Berlin.'⁵⁶ His alternative suggestion was to abrogate 'the Anglo-Turkish Convention that might put the Porte in such good humour' which he believed would enable them to make progress.⁵⁷ In this regard, Granville's strongest instructions to Goschen were not to 'fail to make the Sultan and his ministers understand that their present careful abstinence from menace does not imply any earnestness or determination as to the course of policy which they desire to see pursued' but to seek reform in its administration both in the capital and in the provinces.⁵⁸ In a conversation with Lord Granville, Gladstone's proposal for 'maintaining as far as might be a continuity in Foreign Policy' that was the 'common ground for both political parties.'⁵⁹ This was found 'in the unfulfilled Clauses of the Treaty of Berlin...a perfect international title; evidently a far better one than the title of the late Government to conclude the Anglo-Turkish

⁵⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 22 May 1880', p. 128.

⁵⁶ BL GP Add MS 44172 fol. 61, 'Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone' on 22 May 1880.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ TNA FO 78/3108 Confidential, Earl Granville to Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, Foreign Office, 18 May 1880, p. 4.

⁵⁹ BL Add MS 44764 fol. 101, 'Memorandum by Mr. Gladstone on the Conversation with Lord Granville, 23 September 1880.'

Convention.’⁶⁰ To appreciate more fully the elements of Gladstone and Lord Granville’s policy, it is also necessary to understand the exhaustion of these two figures in regard to the implementation of reforms throughout the years. As Granville put it:

The noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) had proposed certain reforms to which objections were made by the Porte. The noble Marquess accepted the promise of these in a modified form from the Porte. But none of these promises had been carried out. The European Finance Inspectors had been unable to do anything practical. Some of them had resigned. The appointment of the Judicial Inspectors had been worse than a failure. The organisation of an efficient Gendarmerie still remained without progress. In short, there had been promises, but no performances. The Asiatic provinces were in a lamentable state of disorder and distress, which the steps taken by the Turkish Government were quite insufficient to redress and to relieve.⁶¹

It is true that Gladstone’s concerns never drifted away from the remaining articles of Berlin Treaty in respect to Greek and Montenegrin boundary disputes and Armenian reforms. In June 1880, the Liberal government’s attention became fully focussed on the possible solutions which would compel the Turkish government to accept the possibility of joint foreign policy decisions. Under the guidance of the British government, the Berlin Conference between 16 June and 1 July 1880 was particularly important turning point which implied a collective plan of action to this issue. Yet, despite some progress in policy-making between Great Powers as in the case of Eastern Rumelia⁶², it is evident that there was a distinct lack of a powerful and consistent strategy to this issue. Gladstone’s consistent idea,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Lord Granville on ‘Observations-Question’, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 252 (11 June 1880), cc1722-37.

⁶² Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 18 June 1880’, p. 137.

on the other hand, was that ‘while the Treaty of Berlin is favourable to local government there as well as elsewhere in Europe, its special title to have its case put forward, depends upon & should vary with the opportunity of making it serviceable towards the settlement of the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers.’⁶³

In order to coerce the Porte into an honest Course as regards to Berlin Congress, sending British warships to the Ottoman waters was considered as an effective way of British diplomacy. Nonetheless, the significance of the naval demonstration at Smyrna in the autumn of 1880 for Gladstone has been largely ignored by historians. Indeed, it could be argued that this event brought his ideas towards the Ottoman Empire to the surface since the Crimean War. It is true, as Paul Knaplund argues that the ‘Smyrna proposal emanated from Gladstone.’⁶⁴ Moreover, Richard Shannon suggests that as ‘critical as he was of the treaty, the demonstration was part of the public law of Europe’ and that it was Gladstone’s strategy ‘to use status quo as a fulcrum upon which the Turks might be levered into compliance, especially in the matter of frontier ”rectifications” in favour of Montenegro and Greece.’⁶⁵ Nonetheless, this neglect in the historiography is surprising since this was not a sudden decision. Indeed, John Gladstone’s determination on British inclusion into European alliance in 1827 was not only a continuation of George Canning’s foreign policy but also a gunboat diplomacy to compel the Ottoman Empire in order to give independence to Greece which ended with the destruction of the Ottoman and Egyptian navies at Navarino by British, French and Russian joint fleet.⁶⁶ There is, indeed, a marked difference between the two cases in terms of their application but they appear to have similarities in approach. True to the basic

⁶³ Ibid, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 14 July 1880’, p. 145.

⁶⁴ Knaplund, *Gladstone’s Foreign Policy*, p. 142.

⁶⁵ Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, p. 255.

⁶⁶ Checkland, *The Gladstones, a Family Bibliography 1764-1851*, p. 159.

intentions of presenting Gladstone's thoughts as to the establishment of balance of power, the concert of Europe was the best method to enforce this equilibrium against the increasing hopelessness of Turkish administration. Indeed, Gladstone's views had already become crystallised, as evidenced by the harsh judgements he espoused about Turkish maladministration. The demonstration, therefore, implies that when Gladstone made his decision to coerce the Turks, it was not primarily based on a personal antagonism. Rather, it demonstrated 'the power of a real concert believed to exist'⁶⁷ in order to secure the fulfillment of the treaty. Following the success in Montenegrin frontier, on the other hand, Gladstone wrote Madame Novikov with pleasure that 'the thought of Montenegrin peasant in Dulcigno and this district, though the subject be small, is in principle one for great thankfulness.'⁶⁸

Convinced by this reasoning, on 4 September 1880, in a speech to the Commons, Gladstone clearly declared that 'a change of tone' must be adopted and it was a 'sham and a farce to continue to recommend reforms and to hold this language to the Turkish Government.'⁶⁹ It is difficult not to see this as a special appeal on Gladstone's part since it had no connection with peculiarly personal idea. Rather, it related to the priority of upholding the principle of the emancipation of the minorities in British policy towards the Porte:

Mind, whatever we say about reforms, that is a secondary object in our view; to keep you where you are is our first object. "And the change, Sir, that I hope has been made has been this—that the Ottoman Government begins to understand that although we are *bona fide* desirous to avoid the difficulties and complications that might arise upon the breaking up of the Turkish Empire, yet the tolerable discharge of the duties

⁶⁷ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 234, '11 October 1880'

⁶⁸ 'Mr. Gladstone to Madame Novikov, 28 November 1880', Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff*,

⁶⁹ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 256 (4 September 1880), cc1298-328.

of government towards the subjects of Turkey is no longer a secondary, but a primary object; and that unless Turkey is prepared to discharge them in that tolerable manner of which, I am sorry to say, we have not yet sufficient evidence, the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire must learn to shift for themselves. Notwithstanding it may appear strange to the hon. Member opposite, this is what we believe to be true friendship to Turkey. We believe the true interests of Turkey lie in the adoption of those reforms which good government demands. Other friends of Turkey have had her destinies in their hands at other times, and we see what has been the result. The present condition of the Turkish Empire and its present dangers are the proof of the fruits of another policy.⁷⁰

This speech provides evidence for the key argument of this thesis. It should be observed that Gladstone's understanding of true friendship with Turkey seemed to underlie his good will for the development and a change on the part of the Turkish governance. 'In answer to the Sultan's request for a proof of our friendship', Gladstone's suggestion was to 'point out at Constantinople this state of things and urge that it, are principally due to the delays and evasions of Turkey in the non-execution of the Treaty of Berlin.'⁷¹ On the other hand, it is also noteworthy that Sir Henry Elliot, as the British ambassador at the Porte, was severely criticized by Gladstone due to his consideration of the events since the 1870's. Following this speech, he refused to accept Elliot's interpretation stating that Gladstone believed that 'foreign aid is to be given to the subjects of Turkey against their Government.'⁷² At this point, he repeated that British policy was to be founded on 'the introduction of reforms ought to be primary object in Turkey' unless 'the Porte tolerably discharge administrative duties' in

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 18 September 1880', p. 177.

⁷² Ibid, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 18 September 1880', p. 176.

opposite of Austrian's objection to European peace.⁷³ Indeed, this raises two important points. On the diplomatic aspect, Gladstone was determined and remarked that 'a change of tone' must be adopted in British policy. The second was related to Gladstone's reputation with Elliot's interpretation as to the Bulgarian pamphlet. He lamented to Lord Granville that 'when I contended the official & governing Turk should go out Bulgaria, I was construed by Sir H. Elliot as saying that the Ottoman Power, indeed I believe that all Turks, should be turned out of Europe.'⁷⁴ It is important to stress just how confused contemporaries were by Gladstone's strong rhetoric, particularly the bag and baggage phenomenon which he had employed during the Near Eastern Crisis. This statement to Lord Granville made Gladstone's position clearer as to separating the Turkish government from Turkish nation which was an important feature of his attitude at the time.

What Gladstone's description further illustrates is just how important his perception of Turks was once more. To appreciate more fully the nature of Gladstone's thinking towards the Porte, it is essential to stress the importance of his consideration of Sultan Abdulhamid II. It is, nevertheless, the case that dilating on the balance between principles and individuals in Gladstone's attitude and further reinforces the argument that the Abdulhamid factor in this period has been largely unexplored by historians. First of all, recent research has shown that the Eastern Question was a milestone in Gladstone's long political career and also a platform to present his views on Christianity, love of freedom, liberalism and humanitarianism in support of Ottoman Christian subjects. On the other hand, it can be argued that the experience Abdulhamid II had had during the Eastern Crisis influenced the Sultan's perceptions. Francois Georgeon argues that Abdulhamid had viewed the label of "the Sick Man of Europe" as an insult to his Empire since his childhood and this enabled him to be strong-

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

minded against the Great Powers during the uprisings in the Balkan provinces in 1875.⁷⁵ From that point of view, Feroze Yasamee identifies four major elements in the Sultan's political outlook: 'autocracy, conservatism, reformism and Islam, as a result of the events between 1875 and 1878.'⁷⁶ In the light of the evidence of these appeals, it is appropriate to propose that Abdulhamid II had begun to establish an authoritarian regime to which he endeavoured to attain a stronger position to defend its interests during the relations of the European Powers.

Secondly, and most importantly, the legacy of the Bulgarian agitation had left a heavy impression on both leaders and had affected their optimism towards reconciliation. Joan Haslip argues that Abdulhamid II referred to the Bulgarian Agitation as, 'the most unfortunate event which could have occurred both to him and his country' and who, many years later, came to the throne with the genuine belief in England's friendship, offered to be guided by the advice of her government, and 'he found the government helpless in the hands of that strange phenomenon public opinion'.⁷⁷ On the contrary, Gladstone's strong rhetoric of indignation was evident in his famous pamphlet in which described the Turks as 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity' turned out to be a symbol for the sympathies of British public opinion and to Christian world.⁷⁸ In an ironic and unfortunate turn of events, this incident can be counted as the beginning of a political-ideological confrontation between Islam and Christianity. In other words, Gladstone's strong defence of the rights of Eastern Christians in the Ottoman Empire was arguably perceived as the struggle for the freedom of

⁷⁵ Francois Georgeon, Berktaç, Ali (trns.), *Abdulhamid II, le sultan calife, (Sultan Abdulhamid)*, (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2005), p. 32 and p. 53.

⁷⁶ Feroze A. K., Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdulhamid II and the Great Powers*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1996), p. 20.

⁷⁷ Joan Haslip, *The Sultan, The Life of Abdul Hamid*, (London: Cassell, 1958), p. 90.

⁷⁸ Gladstone, 'Bulgarian Horrors and The Question of the East', p. 13.

Christians against Muslim oppression.⁷⁹ By the same token, it would also fair to state that Abdulhamid's perceptions had changed since the Russo-Turkish War due to withdrawal of expected British support. One of the solutions as to his diplomacy was his belief in the influence of Islam, namely Pan-Islamism, whilst searching for new remedies for his policies and empire. Abdulhamid in this regard declared that 'It was Islam that kept the different groups of the Empire like the members of one family. Therefore the stress should not be on Ottomanism but on Islam... because the social structure and the politics of our Empire is based upon religion.'⁸⁰ It becomes clear that this tendency showed the prominence of religion in the minds of the two statesmen while pointing out the great contradiction between the Islamic centric point of view and Gladstone's high moral tone with biblical emphasis.

Drawing what logic that can be inferred from retrospective analyses, it is not difficult to see Sultan Abdulhamid's concerns about Gladstone's Premiership and British policy towards the Porte. Matthew supports this line of enquiry by stating that 'Gladstone's campaigns of the 1870s had given a general impression of hostility to the Ottoman Empire, and the Sultan cannot have welcomed the start of Gladstone's second political career.'⁸¹ Accordingly, Azmi Ozcan argues that 'Abdulhamid was convinced that Britain was pursuing a sinister policy of undermining the unity of the Empire in the Middle East, [and] he found himself [in a] helpless [position] as he could not afford to openly antagonize Britain.'⁸² Similarly, the expectation that came from public opinion was also along the same lines. Whilst *The Standard* on 13 April had already described Gladstone's Ottoman policy as 'sentimental,' *the*

⁷⁹ Karaca, *Ingiltere Basbakani Gladstone'un Osmanli'yi yikma Planı*, p. 18.

⁸⁰ Sultan Abdulhamid II, *Siyasi Hatiratim* 'Political memoirs', S. Can (trns.), (Istanbul, 1984), p. 178 and p. 180; Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)*, (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 1997), p. 47.

⁸¹ Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 124.

⁸² Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)*, (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 1997), pp. 44-5.

Pall Mall Gazette on 16 April had reported that ‘as being the watchdog of the Balkan barks Mr. Gladstone has promised line of procedure for maintaining the peace of Europe and it is known to be that which his followers has always supported him vehemently.’⁸³ ⁸⁴ However, from the Ottoman perspective, Britain ‘was still Constantinople’s closest ally despite the deterioration of relations between the Empire and Britain after the Congress of Berlin in 1880.’⁸⁵ At this point, Gladstone advocated ‘mediation’ in Anglo-Ottoman affairs and ‘had a recollection of an exposition by Lord Palmerston on the subject and of a broad distinction which he drew between mediation, and good offices, to which the Turks seek to reduce it.’⁸⁶ Gladstone meant to cease British unofficial interference as in the times of Lord Palmerston. Nonetheless, it seemed impossible to form a mediation relationship in order to fulfil the outstanding terms of the Treaty of Berlin. As Ramm points out, the Turkish government ‘was ready to accept the mediation of the powers, but could not allow them to “decide” or “judge”, only to examine, recommend and discuss.’⁸⁷ This Turkish understanding underlies the expectations of support from Britain instead of reconciliation with the European Powers. When Goschen visited the Grand Vizier Cadri Pasha, he was informed that, on the basis of traditional friendship, the Ottomans expected protectionist policies:

The Government relied on England mainly to help them to a solution. He had read identic note. He had seen that it alluded to Lord Salisbury’s proposal remaining unanswered. He asked was it too late to answer now, in two days for instance. I replied it was too late. He continued that Abeddin Pasha would ask English mediation

⁸³ ‘The English Liberals and the Eastern Question’, *The Standard*, 13 April 1880.

⁸⁴ ‘Means and Ends in the Foreign Policy’, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 April 1880.

⁸⁵ TNA: FO 78/3166, Assim to Musurus, Constantinople, 4 October 1880 Tokay, G. ‘Anglo-Ottoman relations and William Gladstone’ p. 331. source: <http://ebox.nbu.bg/hist12/ne3/5tokay.pdf>

⁸⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 June 1880’.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

on Greek frontier. They would entirely put themselves into our hands. I expressed thanks for confidence shown but said such a course was impossible. The Berlin Treaty stipulated for collective mediation. We could not take separate action, nor would it be in the interest of Turkey. I suspect the proposal was only a feeler as to our general attitude.⁸⁸

In a letter to Gladstone, Layard had already described the Sultan as ‘an absolute Sovereign whose weak and suspicious nature and constitutional timidity liable to the influence of those who may for the time be about him.’⁸⁹ He warned Gladstone on Sultan’s entrance ‘upon a policy hostile to the interests of England, and at the same time likely to bring about, at no distant period, events which may lead to the downfall of the Empire.’⁹⁰ As the author of a corpus of Ottoman legislation and Turkish attaché at Paris, Aristarchi Bey, was seen by Gladstone as a respectable diplomat who summed up the hopes and aspirations of all non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte and had forwarded his oversight to Sultan.⁹¹ In a conversation with Aristarchi Bey, who had asked Gladstone’s support during the Cretan question, he agreed with Layard’s accounts of the Sultan. In his memorandum, Gladstone attached great importance to the accuracy of his information and thoughts:

His account on the ministers was still worse. He hoped the advent of the new government might avail to check and mitigate the descent of Turkey in the scale—assured it could not be— it was the march of history and doom. He did not find any serious hopes upon a Parliament. The crying wants of justice, education, finance,

⁸⁸ TNA FO 78/3108 G. Goschen to Lord Granville, 14 June 1880

⁸⁹ BL Layard Papers (LP) Vol. CXCIX Correspondence Register Turkey Add MS 39129, A. H. Layard to Lord Salisbury fols. 1-18, fol. 12, 1 January 1880 This letter contains information that Sultan Abdulhamid II at the time requires absolute power over foreign affairs.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ BL GP Add MS 44451 fol. 11 ‘Gladstone to Aristarchi Bey on 29 July 1876’

could not be supplied by the government. He saw nothing for it, but an international commission, assuming the virtual direction of the Empire in virtual matters. He admitted that the Treaty of Berlin did not go beyond Europe and Armenia: but it would be very much to deal with satisfactorily with Europe. He thought the renewal of the *entente cordiale* would most effectually promote the settlement of the Turkish question. Germany would favour its plans, at least sentimentally, Russia would not oppose, and the interests of Austria would be to have tranquillity and contest upon borders.⁹²

Gladstone's view of Abdulhamid II can be found further in his correspondence during the period of discussions as to the naval demonstration. Indeed, at this stage, Gladstone appraised the results of the three and a half months Session which were 'excellent' and he was satisfied that progress had been made in respect to the Eastern Question.⁹³ Nonetheless, Gladstone did regret that it was 'a new obstacle to contend with in the personal "government" of the Sultan, greatest of all the liars upon earth.'⁹⁴ Upon the Sultan's rejection of the proposals of the Berlin Conference and the Greek frontier question, it was Gladstone's suggestion to request Queen Victoria to write a letter to urge Sultan's compliance.⁹⁵ Indeed, it was also his considered opinion that the Sultan was so unaware of the dangers that he was incurring and was using 'both fraud and underhand force against us at every point'. As a result, Gladstone reached the discouraging conclusion that 'we have nothing to expect but from his fears.'⁹⁶ In

⁹² BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97'; Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, '21 May 1880 Conversation with Aristarchi Bey, Turkish attache at Paris', p. 57.

⁹³ BL GP Add MS 43515 fol. 1, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Ripon on 10 September 1880', Secret.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 12 July 1880', p. 145.

⁹⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville 29 June 1880'; 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 16 July 1880', p. 139, pp. 146-7.

other words, Gladstone was aware of Sultan's authority on affairs and fear for dissolution of his empire without British support. With respect to the Montenegrin frontier, he lamented to Lord Acton that:

I need to tell you how heartily & how anxiously we pull together on the Eastern Question in its various phases. We are now looking almost daily for the close or crisis of the first by the delivery of Dulcigno and its district: but the mind of the Sultan, who is the Turkish Government, is a bottomless pit of fraud and falsehood, and he will fulfil *nothing* except under force or the proximate fear of *force*. His delays & shufflings give scope, in the meantime, for Slav agitation and the Balkan countries cannot be relied on to keep the peace if he lifts his hand or causes other hands to be lifted.⁹⁷

Gladstone made his criticism in the wider context of 'the shifts & falsehoods'⁹⁸ of the Sultan in the Montenegrin and Greek frontier question. He made clear his general distrust of Abdulhamid's policy measures. For instance, when the Sultan refused to cede Dulcigno to Montenegro and regarded any movement as *casus belli*, Gladstone suggested fastening the responsibility on Abdulhamid, as distinct from the Porte.⁹⁹ Ebru Boyar argues that 'by putting the demands of local people (Albanians in this case) first was an important tactic of Ottoman policy in the late nineteenth century' as the Sultan's 'attempt to prevent the annexation of Dulcigno by Montenegro shows.'¹⁰⁰ An important consideration here is that Abdulhamid's

⁹⁷ 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Acton on 19 September 1880', Italics are Gladstone's in Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX., pp. 583-4.

⁹⁸ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 65, 'Gladstone to Madame O. Novikov, 25 September 1880', William T. Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff*, 2 vols (London: Melrose, 1909), I, p. 95.

⁹⁹ BL GP Add MS 44466, fol. 114, 'Gladstone to F. H. Hill, 27 September 1880'

¹⁰⁰ Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost, Relations Altered*, (London: Tauris Academic Publishing, 2011), p. 61

endeavour for the Albanian nation and concern for the Muslims was an important example of his Pan-Islamist policy. Gladstone, on the other hand, had already admitted that it was his intention ‘to proceed with perfect impartiality as between Turkey and Russia, as between the Mussulman and Christian populations in regard to the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.’¹⁰¹ When the question arose whether to seize this act as an ‘encroach upon the nationality of Albania’, Gladstone declared that ‘we are bound to have the same fair regard to all the facts of the case, and to the element of nationality and to the peculiar circumstances of Albania, as we should do in reference to any other portion of territory.’¹⁰² It is true that Gladstone was equally concerned to emphasize the importance of human rights with international peace but he also sought to attach special significance to the Concert and the Treaty of Berlin as instruments of collective security.

Much later in life, he admitted that the Sultan’s refusal was ‘a refusal of the joint European request for the fulfilment of the engagements taken in Berlin’ which ‘was dispatched by him in ignorance of British intention to propose coercion.’¹⁰³ Pleased with ‘much concretion of method of procedure in the Eastern Question,’¹⁰⁴ it is evident that Gladstone’s proposition was in fact a joint intervention:

We are for the concert of Europe—we hope it will continue to subsist, we think that then it will prevail—for surely Europe will not run away from the Turks with its tail between its legs. But, it would be too bold to say positively that it united in 1853 and 1854, but not in 1855. Should it be broken up entirely by in its entirety, two duties

¹⁰¹ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 253 (18 June 1880), cc297-9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ BL GP Add MS 44776 fols. 145-53, fol. 145, 8 April 1895, ‘Memorandum of proceedings in 1880 with relation to the unfulfilled covenants of the Treaty of Berlin.’

¹⁰⁴ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX., p. 589, ‘2 October 1880’

will remain, one to let it be known who has broken it, the other to see whether enough remains to be sufficient for the end in view.¹⁰⁵

The Great Powers had unanimity and each sent naval forces to the coast of Albania in favour of Montenegro. As a result, Montenegro obtained considerable territory in conformity with the stipulations of the treaty. Nonetheless, it is difficult to see a full and co-ordinated approach from the Concert on the Greek frontier question. Whilst Austria-Hungary and Germany refused to do anything 'leading to war with Turkey', France was 'dubious.'¹⁰⁶ However, Russia along with Italy agreed to it. For instance, Gladstone described his conversation with German ambassador Count Munster:

He stated very full that we had all a common interest in maintaining the Concert, and settling the question. And it 'seemed impossible' for the six powers to recede before the Turks. We were alike sensible of the dangers of a general shock to Turkey by making an appearance in the Dardanelles or Bosphorus. I said it seemed to me not impossible to arrange for a milder and safer measure of material pressure upon Turkey. He did not give any opinion.¹⁰⁷

The letters that Gladstone sent to his wife each day since the Sultan had formally refused to cede Dulcigno stress the special importance of the naval demonstration for him. In a letter written on 4 October 1880, Gladstone wrote that he believed that 'The Sultan's answer was quite unsatisfactory', to which, 'Granville and I sufficiently aware of the concurrence of our colleagues, are going to telegraph to each of the Powers tonight proposing that the united

¹⁰⁵ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 59, 'Gladstone to Lord Reay, 16 September 1880'.

¹⁰⁶ 'Document 158. Turkey collapses and Gladstone rejoices, 4-12 October 1880', Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, pp. 410-1.

¹⁰⁷ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 67, 'Gladstone to Count Munster, 1 October 1880'; BL GP Add MS 56645 unfoliated, 'Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1855-97', Brooke and Sorensen (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, '21 May 1880, Conversation with Count Munster, German Ambassador in London: The Eastern Question', p. 58.

fleet now at Cattaro shall straight away sail and lay hold of Smyrna' which he regarded 'the kernel and crisis of the question.'¹⁰⁸ Upon the Sultan's refusal to allow Thessaly's accession to Greece, the main proposition was the seizure of the port of Smyrna to secure the fulfilment of the treaty. As to the attitude of European Powers, Gladstone was certain that 'the matter was not a simple one. We knew that from certain of the Powers no aid could be had in an operation in behalf of the liberty in the East.'¹⁰⁹ Gladstone was well aware that there should be other persuasive reasons for Great Powers to support the demonstration. It should be remembered that the Paris Treaty of 1856 provided a guarantee of Ottoman territorial integrity, given by Austria, France, and Russia with Britain. Nonetheless, the Berlin Treaty proposed more terms in favour of the minorities' rights and self-determination.

Until the day that the Sultan discovered that Powers proposed to seize upon Smyrna, there was a delay in his response. Gladstone confided this situation to his wife that: 'we live in a state of perpetual tension and so far as the time is concerned of great and increasing vexation.'¹¹⁰ On 9 October, Gladstone was disappointed with the 'shabby' answer from Austria and the response from both Germany and France was along similar lines.¹¹¹ No power was willing to accept responsibilities over the demonstration. Yet, on the following day, Gladstone remarked that it was 'a day of joy & thankfulness: with a faint tinge of doubt' when the news arrived that the Sultan had given in and had determined to relinquish Thessaly to Greece.¹¹² In a later reflection, he also referred to the tidings of telegraphy by Mr. Goschen

¹⁰⁸ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, pp. 229-30, '4 October 1880'

¹⁰⁹ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, 'Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I', 24 July 1894, pp. 252-4.

¹¹⁰ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, pp. 229-30, '8 October 1880'

¹¹¹ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 71, 'Mr. Gladstone to the Duke of Argyll on 9 October 1880'

¹¹² Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. IX.*, p. 593, '10 October 1880'

which had filled him and Lord Granville ‘with equal astonishment and delight.’¹¹³ As a consequence of this significant piece of intelligence, Gladstone’s letter to his wife offered a particularly good illustration of this fact:

The Turks would not merely evacuate but cede, hand over, to the Montenegrins, Dulcigno immediately—though the Sultan might again bolt— Granville and I have put off the Cabinet which we had fixed for tomorrow...I do not recollect an instance in which the Providence of God has been more manifest. Had the Sultan known that, at the moment when Ministers went round, Austria, Germany and France had all refused to go with us! It might again have changed his mind... There is not time to tell you in how many ways this will be a good and a great good. Six months ago the question of the Montenegrin frontier was a small one. The proceedings of the intervening time have made it a large one. It is the working of the European Concert for purposes of justice, peace and liberty, with efficiency and success, which is the great matter at issue. That has been the ideal of my life in Foreign Policy: and if this goes forwardly to the right end it will be the most conspicuous instance yet recorded, the best case of success yet achieved...It is a most generous subject of satisfaction that the Montenegrins should get without a drop of blood shed the land to which they are entitled by the Treaty of Berlin.¹¹⁴

These remarks stress that Gladstone once more found himself in a situation which was morally affronting but also reinforced his belief that he had successfully balanced his principles and achieved international peace as part of determining factors of his attitude to the Ottoman Empire. It was on this basis that he endeavoured to appeal to the notion of concerted

¹¹³ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I’, 24 July 1894, pp. 252-4.

¹¹⁴ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, pp. 229-30, ‘9 October 1880’

action as ‘the ideal of his life in Foreign Policy’ and work with international law for the civil and religious rights of the minorities of the Porte. It is true that Gladstone was concerned about the Sultan who he deemed to be a ‘lying scoundrel’ capable of employing ‘tricks’ whilst knowing full well about the ‘half-heartedness’ of Austria, Germany and France in seeking to pursue this matter further.¹¹⁵ What he wrote his wife, he repeated to Henry Brand that ‘in one thing only the Sultan is quite consistent. He never speaks a word of truth.’¹¹⁶ Gladstone, on the other hand, always had concerns as to the maintenance of the moral concert.¹¹⁷ Yet, the picture that emerges from his correspondence and diaries is of a disappointed Gladstone. It was indeed at the time when Gladstone was very pleased with the result since to him ‘*it demonstrates the power of a real concert believed to exist. And makes it more difficult for the Shabbier Powers not to join us or give countenance which is aid of a certain kind—one way or another the Almighty will work it out.*’¹¹⁸ Therefore, when Gladstone came to consider the manners of the Great Powers ‘the whole of this extraordinary volte-face’, as he told to John Morley, he ‘had been effected within six days; and it was entirely due not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Great Britain had asked Europe to coerce.’¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, this coercion of the Sultan was the best means to demonstrate Gladstone’s policy due to the fact that he refused to act in a unilateral action in support of the Turkish government; instead it was an approval for his firm belief in the principle of the Concert of Europe. This emphasis on the Concert of Europe is the key

¹¹⁵ Italics are Gladstone’s, Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, pp. 232-3, ‘10 October 1880’; Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. IX.*, p. 593, ‘11 October 1880’

¹¹⁶ ‘Document 158. Turkey collapses and Gladstone rejoices, 4-12 October 1880’, Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, pp. 410-1.

¹¹⁷ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 71, ‘Mr. Gladstone to the Duke of Argyll, 9 October 1880’

¹¹⁸ Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, pp. 232-3, ‘10 October 1880’

¹¹⁹ John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859*, Vol. III, (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 10.

argument of this chapter. This highlights the basic fallacy in those from Knaplaund and Morley onwards who neglected Gladstone's role in determining British policy towards the Porte in collaboration with Lord Granville and Goschen. Modern scholars such as Matthew and Shannon are the first to define the meanings of naval demonstration to Gladstone and point out that 'he saw intervention as a natural part of the maintenance of the civilized order of the world.'¹²⁰ Contemporary opinion as voiced by Steele suggested that 'this early success in his second ministry was the high point of Gladstone's dealing with the sultan, for whom he could not disguise a visceral loathing.'¹²¹

It is important to note that in his later reflections and correspondence Gladstone sustained his confidence in Lord Granville and Goschen in the affairs with the Porte. Despite the fact that the Queen believed that Goschen whom she considered to be Turcophobic and was 'pushing to hostilities',¹²² Gladstone regarded him 'something of a pillar; something that a man can lean on: you have shown, in circumstances of great difficulty, a combination of acuteness, uprightness of mind, courage, and assiduity, such as it does one good to see...I write on the day which is to produce sultan's satisfactory arrangement. And a true day of rest it will prove to have been.'¹²³ Nevertheless, it is the case that Gladstone had little doubt about the central role Lord Granville played during the proceedings. In a letter to Goschen, he confessed that:

I believe you and we are completely at one as to intentions, desires, and propositions. But mood is acted upon by *entourage*, and our, let me rather say Granville's *entourage* is different from yours. He is in closer communication with the Foreign

¹²⁰ Shannon, *Gladstone: 1865–1898*, pp. 266-8, Matthew, *Gladstone*, p. 375.

¹²¹ Steele, 'Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902', p. 50.

¹²² George Earl Buckle (ed.), *Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2nd series, vol.3, (London: John Murray, 1931), pp. 141-2 in Spinner, *George Joachim Goschen*, p. 73.

¹²³ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 68, 'Mr. Gladstone to George Goschen, 3 October 1880'

Governments, you with the Constantinople ambassadors, and these, upon the whole, and notably in one if not more instances, are better than the Governments. He is in the best position of all for judging how great a weight we can safely hang upon what ought to be cable but seems a thread, the European concert. He has to pursue a most difficult aim, by means as difficult and in doing this he has very properly renounced the big drum, and never uses a word except what, as far as England is concerned...As to the Montenegro, sole action might be Quixotic...¹²⁴

Gladstone showed himself to be very meticulous in the matter of seeking a consistent policy. In a later reflection he observed that 'we were resolved that the treaty should not be frustrated: and principles being agreed on, Lord Granville and I remained in London during the autumn of 1881 for the express purpose of bringing the affair to a conclusion.'¹²⁵

Sultan Abdulhamid's ambivalence over Dulcigno reinforces Gladstone's indignation as it once more revealed his anger and hatred: 'The Turk, that is the Sultan, is a bottomless pit of iniquity and fraud. He is not only a liar, but seems as though he might compete with Satan for the honour of being the Father of it, and stand a fair chance of winning.'¹²⁶ However, the Queen asked Gladstone to regain the Sultan's 'confidence' and courage in foreign affairs between Britain and the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁷ It is also noteworthy to remember that the Queen had already written to Lord Granville to relay 'on her anxiety lest the naval demonstration

¹²⁴ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol.84, 'Mr. Gladstone to G. Goschen, 27 October 1880'

¹²⁵ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, 'Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I', 24 July 1894, pp. 252-4.

¹²⁶ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 83, 'Mr. Gladstone to the Duke of Argyll, 26 October 1880'

¹²⁷ Ibid.

should lead to war with Turkey and her determination that, if the other powers then withdrew, Britain should not be left alone with Russia.’¹²⁸

Following this lack of confidence in his former ally, it is true that Abdulhamid had approached Germany. The reason for Abdulhamid’s choice of Germany amongst the Great Powers seems judicious; in comparison with Britain and Russia, Germany had no particular interest to expand to Ottoman territories. In this vein, Yasamee argues that Otto Von Bismarck’s objective was ‘to keep Abdulhamid available as a kind of insurance policy’, with his expectation that Abdulhamid never complained ‘and for which he would pay the premium possible.’¹²⁹ It was with approval that Gladstone noted ‘Mr. Goschen had the idea that Germans were extremely desirous to avert any crisis in the east, and that they advised the Sultan in the sense of concession.’¹³⁰ Gladstone further expressed his satisfaction after the negotiations which ‘the Sultan, having made the concession preceded with perfect good faith at all subsequent stages of the communications’ and subsequently Thessaly was relinquished to Greece.¹³¹ In this context, it is interesting to note that after Bismarck’s suggestion to cede Crete to Greece instead of Thessaly or Epirus in order to settle the Greco-Turkish frontier question, Gladstone’s proposal was to recommend, by the same token, handing Cyprus to Greece as well:

If this is to happen and Crete to be Greek, it seems to be not wholly unworthy of consideration whether Cyprus might not be handed over by the Porte and us, in

¹²⁸ BL GP Add MS 44172 fol. 147, ‘The Queen to Lord Granville 14 September 1880’

¹²⁹ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdulhamid II and the Great Powers*, p. 75. For further reading on Ottoman-German alliance since Abdulhamid II; İlber Ortaylı, II. Abdulhamid döneminde Osmanlı’da Alman nüfusu, (German population in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Abdulhamid II), (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981)

¹³⁰ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers’ Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, ‘Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I’, 24 July 1894, pp. 252-4.

¹³¹ Ibid.

sovereignty not in mere occupation. This would incidentally be a strong challenge to the late Disraeli government, but I do not know that it would be an unsafe one. Of course it should not be thought unless desired by the Cypriot people. At present they can hardly [have] dreamt of it.¹³²

Knaplund argues that this proposal ‘proved inexpedient.’¹³³ Shannon, on the other hand, regards this as a liberalising step which ‘Greek Cypriots took the cue to begin their own campaign to persuade the liberator of their brethren to countenance their *enosis* with Greece.’¹³⁴ A further interpretation of this proposal can also stress the importance of Gladstone’s sensitivity to appeal to Greek unionist sentiment and advocate for greater freedom of the Cypriot people on the ground.

¹³² BL GP Add MS 44172 fols. 323-4, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 December 1880’

¹³³ Knaplund, *Gladstone’s Foreign Policy*, p. 87.

¹³⁴ Shannon, *Gladstone: 1865–1898*, p. 268.

II. W. E. Gladstone and The British Occupation of Egypt (1882)

There never has been a complicated and difficult foreign question in my recollection which has been kept so incessantly under the view of Parliament as the Egyptian Question. I do not hesitate to say that in certain particulars its difficulties have been immensely aggravated by the incessant discussion in this House.

W. E. Gladstone on 11 August 1884¹

The British decision to invade Egypt was a curious affair, but also it presented an insight into Gladstone's own political thinking at this stage. Taking into account the scholarship surrounding Gladstone, it is clear that the British decision is a contentious subject where the debate surrounding Gladstone's advance towards imperialism was a matter of political and economic logic. Economic interests are a common thread throughout the historical debate between traditional and modern historians who argue that Britain invaded Egypt as a means to protect her trade interests in the Suez Canal and control Egyptian finances. Beyond the bondholder interests forwarded by Wilfrid Blunt², it is the case that earlier scholars, particularly John Morley, Paul Knaplund, John Hobson and Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher argue that the core aspect of British expansion was 'a symbiosis' between her trade interests and her power in India throughout the nineteenth century which justified Gladstone's decision towards intervention.³ The high quality of Gladstone's statements

¹ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 292 (11 August 1884), cc.449-535.

² Wilfred S. Blunt, *A secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, (London, 1907)

³ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1859*, Vol. III, pp. 83-4, Knaplund, *Gladstone's Foreign Policy*, pp. 209-10, John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A study*, (London: James Nisbet & Co. Limited), 1902, p. 210, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians the Official Mind of Imperialism*, (London: Macmillan & Co. Lmted., 1965), p. 11.

against British occupation of Egypt and his consistent ideals to promote national aspirations has led historians to criticize his key role in the affair. With this line of reasoning, Harold Temperley and Lillian Penson suggest that ‘For the occupation and ultimate annexation of Egypt were contrary to his intention as well as contradictory of his principles and his desire to encourage and not to repress national movements wherever manifested themselves ...The Egyptian adventure, therefore, violated the fundamental principles of his policy.’⁴ It is, nevertheless, true that Gladstone was at a critical point in his career as he faced the realities of his principles in both conception and execution. Along with the decolonisation of Egypt, modern academics from 1956 onwards are more critical of dilating the balance between certain factors and political motivations as determinants of Gladstone’s attitude. While John Galbraith and Ataf Sayyid-Marsot argue that Gladstone’s ‘ignorance’ of Egyptian affairs and lack of leadership⁵, a prevalent school of thought, suggests that Gladstone’s lack of interest in Egypt was due to his attention on Ireland.⁶ A much more recent development suggests that his holding of large Egyptian tribute loans was a key personal motive for his intervention in Egypt and undoubtedly helped Gladstone’s to develop an affinity with the bondholders’ point of view.⁷ One of the important sources of disagreement between historians, however, is whether Gladstone was sympathetic to the Arabi and Egyptian nationalist movement. It is true that, as Ian St. John notes, ‘Gladstone sympathised with Arabi’s national demands when

⁴ Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy From Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, p. 416.

⁵ John S. Galbraith, and Ataf L. al Sayyid-Marsot, ‘The British Occupation of Egypt, Another View’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 4, (November, 1978), pp. 471-488, p. 478.

⁶ Blunt, *A secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, p. 164, Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians the Official Mind of Imperialism*, p. 24, C. J. Lowe, *Reluctant Imperialists*, (London: Routledge, 1967) p. 48, Efraim & Inari. Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East 1798-1923*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 54 Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*, p. 175, Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. X*, introduction, p. lxxi

⁷ Quinault, ‘Gladstone and War’ in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives*, p. 247, P.J. Cain and Antony Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, (Essex: Pearson Limited, 2002, second edition), p. 314, Philip Mansel, ‘The Rise and Fall of Royal Alexandria: From Mohammed Ali to Farouk’, *The Court Historian*, Vol. 49, (2012), pp. 225-42, p. 232.

Wilfrid Blunt sent him the Programme of the National Party of Egypt, Gladstone remarked that he thought it provided a basis for a ‘favourable issue.’⁸ By directly countering the earlier historical narrative, Roland Quinault, Robert T. Harrison and Richard Toye and Martin Thomas have argued, in the course of events that Gladstone ‘was prepared to concede that a genuine Egyptian national movement might be coalescing’ and he ‘never advocated an Egyptian nationalism any way co-terminous with the concept of Egypt’s independence.’⁹ However, historians have largely overlooked the importance of other factors in this decision. These included the fiscal deficits based on the Ottoman budget, Gladstone’s disillusionment with Abdulhamid’s policies for the solution of Egyptian problem, interaction with Wilfrid Blunt with regards to Egyptian nationalist movement and eventually his distrust of Arabi’s leadership. The question arises, therefore, since he had pursued a consistent line in advocating the rights of minorities against the Turkish rule why was the case of Egypt different from his previous engagements in Balkans? Given the aim of this present study, it is important to examine Gladstone’s behaviour in regard to the nationalist movement under the military leadership of Arabi Pasha. As well as enhancing the consistent line of financial aspects in his approach to Ottoman finance, this chapter seeks to ascertain possible answers as to why Gladstone did not hold onto his abiding humanitarian principles in the case of Egypt. Equally significantly, since Gladstone believed that Britain had a moral duty to pursue a consistent and certain policy; this chapter explores areas of both change and continuity in Gladstone’s thinking towards the Ottoman Empire.

⁸ St. John, *Gladstone and the logic of Victorian Party politics*, p. 68, Blunt, *A secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, Appendix II, pp. 383-5.

⁹ Quinault, ‘Gladstone and War’, p. 247, Martin Thomas and Richard Toye ‘Arguing about intervention: a comparison of British and French rhetoric surrounding the 1882 and 1956 invasions of Egypt’, *The Historical Journal*, (2015, 58), pp 1081-1113, p. 1087, Robert T. Harrison, *Gladstone’s Imperialism in Egypt Techniques of Domination*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 68

Since the establishment of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration in 1881, the Ottoman Empire had no choice but to continue to seek a series of foreign loans.¹⁰ Primarily used for the fiscal reform and monetary stability of the Ottoman administration, these loans paved the way for foreign control over the Ottoman treasury. While having a voice in Ottoman finance, the allies had also provided the Ottoman with state revenues to the investors, and guaranteed the interests of the bondholders. ‘The guarantee of the British and French governments’, as Donald Blaisdell notes, ‘brought the most conservative bankers into the field, and the price reflected this competition.’¹¹ The French and particularly the British promoted the Ottoman Imperial Bank that was founded in 1856. At the same time, they also maintained its primacy in the market for Ottoman bonds to which London became the largest shareholder in direct foreign investment during the 1860s and 1870s.¹²

From the beginning of Gladstone’s second administration, Lord Granville’s object was also to form an ‘independent inquiry and Commission’ in order to ‘improve the finances of the Ottoman Empire, which would indirectly be of advantage to its creditors.’¹³ ‘The Turk owes the Exchequer £60000 & owes France I presume the same, on account of the Guaranteed Loan’ Gladstone reminded Lord Granville that ‘Britain and France, secured on the Turkish tribute and the Smyrna and Syrian customs, and on which the Treasury had paid out £61.000

¹⁰ According to Seda Ozekicioglu and Halil Ozekicioglu’s data collection showing foreign borrowings between 1854 and 1874, ‘it is calculated that the average of the 15 separate foreign borrowings is 16.346.667 Ottoman liras and the average interest is %5.6 and the loan amount received after the deduction of the commission per loan is about 8.768.613 Ottoman liras.’ Seda Ozekicioglu and Halil Ozekicioglu, ‘First borrowing period at Ottoman Empire (1854–1876): Budget policies and consequences’, *Business and Economic Horizons*, Volume 3, Issue 3, October 2010, pp. 28–46, p. 35.

¹¹ Donald C. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 28.

¹² Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1987), p. 76.

¹³ BL GP Add MS 44172 fol. 337, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone on 21 December 1880’

in execution of the guarantee.’¹⁴ Even Goschen, Gladstone believed, could do nothing in the matter of getting the Turks to provide for this portion of debts. Indeed, he had anticipated that ‘the financial case is so bad that it cannot long go unnoticed.’¹⁵ Therefore, his desire was to use Cyprus revenues but preferred to act with France ‘to consider some joint, prompt & intelligible measure in the way of demand upon Turkey.’¹⁶ In February 1882, Gladstone was so convinced by the ‘Turk’s default’ to meet the interest due on the guaranteed loan of 1855 that he emphasized that the ‘repayment of the sum advanced by the British Treasury now amounting to £224.565.’¹⁷ Throughout it is notable that Gladstone's concern was not with the merits of the measure of the Turkish loans or debt. Instead, his primary focus was on the effect that this default would have on the stability of the British economy and reflected his deep concern to manage the financial affairs of the nation.

Yet, there is little doubt that Gladstone’s role and motivation in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 can be traced back to this period. The possibility that his personal holdings in the Egyptian Tribute Loans (of 1854 and 1871) directly influenced his decision to intervene in Egypt has been the subject of intense debate. Beyond the financial and moral reasons, the ‘bondholder thesis’, as forwarded by Wilfrid Blunt, was considered ‘a personal powerful factor’.¹⁸ Over the years leading up to the British bombardment in Alexandria, Gladstone had already recognised the interests of the bondholders in Egypt as being ‘on a par with those of

¹⁴ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 26 July 1880’, p. 152.

¹⁵ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 53, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 8 September 1880’, Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 5 October 1881’, p. 299.

¹⁶ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 53, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 8 September 1880’, Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 5 October 1881’, p. 299.

¹⁷ Ibid, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 23 February 1882’, p. 344.

¹⁸ John, *Gladstone and the logic of Victorian Politics*, p. 282.

[the] Sultan, the Khedive, and the people of Egypt.’¹⁹ Whilst Gladstone’s diaries do not reveal any direct link between his personal interests and the armed intervention in Egypt, Matthew suggests that the ‘exclusive or special’ interest of the bondholders were amongst the main factors in Gladstone’s policy making. He argues that this can only be derived from ‘Gladstonian qualifications as part of the clutch of established rights subject to British government’s guardianship.’²⁰ Yet, three considerations influenced Gladstone’s status by holding of Egyptian tribute loans. First of all, the question arises as to why Gladstone was interested in the Ottoman bonds in spite of his belief in the untrustworthiness and immorality of the Ottomans? As previously discussed, free trade was one of the key motivations behind Gladstone’s Liberalism, and doubtlessly it was his father’s role in business which left a strong impression on William. Not anticipating his commitment to military intervention, Gladstone’s appraisal of the situation stemmed from Britain’s long-standing commercial interests in Egypt. Despite ambiguous evidence, the trace of this may be found in the substantial increase of Gladstone’s holdings of the Egyptian Tribute accounted for about 37 percent of his portfolio in December 1882.²¹ Secondly, how important were the interests of bondholders, and how were they incorporated into Gladstone’s policy in Egypt? In the ensuing debate, Gladstone vigorously defended himself against Wilfred Blunt, arguing that protecting bondholders’ interests was not the precipitating cause and declared that there more substantial and promotive reasons behind his decision:

I have only to say in one sentence that undoubtedly it is not for the exclusive or special interest of the bondholders of Egypt-and, indeed, it is almost wholly without reference to them-that the proceeding of yesterday was taken; and that with respect to

¹⁹ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809–1898*, p. 388.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809–1898*, pp.387–8.

the Government of France, it would be impertinent on my part were I to discuss the reasons which have led them to decline taking part in the measures adopted by Her Majesty's Government.²²

It is also Shannon's opinion that Gladstone 'reacted indignantly to any suggestion that he was playing the bondholder's game or that things were "drifting into war".'²³ Although it seems unlikely that Gladstone had acted in 'self-interest' due to lack of any relative evidence, it is to a certain extent true that his holding of Egyptian Tribute loans brought his hand down to emphasize bondholder's point of views. As P. J. Cain and Anthony Hopkins suggest, it is 'not to say that Gladstone was motivated by crude self-interest; but it does suggest that he was likely to see the creditors' point of view with some clarity if it could be presented as an issue of principle, and especially one that was in the wider public interest.'²⁴ It is also interesting to note that Blunt's account agrees with this idea in that Rosebery, who was through his wife a Rothschild, was mainly interested in the financial aspect of the case and had a substantial influence on Gladstone.²⁵ Consequently, Gladstone became embroiled in a battle between personal selfishness and responsibility for the current political disarray. What is often overlooked in the historiography is the nature of Gladstone's reaction to this development which was to maintain his position and advocacy of a connected approach to international finances that coincided with his colonial policy for the rest of his life. As in religion and politics, he not only carried on the family tradition in economics but also employed his

²² *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, 272 (12 July 1882), cc162-98.

²³ Shannon, *Gladstone: God and Politics*, p. 338.

²⁴ P.J. Cain and Antony Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, (Essex: Pearson Limited, 2002, second edition), p. 314.

²⁵ Wilfred S. Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, Being a Personal Narrative of Events*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1922), p. 224.

financial conscience since he did foresee what the future held for Egypt since the Ottoman loans in 1855.

Gladstone's sympathy towards Egyptian culture can be traced back to his reading of Richard R. Madden's travel memoirs in the Eastern provinces.²⁶ Nonetheless, it was now a question why Gladstone consented to the British occupation despite his support for the cause of Egyptian nationalism. In his article of August 1877 titled 'Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East', he had argued against any territorial annexation, the Disraeli government's interference with Egyptian financial affairs and the purchase of nearly half the total shares in the Suez Canal Company. Most historians would agree with the argument that Gladstone 'had spelt out his general objections' by republishing the article in 1884 with very few changes in spite of his regret which he frankly confessed to Madame Novikov: 'It would be hard for me to eat that article; even had I an appetite, I should have no digestion for it.'²⁷ It is important, however, to underline Gladstone's consistent thoughts about the subject of Islamic governance, the references towards his 'sentiment' of 'Egypt for the Egyptians' and it should be stressed the reasons why he argued for 'hands off' policy in his article. In comparison with the case of subjects at the Porte, Gladstone was sceptical about Edward Dicey's views that were in favour of British intervention in Egypt which 'might not be wholly disagreeable to the people of the country.'²⁸ For example, when referring to the case of Cretan desire to unite with Greece, Gladstone reproachfully examined why the same principle was not implemented on the rights of people's choice for freedom. He, furthermore, regarded Midhat Pasha's

²⁶ BL GP Add MS 44721 fols.16–20, 'Madden's travels in Egypt, Nubia, Turkey and Palestine', Richard R. Madden, *Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia, and Palestine, in 1824, 1825, 1826, and 1827*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1829).

²⁷ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 386, 'Mr. Gladstone to Madame O. Novikov' 8 August 1883, Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XI*, p. 15.

²⁸ William E. Gladstone, 'Aggression on Egypt and freedom in the East', article contributed to the *Nineteenth Century*, (Bristol Selected Pamphlets, August 1877: 1884), p. 15; Edward Dicey, 'The Future of Egypt', *The Nineteenth Century*, I, August 1877, pp. 3-14.

constitution to the Slavs, to the Armenians, to the Hellenes to become Ottomans as ‘the most daring result ever inflicted by man upon men.’²⁹ Unconvinced by Dicey’s reasoning on the supreme control in government and holding a secure military possession, Gladstone came to the conclusion that ‘we shall have to deal with all oppression, tolerable or not; and therefore and beyond all things with the entire taxation of the country, which is the fountain-head of the oppression, both tolerable and intolerable.’³⁰ As in the case of Christian minorities of the Porte, Gladstone clung to his belief in self-government but there were notable exceptions to this principle. There appear to be two reasons why Gladstone was far from being confident with the British taking direct responsibility through the self-government. The first was the structure and traditions of Egyptian government to which he was concerned about ‘the action of our popular system [that] might not prove greatly too vivid and direct to please the sheiks and the fellaheen.’³¹ The second relates to his views on the ‘common susceptibilities of Islam’ and the ‘Mohammedan sympathies [that] appear to be operating in Egypt with great force.’³² Conscious that this line of reasoning had to be squared with his consistent apprehension and thinking towards Islamic governance as the central regulation which was the main threat to Christian subjects’ liberty and freedom. Gladstone had given his considered view of the relationship between the subjects and Turkish government and of where he stood in regard to British policy:

The grievances of the people are indeed great; but there is no proof whatever that they are incurable. Mohammedanism now appears, in the light of experience, to be radically incapable of establishing a good or tolerable government over civilised and

²⁹ Gladstone, ‘Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East’, p. 15.

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 16-7.

³¹ Ibid, p. 17.

³² Gladstone, ‘Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East’, pp. 17-8.

Christian races; but what proof have that in the case of a Mohammedan community, where there are no adverse complications of blood, or religion, or tradition, or speech, the ends of political society, as they understand them, may not be passably attained...If I find the Turk incapable of establishing a good, just, and well-proportioned government over civilised and Christian races, it does not follow that he is under a similar incapacity when his task shall only be to hold empire over populations wholly or principally Orientals and Mahomedans.³³

A feature of Gladstone's attitude towards the Muslim groups in the empire to which historians have largely overlooked was the place that he ascribed to the role of Islam if the moral line was to be maintained. It is clear that a deep sense of disappointment can be discerned for the case of Christian subjects. However, he made it clear that the political system of Islam should be responsible for all the affairs of Muslims. Gladstone regarded the Sultan's role as significant influence for establishing a stronger grip over the Empire's Muslim subjects. It was on these grounds that he endeavoured to appeal to the policy of independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire by upholding the treaties of 1856 and 1871. As Morley put it Gladstone was 'justly averse to a joint occupation of Egypt by England and France, as the most perilous of all possible courses, the London cabinet looked to the Sultan as the best instrument for restoring order.'³⁴ St. John also concurs with the idea that 'Gladstone had insisted on maintenance of Egypt's territorial integrity and her tie to the Ottoman Empire in opposition to Disraeli's recent scheme permitting the Ottoman Empire and Egypt's disintegration and dismemberment into spheres of influence.'³⁵ What seems clear is that Gladstone considered it right to pursue a hands-off policy in Egypt. Nonetheless, he

³³ William E. Gladstone, *Agression on Egypt and freedom in the East*: article contributed to the Nineteenth Century in 1877, (Bristol Selected Pamphlets, 1877; 1884), p. 18, p. 20, *Gleanings*, IV, p. 364.

³⁴ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, Vol. III, p. 83.

³⁵ Harrison, *Gladstone's Imperialism in Egypt Techniques of Domination*, p. 6.

remained troubled by what he had declared for Egypt which was considered as a commitment to non-interventionism.

Through emphasizing the importance of pecuniary interests on behalf of Turkey and his ‘apprehension of a conflict between the ‘Controul’ and any sentiment truly national’, Gladstone was ‘not by any means pained’ but rather he was ‘much surprised with the development of national sentiment and party in Egypt.’³⁶ What he regarded was the incompatibility between ‘the very ideas of such sentiment and the Egyptian people.’³⁷ At the time, Gladstone had openly declared that his intention was to give scope to the sentiment of ‘Egypt for the Egyptians’ to be ‘the only good solution of the Egyptian question’.³⁸ In light of these considerations, the relations between Gladstone and Wilfrid Blunt over the Egyptian national movement and Arabi Pasha should not also be overlooked. This is a surprisingly neglected area which shows the manner why Gladstone showed little willingness to side with Egyptian nationalism. Since Blunt, although he was considered as a ‘Byronic adventurer who had set himself up as the tribune of Egyptian liberty’³⁹ or ‘the accident tourist’ had ‘dreamt dreams of [an] Arab Utopia’.⁴⁰ It is, also, important to note that he was one of the foremost English supporters of Egyptian nationalism. He described ‘his sympathies as far as England was concerned, were still rather with Tories, and Oriental questions I looked upon Gladstone, little as I loved the Turks, as an ignoramus and fanatic.’⁴¹ Convinced with the idea that Turkish religious and political authority over Islamic lands had declined, Blunt’s plan was to

³⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 6 February 1882’, p. 340.

³⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 6 February 1882’, p. 340.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, p. 288.

⁴⁰ Michael D. Berdine, *The accidental Tourist, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, and the British Invasion of Egypt in 1882*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2005)

⁴¹ Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, Being a Personal Narrative of Events*, p. 52

use ‘his special affinity with [the] nomadic populations of Central Arabia to extend British influence in the region.’⁴² Since Gladstone had steadily built upon the reputation that he was a strong advocate of liberal nationalist movements, Blunt’s appeal to Gladstone seems convincing. Recalling how he was concerned in earlier occasions, Blunt believed that ‘Gladstone’s sympathies with Oriental liberty were not debated.’⁴³ Gladstone’s ‘Aggression and Freedom in the East’ article is also an important source that contributed as a cause in Blunt’s consideration of this subject.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Gladstone did not feel such confidence to Blunt’s policies in Egypt which he regrettably admitted that Blunt’s thoughts had ‘no insignificant share’ of his daily attention.⁴⁵

From the beginning of 1882 until June of that year, the exchange of letters between Blunt and Gladstone revealed that Blunt insistently asked for Gladstone’s authority ‘to encourage [the] national movement as the last hope of our rule & civilisation in Mussulman East. Speaking the work; all the Arabs will be with you.’⁴⁶ He not only reiterated the statement that Arabi commanded the confidence of Egyptian people but he also elaborated upon the increasing national character of the Egyptian movement.⁴⁷ Blunt, furthermore, made it clear that Islam was a significant factor for the future fortunes of good government in Egypt but he had also asked Gladstone to consider the Turkish decline that affected the basics of Ottoman state

⁴² Luisa Villa, A ‘Political Education’: Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the Arabs and the Egyptian Revolution (1881-82), *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17:1, (2012), pp. 46-53, p. 50.

⁴³ Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, p. 60.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 55, In a letter to Blunt, he wrote ‘My own opinions about Egypt were set forth in the ‘19th century’ a short time before we took office & I am not aware as yet of having seen any reason to change them.’ BL GP Add MS 44545 fol. 92, ‘Mr. Gladstone to W. S. Blunt, 20 January 1882’

⁴⁵ BL GP Add MS 44545 fol. 92, ‘Mr. Gladstone to W. S. Blunt, 20 January 1882’

⁴⁶ BL GP Add MS 44110, fol. 9, Lord Granville itemizes Wilfrid Blunt’s letter from Cairo dated 16 February 1882.

⁴⁷ Ibid; BL GP Add MS 44110 fols. 30-8, ‘W. Blunt to Gladstone on 17 May 1882’

structure and ‘the special part destined to be played by England in the drama of the Mussulman future.’⁴⁸ Indeed, he went on further to state the significance of Islam:

There is undoubtedly a strong wave of religious feeling passing over Islam and the Sultan has put himself at its head and so identified himself with the cause of orthodoxy. I do not however see in this anything more than a matter of policy. The antagonism to the Turk is too deeply rooted in the Arabian mind to allow itself to be deluded by Ottoman promises, and the loyalty displaying towards Abdulhamid is only but European aggression can change into true regard. I know that in the eyes of the more enlightened Egyptians the Ottoman Empire and Caliphate doomed, and that they look to its inheritance at no distant date. My dislike of the Turks in which I yield not been to you Sir, has made me more than all things suspicious of the Sultan’s influence here; but I do not seriously fear it as likely to affect the liberal thought with the Mussulman Egyptians is a strong guarantee against this. Pan Islamic ideas find certain sympathy at the Ayhan (university), but it is pan Islamism of a very different sort from Abdulhamid’s— one which only seeks to unite Mahommedeans by aiding their enlightenment. I think Sir, if you will allow me to suggest it that you have a noble work before you in encouraging openly the liberal movement so strangely began in this country. It will certainly spread before Syria and in due course time to India and the rest of Asia, and in it lie the best chances of our rule in civilisation in the Mussulman East. You have but to speak now and the entire Arab race will be with you. In six months’ time you may be already too late.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ BL GP Add MS 44110, fols. 7-8, ‘Wilfrid Blunt to Mr. Gladstone, 16 February 1882’, Wilfred S. Blunt, *Future of Islam*, (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1882), pp. 191-4.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

It is true that Blunt's willingness to make common cause with Gladstone based on his earlier convictions for an authoritarian Turkish regime, the failure of reforms and the suspicions of the Sultan's influence over his Muslim subjects had led him to agree upon a formal policy in Egypt. Indeed, it could be argued that whilst the Government decided to firmly uphold international engagements, Gladstone considered that 'Egyptian feeling (was) in reference to be purposes & means of good government much.'⁵⁰ Gladstone did not dispute that his humanitarian side was with Egyptian liberty but had already anticipated the possible threats of Pan-Islamism to the British Empire. Blunt's observation in this regard was that 'a British steamer had been fired on by some Arabs on the Tigris, and he (Gladstone) began by remarking that he feared that this fact showed a marked antagonism towards England on the part of Arabia. The state of the Ottoman Empire he considered most critical. Probably the East had never been in critical state than now.'⁵¹ There is indeed a marked difference between Blunt and Gladstone's policy-making as to the future of Ottoman Empire. Writing to his friend Edward Hamilton, Gladstone's private secretary, Blunt argued that 'the great thing is to break up the Ottoman power by setting up Mussulman Princes independent of the Sultan.'⁵² Gladstone, on other hand, was clung to his belief for the maintenance of Ottoman territorial integrity under the Sultan's authority.

Blunt did not only appeal Gladstone through 'his usual channel of communication' where Hamilton asked what help the Arabian movement might count on but there was also another hopeful channel from John Morley's personal connection with Gladstone whose paper *the*

⁵⁰ BL GP Add MS 44110, fol. 9, Lord Granville itemizes Wilfrid Blunt's letter from Cairo dated 16 February 1882.

⁵¹ Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, p. 67.

⁵² 'Wilfrid Blunt to Edward Hamilton, 15 January 1881', quoted in Villa, A 'Political Education': Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the Arabs and the Egyptian Revolution (1881-82), p. 51.

Pall Mall Gazette was one of the few that Gladstone read.⁵³ ‘After a pleasant dinner’ at the Travellers’ club’, he wrote ‘we all took rather enthusiastic views as to the possibilities of the future of Islam. On the subject of Egypt, however, Morley was unfortunately already other influences than mine.’⁵⁴ When Blunt met with Gladstone at Downing Street on 22 March 1882, he was convinced that Gladstone’s sympathy was both obviously and strongly with the movement. He found Gladstone’s manner to be ‘so encouraging and sympathetic that I spoke easily with an eloquence I had never had before, and I could see that every word I said interested and touched him.’⁵⁵ It is true that Gladstone instantly read Blunt’s *Future of Islam* following its publication.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, it is difficult to regard that it was Blunt’s confidence about Islam that had solely impressed Gladstone. There is hardly any evidence to confirm whether he was convinced or was inspired by Blunt’s thoughts on the cause of Islam as the ‘cause of good over an immense portion of the world, and to be encouraged, not repressed, by all who cared for the welfare of mankind.’⁵⁷ However, this does by no means suggest that his political actions were entirely a product of his antagonism towards Islam. It has been argued that Gladstone regarded Islamic governance as the central regulation which was the main threat to Christian subjects’ liberty and freedom. In the case of Muslim subjects, it has been suggested that Gladstone was more optimistic. Implicit in such observations, nonetheless it should be argued that Gladstone’s concerns were related to his earlier thoughts as to the deficiency of Islam in respect to governance and Mohammedan fanaticism.

This is especially apparent in his consideration towards Arabi and liberal Islamic movement. Blunt saw Arabi Pasha as the ‘champion of Arabian reform’ and consistently supported his

⁵³ Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, p. 90.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 121.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 178.

⁵⁶ Diary entry for 22 July 1882, Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. X*, p. 303.

⁵⁷ Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, p. 92.

leadership in Egyptian nationalism.⁵⁸ Furthermore, he sought to convince Gladstone of Arabi's sincerity by attaching copies of Arabi's translated letters.⁵⁹ By defining Blunt as 'a respected, true and free-minded friend' and thanking him in 'establishing good order on a basis of freedom', Arabi tried to assure Gladstone that he would adhere to all treaties and international obligations and bear European bankers and financial people with 'wisdom and firmness.'⁶⁰ It is the case that there is a noticeable antagonism between Lord Granville and Blunt who believed that 'Blunt has been a good deal humbugged by Arabi Bey.'⁶¹ Gladstone's correspondence with Lord Granville indicates that Gladstone was also far from convinced that Arabi represented the liberties of Egyptian people.⁶² The analysis given by Steele puts forward the argument that Gladstone regarded Egyptian nationalism as both 'premature and superficial' which was based on three elements intent on pursuing their own sectional aims: 'the pure militarism of Arabi and his officers; the equally self-centred ambitions of a few large landowners of mainly Turkish descent and religious fanaticism of professional clergy.'⁶³ Recent developments in the historiography have made sincere attempts to reassess Arabi's role and Gladstone's vision in the Egyptian nationalist movement. P. J. Cain suggests that moral action was a reluctant necessity in order to restore order and financial stability while political insecurity was a reflection of British counteracting in the

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 178.

⁵⁹ BL GP Add MS 44110 fols. 14-5, 'Two letters from Arabi Pasha, 1 April 1882'; BL GP Add MS 44110 fol. 12, 'Mr. Blunt to Mr. Gladstone, 22 April 1882'

⁶⁰ BL GP Add MS 44110 fols. 14-5, 'Two letters from Arabi Pasha, 1 April 1882'

⁶¹ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 8 March 1882', p. 348.

⁶² Ibid, pp. 348-448.

⁶³ David Steele, 'Britain and Egypt 1882-1914: The Containment of Islamic Nationalism', p. 4 in Keith M. Wilson (eds.) *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Middle East, The Anglo-Egyptian Experience 1882-1982*, (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1981)

face of Arabi's movement.⁶⁴ Matthew also concurs with this idea by defining the hope for action by the Porte as 'irony of ironies for Gladstone' and suggests that 'British first object should be to have the Sultan committed visibly in Egypt against the unruly' since the public opinion had begun to consider "Egypt for the Egyptians" as compatible with "order."⁶⁵ Harrison, on the other hand, argues that Gladstone's 'usual high moral stance and scrutiny for legal rectitude appeared completely absent in the Arabi affair. The government failed to prove its case because its own greater guilt had far surpassed any of Arabi's actions.'⁶⁶ It is hard to see that Gladstone adopted his consistent approach in liberal national movements over the years in the case of Egypt. What emerges from his actions and earlier statements regarding freedom and self-government Gladstone's reasons for opposing Arabi's leadership are, however, a convincing rationale. First of all, Arabi's authoritarian uprising implied a real threat for the preservation of European order as well as the Muslim colonies to follow this model with Pan-Islamic activities against the British Empire. He regarded Arabi as 'traitorous' not only to Sultan or the Khedive but against the liberties of Egypt and he 'would be unsafe to public order if in the Turkish Empire.'⁶⁷ It is correct that he followed the intricacies of this line of reasoning:

I am sorry to say the inquiry is too likely to show that Arabi is very much more than a rebel. Crimes of the gravest kind have been committed; and with most of them he stands, I fear, in *presumptive* (that is, unproved) connection. In truth I must say that, having begun with no prejudice against him, and with the strong desire that he should

⁶⁴ P.J. Cain, 'Character and imperialism: The British financial administration of Egypt, 1878–1914, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2006, pp. 177-200,

⁶⁵ Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898*, p. 385.

⁶⁶ Harrison, *Gladstone's Imperialism in Egypt Techniques of Domination*, pp.16-9, 143.

⁶⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 22 September 1882', p. 429, BL GP Add MS 44643 fol. 176, 3 October 1882 'Gladstone's note on the fate of Arabi'

be saved, I am almost driven to the conclusion that he is a bad man, and that it will not be an injustice if he goes the road which thousands of his innocent countrymen through him have trodden.⁶⁸

This offers a reasonable explanation for Gladstone's desire to act through Sultan Abdulhamid and the Concert of Europe. The second consideration is that although his concerns remain towards the Turkish government, Gladstone adhered to the policy of British protection of Ottoman territorial integrity. 'Besides the argument of the Debt', he wrote to Lord Granville, 'I am averse to establishing Egyptian independence on account of the heavy shock it would impart to the general fabric of the Ottoman Empire, about which I for one have been steadily conservative, I think like you, not from the love of it but from dread of the evils of a general scramble for the spoils.'⁶⁹ What historians have neglected to analyse is how Sultan Abdulhamid with Turkish governors assessed Arabi and British acts on the path to intervention. It was reported to the Sultan that the main proposal of Arabi Pasha in Egypt was to establish a national Arabic state whose uprising advanced against British government and eventually led to the British occupation of Egypt.⁷⁰ An important reason why that the British could not entirely occupy Alexandria was due to the fact that they used Arabi Pasha along with his forces and sent the propagandists to villages in order to gain support and carry out heavy conditions that put the Ottomans in a very serious situation.⁷¹ Seen in this light, Abdulhamid's general fears can be linked with Arab separatism and its relation to the Gladstone government's policies. Yasamee refers to Abdulhamid's personal note and

⁶⁸ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, Vol. III, p. 96.

⁶⁹ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 October 1882', p. 448.

⁷⁰ 'Report by Ibrahim Dervis, Lebib, Ahmed Esad, es-Seyyid Abdulkadir', 17 June 1882, pp. 423-9.

⁷¹ 'Report by Mehmed Selim', 23 September 1882, *Osmanli Belgelerinde Misir*, 'Egypt in Ottoman Documents', (T. C. Basbakanlik Devlet Arsivleri Genel Mudurlugu, Osmanli Arsivi Daire Baskanligi, Yayin No: 120, Istanbul, 2002, p. 451-5.

suggests that support for Arab independence ‘was of a piece with the British government’s general support for the Ottoman subject peoples and principle of autonomy.’⁷² Karpas also strengthens this idea that the Sultan ‘initially regarded the Urabi uprising as a subversive movement that could threaten his Caliphal seat.’⁷³ The intensity of the political antagonism between Gladstone and Sultan Abdulhamid II had also affected the decisions concerning the intervention in Egypt in July 1882. Since the beginning of Gladstone’s second ministry, suspicions of the Sultan had been increasingly high. For instance, on 30 January 1882 the Constantinople Correspondent of *Journal des Débats* reported that ‘the Sultan and his entourage are in a state of exaltation since the news of the fall of the Gambetta Ministry. The telegram announcing that event arrived during the *sélemlek* on Friday last January 27. All who were present could see, from the expression of Abdulhamid’s face that he had received pleasant news. As soon as the ceremony was over, his Majesty, calling to him Hobart Pasha - “cet Anglais aussi Turcophile comme tout le monde sait qu’il est Gallophobe”-, told him “Well, you know the news, the Gambetta Ministry is overthrown. It will be Gladstone’s turn soon”.’⁷⁴ Yet, Gladstone’s strong reputation for supporting nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire meant that whatever his motives might be his actions were bound to be interpreted with the experience during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-1878. Gladstone similarly found Sultan Abdulhamid’s manner disappointing. Indeed, he believed that the Sultan was ‘intensely false & fraudulent’ and ‘tried to work everything against’ his government.⁷⁵ Lord Granville also expressed himself willing to maintain international arrangements that represent their ‘wish’ for ‘united action, authority of Europe’ and the

⁷² Yasamee, *Ottoman diplomacy*, p. 90.

⁷³ Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, p. 269.

⁷⁴ ‘The Situation in Egypt’, *The Standard*, 8 February 1882.

⁷⁵ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 5 April 1882’, p. 354.

Sultan as a ‘party.’⁷⁶ Following the dispatch of ships to Alexandria on 23 May 1882, Granville further made it clear that ‘if we had to carry our action beyond the protection of Europeans and the maintenance of our special interests we should necessarily resort to co-operation of the Sultan. I hope this explanation will calm Porte’s susceptibilities aroused by a misunderstanding of our motives.’⁷⁷ Following his meeting with Musurus Pasha, Gladstone pointed out that it was the Sultan who should bear heavy responsibility as a result of his decision to send Turkish commissioners to Egypt and his refusal to participate in the European Conference at Constantinople.⁷⁸ Indeed, it had been also his intention to ‘intimate that if [the] Conference decline[s], or if the Sultan decline[s], we shall invite [the] Conference to concert effectual means for the re-establishment of legality and security in Egypt and the form of this invitation will be to ask the Powers to provide for or sanction a military intervention than Turkish under their authority.’⁷⁹ Harrison sceptically argues that Gladstone ‘had delayed action to gain support from the Conference [as it was] essential to his morally bound foreign policy principles.’⁸⁰ Having lost his faith in the possibilities afforded by the Anglo-French control, it is true that Gladstone had indeed abandoned his hope not only for the concerted action but also the possibility of cooperation with the Sultan.⁸¹ ‘We are all much pleased and very thankful for the news of Sir Garnet Wolseley’s engagement’ he confided to his wife, ‘It seems to show that Egyptians will not stand for anything like a

⁷⁶ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone on 6 February 1882’, p. 340.

⁷⁷ ‘Document 162. Granville explains the dispatch of ships to Alexandria, 23 May 1882’, Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, p. 418.

⁷⁸ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 June 1882’, pp. 378-9.

⁷⁹ BL GP Add MS 44643 fol. 129, ‘Decision of Cabinet on 21 June 1882’

⁸⁰ Harrison, *Gladstone’s Imperialism in Egypt Techniques of Domination*, p. 100.

⁸¹ In a letter to Lord Granville, ‘there is nothing I think more clear in the Egyptian matter than that the dual action must be abolished.’ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 29 September 1882’, p. 434.

pitched battle in the open field, and it still further improves the military prospect. The Sultan continues his tricks and perfidy but we are in no way dependent upon him.’⁸²

In opposing Joseph Cowen, Gladstone declared that ‘we are not at war with Egypt.’⁸³ Prior to his order for military intervention, Gladstone had made much of what he regarded as the special difficulties of his particular position and earlier statements had attacked the policies of the Disraeli government or the ‘military government’ as he called it, in Egypt:

It is not because I am friendly on general principles to intervention such as has taken place in Egypt. He seems to think that I am a general apostle of non-intervention. I do not, however, see why he should say so; he had quoted nothing that bears out that view. On the contrary, if he will take the trouble to recollect, all my objections to the conduct of the late Government for a certain time—in the year 1876 and the year 1877—were, he will find, expressly founded on the charge that we had not had intervention enough. A change in events then took place; and as to my opinions with regard to intervention in Egypt, happily, they are on record, and if my hon. Friend will have the goodness to turn to a speech made by me in 1876, of which I may hereafter have again occasion to remind the House more particularly, he will see how I planted my foot down at the very first point with respect to intervention in Egypt, and indicated the consequences to which it might probably lead. However, that is a by-matter which touches only myself.

In this regard, such justifications that Gladstone did offer for his consent to military intervention was based on the consolidation with the notion of continuance for international security and civilisation. As Feuchtwanger suggests, just ‘like the Crimean War in its earlier

⁸² Bassett, *Gladstone to his Wife*, p. 238, 26 August 1882.

⁸³ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, 272 (12 July 1882), cc162–98.

stages he considered this a just war.’⁸⁴ It also helps to explain why he referenced the Battle of Navarino, in which the Turkish Fleet was destroyed by the joint action of France, England, and Russia for the freedom of Greece and declared that ‘it was not stated, nor was it the fact, that we were at war with Turkey.’⁸⁵ In this regard, it is the case that Gladstone ‘had no doubts about the justice of the intervention’ and he was ‘not a non-interventionist in international affairs.’⁸⁶

Drawing what logic can be inferred from his contemporary and retrospective analyses, it can be argued that Gladstone was clear on two points: firstly, the best condition for the welfare of Egyptian people and secondly, the ‘avoidance of whatever might tend to disturb the general tranquillity of the East.’⁸⁷ In comparison with the Bulgarian and Neapolitan cases, Lord Granville reminded Gladstone that ‘it was the Government & not individuals who committed the outrages—that in the Bulgarian case there was official information upon which to go, and that above all in these cases you acted as a private individual and not in any official capacity.’⁸⁸ Gladstone’s response implies that such confidence and hope had to be required and willing to employ British order in the case of Egypt.⁸⁹ His letter to Sir W. V. Harcourt strengthens this point of view:

No doubt great difficulties remain: and we have great questions to consider. The first of these is whether Egypt is to be hereafter, and whether we are now to lay the ground for her being, for the Egyptian people, or for something else? I say for the Egyptian

⁸⁴ E.J. Feuchtwanger, *Gladstone*, (London: Penguin Books, 1975), pp. 213-4.

⁸⁵ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, 272 (12 July 1882), cc162–98.

⁸⁶ Quinault, ‘Gladstone and War’ in Quinault, Swift and Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone New Studies and Perspectives*, p. 247, Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. X*, introduction, p. lxxi.

⁸⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 October 1882’, p. 448.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, ‘Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone on 8 February 1882’, p. 340.

⁸⁹ ‘Either way will suit me’, *Ibid*.

people, just as Bulgaria for the Bulgarian people, although Egypt cannot at the moment undertake so large a share of self-government, and is also hampered with definitive external obligations which cannot aside. The Queen expressed to me at Osborne a desire that Egypt should be independent. There was not then as much temptation, as there is now, to say otherwise. The great question of British interest is the Canal, and this turns on neutralisation, aye or no.⁹⁰

To Gladstone, the conditions required for self-government did not exist for Egypt and it was with this primary object that he strongly opposed Egyptian independence. By casting doubts on Russia's and Austria's interaction with the Sultan, he also believed that 'each has selfish aims to prosecute, and neither can be supposed to care much for Egyptian liberties.'⁹¹ His goal was to consider what 'is the basis found in freedom & self-development, as far as may be for Egypt' for a generous policy.⁹² Nonetheless, it was not only economic entanglements but also, as Feuchtwanger argues, the 'greatness' of 'the discrepancy between his ideology on foreign policy and the realities of the situation' that constrain[ed] him to abandon the 'moral cornerstone of his political thought' for the territorial integrity of nations and for their right to self-determination.⁹³ This can be attributed to a sketch conversation by Tenniel in *Punch* magazine on 5 August 1882 on which the British lion boasts talking the Turkish fox by referring to Egypt, 'you may be here *de jure* but I am here now *de facto*'.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries, Vol. X*, p. 337.

⁹¹ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 7 September 1882', pp. 414-5.

⁹² Ibid, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 3 October 1882', p. 441.

⁹³ Feuchtwanger, *Gladstone*, p. 214, Villa, 'A 'Political Education': Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the Arabs and the Egyptian Revolution (1881-82)', p. 58.

⁹⁴ 'The Lion and the Fox', *Punch*, 5 August 1882, see Appendices Figure 3.

It would be fair to state that there is a clear distinction between the Ottoman-centric and the British-centric historiography with regards to the general picture of British policy towards the Porte. Sean McMeekin argues that ‘the British control of Cyprus in 1878 and the invasion of Ottoman Egypt ordered by the Gladstone government in 1882, marked the beginning of the end of London’s special relationship with the Porte, which would never truly recover.’⁹⁵ Sevket Pamuk also concurs with the idea that the British occupation of Egypt ‘had reduced British political influence in the Empire to its lowest point of the country.’⁹⁶ Since Britain had developed an intimate relationship the Ottoman Empire since 1830s which was based on mutual trust and friendship for the maintenance of Turkish territorial integrity, this was a logical conclusion from the Turkish point of view. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to suggest that there was a systematic British effort to abolish Ottoman sovereignty, as Esra Sarikoyuncuoglu argues, in order to control Middle East while supporting nationalist movements.⁹⁷ The high quality of Gladstone’s works and his Bulgarian pamphlet has led historians to assign Gladstone a central role in the affairs with the Ottoman Empire. Karaca’s approach towards Gladstone’s arguments was based particularly on this alleged aim ‘to destroy the Ottoman Empire as a Crusader’.⁹⁸ Therefore, Karaca suggests that the uprisings and the wars in the Middle East and the Balkans during the nineteenth century were parts of a Great Game and should be connected with this plan.⁹⁹ It has recently been argued that Gladstone was adamant because he was greatly exercised over the whole Eastern question, he was involved in more than simply the question of whether the Bulgarian pamphlet would

⁹⁵ Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express, The Ottoman Empire and Germany’s Bid for World Power*, (London: Penguin Group, 2010), p. 35.

⁹⁶ Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913: Trade, Investment and production*, pp.78-9.

⁹⁷ Esra Sarikoyuncuoglu Degerli, ‘East Policy of Britain (1882-1914)’, *Akademik Bakis*, No. 14, April 2008 (Celalabat, Kirghzia), p. 13.

⁹⁸ Karaca, *İngiltere Başkanı Gladstone’un Osmanlı’yı Yıkma Planı: Büyük Oyun*.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

cause a great sensation. It becomes clear that Gladstone had never abandoned his sympathy and support towards nationalist movements against the Turkish government. In the case of Egypt, however, what needs to be understood is what lay behind the change in his attitude. It has been argued that there were certainly economic and political elements that provided the stimulus for his determination of Egyptian policy instead of individual estimation. Nonetheless, it should be remarked here that Gladstone was concerned with the prospect of Egyptian independence as a possible threat to the stable order for the East. In this regard, Matthew defines the liberal ministry's Egyptian policy as one without a 'prudential basis' which Gladstone had urged to alter nationally and he explicitly warned since 1876 that Britain's movements were becoming 'entangling'.¹⁰⁰ In that respect, it becomes clear that the charge against Abdulhamid II was one of the main reasons for the mistrust and breaking the tradition of protecting Ottoman integrity. Following the bombardment in Alexandria, *Harper's Weekly* published a cartoon in which the British lion and the Turkish Sultan were sketched hugging each other and bursting into tears.¹⁰¹ While this symbolised the old friendship and British relief to the Sultan, it also aimed to depict Abdulhamid as 'insincere' crying his crocodile tears. On the other hand, Biagini points out the contribution of Egyptian policies to Gladstonian Liberalism by stating that 'having failed to sympathise with secularised Islamic reformer, Gladstone managed to manufacture an ideology of imperial domination which presented Britain's new Egypt policies as consistent with Liberal pledges.'¹⁰² Steele, on the other hand, argues that 'the Gladstone government was compelled to invade the country and establish a quasi-protectorate without the sultan's goodwill, though

¹⁰⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. X, p. lxix.

¹⁰¹ 'Alexandria's Bombardment and Burning' by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, 22 July 1882. See appendix Figure 4.

¹⁰² Biagini, 'Exporting 'Western & Beneficent Institutions' in Bebbington and Swift (eds.), *Gladstone Centenary Essays*, p. 216.

not without his acquiescence.¹⁰³ The relations between Sultan Abdulhamid II and Britain are another misinterpreted area for Gladstone since he pointed out the significance of ‘the nominal connection of the Sultan with Egypt.’¹⁰⁴ The most prominent aspect of Gladstone's attitude towards the Porte was the consistent and deep rooted bitterness which he had expressed towards the Turkish administration. What is often overlooked here is that there have been grounds for his thinking towards the Porte:

We had to take into account the Sovereignty of the Sultan in Egypt. We had no desire to impart a shock to the fabric of the Ottoman Empire. Some Members of this House appear to think that a general crusade against the Ottoman Empire had been taught by this Government or by some Members of it. Probably where that idea prevails there is hardly anyone who is more in the view of those who entertain it than myself. But I have never taught a crusade of that kind. I have always held, in language perfectly unvarying, that we ought to insist upon the duty of making some acknowledgments with respect to the condition of the subject races in Turkey—of making those acknowledgements in more than mere words when opportunity offers. But I have never ceased steadily to maintain that we were the best friends of Turkey; and if, on a certain occasion, which was the very highest climax to which I ever ascended, I did contemplate the removal of Turkish power from one Province—the Province of Bulgaria—I said then what has proved to be true—namely, that those who then professed themselves the friends of Turkey would lead her to the loss of that Province, and of a good many more also. Well, such has been the teaching of history in this matter; and we have approached the question of the Turkish Sovereignty in

¹⁰³ David Steele, ‘Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:1, (2014), pp. 43-60, p. 51.

¹⁰⁴ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 17 October 1882’, p. 448.

Egypt with this same feeling, that we were earnestly desirous to maintain that Sovereignty within the limits of lawful right. We, therefore, looked first of all to the Turkish Power as the quarter from which intervention would be most desirable, when once the point had been reached which made the intervention of force absolutely necessary. We did all we could to soothe the susceptibilities of the Sultan.¹⁰⁵

It is true that it has never been easy to give an exact definition for his standpoint towards the Ottoman Empire; nonetheless, this was well illustrated by his Commons speech which was largely left untouched by historians. Gladstone's understanding had always been linked with the rights and liberties of subject races in the East. He evidently came across with the ruins of his long lasting and influential politics during the Bulgarian Agitation. Nonetheless, it has been argued that the case of Egypt is different from his previous engagements in Balkans. It was not only due to the financial aspects that were linked to this particular event but also it was as a result of his lack of confidence with Egyptian nationalist movement under the leadership of Arabi Pasha. Undeniably, absolute British control over Egypt would be possible through ensuring a settlement in the military and political situation together with social and humanitarian reforms.¹⁰⁶ This can also be seen as an agreement to abolish the Sultan's sovereignty over Egypt. It is further stated in the report that 'the sovereignty of the Sultan has wholly failed to fulfil its purposes, and the reestablishment of orderly government against lawlessness and anarchy has been left in the foreign intervention.'¹⁰⁷ Based on 'the possible implications of Arabi's coup on Islam and India with Abdulhamid's less stable rule', Steele observes that 'the Turkish dimension of the Egyptian imbroglio was peculiarly embarrassing

¹⁰⁵ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, 272 (24 July 1882), cc1574-619.

¹⁰⁶ For further information, see 15 September 1882, 'The Settlement of Egypt, the Preliminary Report' in Matthew, *Gladstone Diaries, Vol X*, pp. 331-3; Harold Tollepson, *Policing Islam: The British Occupation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Struggle over Control of the Police 1882-1914*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1951).

¹⁰⁷ 'The Settlement of Egypt, the Preliminary Report' in Matthew, *Ibid*, p. 332.

for Gladstone.’¹⁰⁸ Yet, Gladstone never departed from his belief for the maintenance of Sultan’s sovereignty, particularly in the case of Egypt for the welfare of the county’s Muslim subjects. This is also a surprising area that has been overlooked whilst the deep sense of disappointment can be discerned for the case of Christian subjects; he made it clear that the political system of Islam should be responsible for all the affairs of Muslims.

¹⁰⁸ Steele, ‘Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902’, p. 51.

III. W. E. Gladstone and Armenia

The sufferers under the present misrule and the horribly accumulated outrages of the last two years are our fellow Christians. This is no crusade against Mohammedanism. This is no declaration of an altered policy or sentiment as regards our Mohammedan fellow subjects in India. Nay more, I will say, it is no declaration of condemnation of the Mohammedan and Turkish Empire.

W. E. Gladstone on 25 September 1896

Gladstone's final major public speech on the subject of the Armenian question of 1894-6¹ was not only significant for showing the special place that was ascribed to his statesmanship in humanitarian crusades but it was also the culmination of his traceable line of thought on the Ottoman Empire. It is true that Gladstone's concerns never drifted away from Armenian reforms since the Treaty of Berlin of 1878 and naval demonstration of 1880 had clinched his moral desire for good government in Armenia. The growing apprehension about Turkish maladministration during Cabinet discussions was clearly a discernible feature since Gladstone's second Premiership. James Bryce, as a Liberal member of the Parliament for Tower Hamlets and the founder of the Anglo-Armenian society in 1876, had Gladstone's personal confidence on Armenian affairs. Edward Hamilton, Gladstone's private secretary, noted in his diary that: 'There was an interesting discussion on Friday about Armenia, raised by Bryce. The government seem quite prepared to take the question up and force some real reforms on the Porte...In fact, the question at issue is are the Armenians—the Christians—or

¹ The phraseology regarding the question of the Ottoman Armenians gives rise to serious debates amongst the commentators whether it reached up to the genocide level. As the purpose of this thesis is not to analyse the nature (both legal and sociological) of these events, this author will hereinafter referred them as Armenian Question of 1894-96 and Armenian Question of 1915.

the Mahometans in a majority in this Province?’² It is clear that this discussion amongst the Cabinet that revealed the level of pursuance of Gladstone’s hope of obtaining justice for Armenians as a part of his long advocacy for the rights of the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire.

It is correct that Gladstone’s role in the Armenian question is presented in a very one-sided way in recent Ottoman-centric and British historiography. Karaca regards Gladstone’s engagement with the Armenian question as the logical conclusion of his plan to ‘destroy the Ottoman Empire’ subsequent to his leadership during the Bulgarian Agitation and the British occupation of Egypt.³ On the other hand, taking forward the discussions of previous chapters, Gladstone’s biographers and historians have sought to explain the reasons for his engagement with Balkans which was based upon the pursuit of liberal humanitarianism. There is little doubt that Arnold Toynbee’s pamphlet about the Armenian atrocities of 1915 entitled *the Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*, with a preface by James Bryce reinforced existing perceptions of ‘the tyrannical Turk’. Toynbee reminded the public that Gladstone’s call against Turkish tyranny had been ‘the one voice for liberation against the Turk’ in 1876.⁴ Hakan Yavuz has assessed Toynbee’s thesis from a contemporary point of view and has argued that ‘the bloody Turk’ which developed into an ‘Armenian "genocide" discourse is used to perpetuate the image of "the terrible Turk," to undermine the legitimacy of the Turkish Republic and to keep Turkey out of the European Union.’⁵ This historiographical discussion does not go very far towards explaining the consistency of Gladstone’s

² Diary note on 25 July 1880, Dudley W.R. Bahlman, *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885, Volume I 1880-1882*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 27.

³ Karaca, *Buyuk Oyun: Ingiltere Basbakani Gladstone'nun Osmanli'yi yikma plani*, p. 16.

⁴ Arnold Toynbee, ‘The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks with a preface by Viscount Bryce’, (New York: Hodder&Stoughton, 1917), p. 20.

⁵ Hakan Yavuz, ‘Orientalism: ‘Terrible Turk’ becomes a ‘genocidal Turk’’, *Today's Zaman*, 15 January 2014, http://www.todayszaman.com/op-ed_orientalism-terrible-turk-becomes-a-genocidal-turk-by-m-hakan-yavuz-_336661.html , accessed on 5 July 2015.

engagement with the Armenian question for the rights of oppressed Ottoman minorities. Indeed, the question presents itself: to what extent was Gladstone influential both in and out of Parliament in the conduct of policy towards the Porte?

Despite his diminished prestige in the case of Egypt, his belief in upholding the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire became a defining feature of his approach to the Ottoman Empire. It is clear that Gladstone clung to his optimistic faith in self-determination and gave a clear indication of how significant Ottoman stability was for European peace and order. For instance, he gently rejected the Bulgarian Patriarch Joseph I's request for his support for a Balkan Confederation under Bulgarian leadership:

It is true I do not see exactly what border you mean. If political, then I must take the liberty to remind you that the Bulgarians were the first to go beyond their own borders...It is our deep conviction that: the independence and freedom of all Balkan nations can be secured only by a Confederation is impossible, if one nation should to material and political hegemony over others. Besides, such hegemony could be attained only by one nation absorbing parts, which ethnographically, historically and morally belong to others... We rise to prevent the ambition for political hegemony destroying that natural basis for the establishment and preservation of an political equilibrium.⁶

His fears about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire reveal the still unresolved and abiding doubts that Gladstone had concerning Turkish governance over her Christian subjects. The failure of reforms and Sultan Abdulhamid's authoritarian administration prevented Gladstone's determination for a resolution for the Eastern Question which many thought him destined for.

⁶ BL GP Add MS 44492 fols. 184-88, 'Mr. Gladstone to Bulgarian Patriarch', 17 October 1885, fol. 186.

During Gladstone's last term as Premier, there was no harmonies between Lord Rosebery and Gladstone over foreign policy as there had been previously with Lord Granville. Despite Gladstone's encouragement to Lord Rosebery to play a more defensive and central role in Armenian affairs, Rosebery refused the appeal when he declared that 'I do not see why we should bear the whole burden of this astute if pious race...Unless Armenian crime is to be protected by a halo of hereditary holiness. I do not see how they can be exempted in Turkey from the punishment they would have met with here.'⁷ Sukru Hanioglu and Gordon Martel are of the opinion that since Lord Rosebery was so convinced that he had an ability to influence Turkish policies and concerned with Russian involvement in the affair, he denied that he had acted as the guardian of the Armenian Christians.⁸ Indeed, Lord Rosebery approached the question of English support for the Sultan as a means to ward off a Russian attack. 'I should not venture to undertake an obligation in this matter' he replied, 'but there is no doubt that the first news of a Russian attack on Constantinople would raise a general cry of war in England.'⁹ It is the case, nevertheless, that Lord Rosebery reassured both Gladstone and the Cabinet as a result of his control of foreign policy with pro-empire policies such as the strength of the British fleet in Mediterranean, control over Egypt and international agreements on Near Eastern interests.

Since Rosebery was unable to adopt a firm policy towards Turkey, Gladstone found it logical to put his confidence in James Bryce over Armenian affairs. Rosebery's preference was 'to intimidate', instead of 'befriending' Abdulhamid and 'if the British chose to encourage the

⁷ BL GP Add MS 44290 fol. 170, 'Rosebery to Gladstone, 10 August 1893'

⁸ Sukru Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 259; Gordon Martel, *Imperial diplomacy: Rosebery and the failure of Foreign Policy*, (London: Queen's University Press, 1986) p. 143.

⁹ 'Document 186. 'Rosebery assures Austria-Hungary of his recognition of Near Eastern interests, and of his control of foreign policy, 14 June 1893', Temperley and M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, p. 473.

Armenians, he warned the British ambassador, they could transform a partial conspiracy into a serious revolution, and he refused to promise that he would not give such encouragement in the future.¹⁰ By referring to Rosebery's remonstrance on the British responsibility and characterisation of the Armenian race, Gladstone made it clear that:

I am without any present knowledge as to Armenia: Bryce, however, told me that his accounts as to the Sultan's proceedings are deplorable: and I had the idea that he had promised to remit the capital sentence on the five: awkward if true. You call them 'astute if pious' I have never heard of their being pious. Astute I suppose they are & beyond (perhaps) all other races, when brought into the outer world & developed there...I am reading a rather interesting Moorish novel called the Red Sultan—don't read it without some more trustworthy recommendation than mine.¹¹

What gave special significance to Gladstone's role in Armenian affairs, was not simply the public or parliamentary reaction to it but rather its place within broader humanitarian debates which prevailed since the Treaty of Berlin. This means that the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876 remains the key consideration in historians' understanding of Gladstone's emergent humanitarian initiatives against the Turkish government. To underline the impact of Gladstone's image, it should be stressed that the mutual antagonism between the Sultan and Gladstone also reflected their attitudes towards foreign policy.

It has been widely argued that Gladstone's reaction was against the maladministration of Turkish authorities over her Christian subjects and failure of the reforms. Concerned as he was by these issues, it is evident that Gladstone's observations on Sultan Abdulhamid's

¹⁰ Martel, *Imperial diplomacy: Rosebery and the failure of Foreign Policy*, p. 143.

¹¹ 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Rosebery, 12 August 1893', H. C. G. Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. xiii, 1892-6, pp. 277-8.

policies reflected his exasperation with the Sultan. In 1883, he urged Lord Dufferin to make a further representation on the Armenian question with that ‘arc liar and arch cheat’ of a man, the Sultan who was –‘the greatest of all calamities.’¹² Hamilton wrote about Gladstone’s anxiety that ‘we should leave no stone unturned on this matter in order that we may be in a position to the world eventually that we are freed from all obligations to assist the Sultan in connection with ”his vile and shameful rule” in that country.’¹³ In regards to Mediterranean agreements, it is a characteristic of the profound dislike and distrust of Abdulhamid whom Gladstone defined as an ‘inveterate liar who exaggerates, perhaps much exaggerates, all that he says about the Triumvirate: but all he can do will be done & without scruple.’¹⁴ When the uprisings took place in 1894 around the district of Sasun and incited the Armenian population, Gladstone’s vehemence and anger towards Sultan was noticeable. During the visit of the Armenian deputation on 29 December 1894 to his home at Hawarden, Gladstone was very irritated when they told him that the outrages and abominations of 1876 in Bulgaria had been repeated in Armenia. ‘It is time that one general shout of execration’ that he found it once more morally affronting: ‘not of men, but of deeds– one general shout of execration directed against deeds of wickedness – should rise from outraged humanity, and should force itself into the ears of the Sultan of Turkey, and make him sensible, if anything can make him sensible, of the madness of a such course.’¹⁵

It is clear that Gladstone followed events with greater interest in 1895. Indeed, he was willing to oppose the immorality of the Turkish government once more: ‘Had I the years of 1876 upon me,’ he said to one of his sons, ‘gladly would I start another campaign, even if as long

¹² Diary note on 1 November 1883, Bahlman, *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, p. 504.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ BL GP Add MS 44549 fol. 60, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Rosebery on 1 February 1893’

¹⁵ F. W. Hirst, ‘Gladstone’s Fourth Premiership and Final Retirement 1892-7’, pp. 721-36, p. 734 in Wemys Reid (ed.), *the Life of William Ewar Gladstone*, (London: Cassell and Company Lmted., 1899)

as that.¹⁶ It is also true that public opinion and the campaigns were similar to the times of the Bulgarian Agitation. Nearly twenty years later, the National Conference on Armenia at St. James Hall aimed to impart the same effect upon the national conscience. Gladstone was invited to attend to the meeting for not only because of his earlier endeavours but also because his presence and his words would have ‘the effect of making the meeting representative of all that is highest in the national character, and of enabling, it to speak with an authority.’¹⁷ In fact, Gladstone was so convinced that Lord Salisbury would pursue the humanitarian policy towards the Porte to which was committed since his second premiership. As Shannon argues, ‘it was not a question, as in 1876, of fighting a hostile government’ and Salisbury ‘was entirely in accord’ with Gladstone.¹⁸ It is also true that Gladstone regarded the ‘Bulgarian massacres abominable, execrable and unpardonable [...], yet [...] of paler colour than those massacres which have taken place in the recesses of the Armenian hills.’¹⁹ He stated that he had remained silent due to his full confidence that ‘the Government of the Queen would do its duty, and I still entertain that confidence... The conscious is not limited to Christendom... and there is great power in the collected voice of outraged humanity.’²⁰ Earlier it was noted that beneath Gladstone’s concern at the Sultan’s treatment of his subjects, there lay a deeper anger that support to his administration had contributed to Abdulhamid’s misdeeds:

The distinction of massacres at Constantinople, as compared with those that had taken place before, was not in their moral infamy, it was in this— that all the other dreadful

¹⁶ Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, Vol. III, pp. 581-2.

¹⁷ BL GP Add MS 44520 fols. 122-5, ‘the invitation addressed to Gladstone to attend the national meeting on Armenia, Francis Seymour Stevenson to Mr. Gladstone on 6 April 1895’

¹⁸ Shannon, *Gladstone: Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, pp. 577-8.

¹⁹ F. W. Hirst, ‘Gladstone’s Fourth Premiership and Final Retirement 1892-7’, p. 735.

²⁰ ‘Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian Question’, *the Times*, 31 December 1894.

manifestations which had formerly been displayed in the face of the world, there was added consummate insolence. Translate the acts of the Sultan into words and they become these: 'I've tried your patience in distant places, and I will try it under your eyes. I have desolated my provinces; I will now desolate my capital. I have found that your sensitiveness has not been effectually provoked by all that I have hitherto done. I will come nearer to you and see whether by vicinity I shall or shall not awake the wrath which has slept so long.' Some of it has been awakened; and the weakness of diplomacy, I trust is now about to be strengthened by the echoes of a nation's voice.²¹

This is well illustrated by Gladstone's own account of the public meeting at Chester on 7 August 1895. It must be noted that the meeting was not in favour of any particular party or section of the government. Rather, the meeting was an expression of the conviction that 'her Majesty's government will have the cordial support of the entire nation, without distinction of party, in any measures which adopt for securing to the people of Turkish Armenia such reforms in the administration of those provinces as shall provide effective guarantees for the safety of life, honour, religion, and property and that no reforms can be effective which are not placed under the continuous control of the Great Powers of Europe.'²² It is now evident that the meeting was held for the interests of humanity and peace in the East over the Armenian question. Nonetheless, what is often less appreciated in Gladstone's speech is how he expressed his cumulative indignation towards the Sultan and Turkish government to a public audience but without any antagonism to Islam or Turkish race:

This is no question of a political party so it partakes in no degree element of a religious question. It is perfectly true that the government whose deeds we have to

²¹ 'Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian question', *the Times*, 25 September 1896.

²² 'Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian question', *the Times*, 7 August 1895, pg. 4.

impeach is Mahomedan government, and it is perfectly true that the sufferers under these outrages, under those inflictions, are Christian sufferers. The Mahomedan subjects of Turkey suffer a great deal, but what they suffer is only in the way of the ordinary excesses and defects of an extraordinary bad government—perhaps the worst on the face of the earth. That which we have now to do is, I am sorry to say, the opening of an entirely new chapter...instead of dealing with the Turkish government and impeaching it for its misdeeds towards Mohamedan subjects, our indignation ought not to be less, but greater than it is now...In my time, there have been periods when Turkey was ruled by men of honesty and ability. I will say that, till about 30 years ago, you could trust the word of a Turkish government as well as the word of any government in Europe. You may not approve of their proceedings, but you could trust their words. But a kind of judicial infatuation appears to have come down upon them. Why, what was happened in Turkey? You hear of vaunting on the part of its governors and of the game of brag that is from time to time being played, that it cannot compromise its dignity that it cannot waive any of its rights.²³

Underlying his deep concern was the Turkish maladministration over her subjects regardless of religion to which Gladstone, once again, publicly declared his moral indignation. He reiterated his belief in not only the treaty of Paris which gave the powers of Europe the right to ‘take the government of it out of the hands of the Turk in consequence of his broken the solemn pledges he gave to Europe’ but he also believed that the treaty of 1878 gave to England ‘the power to redress the wrongs of those reforms in Armenia.’²⁴ Since the 1880 naval demonstration at Smyrna, Gladstone had held a firm conviction that ‘the necessity of

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

coercive pressure upon Turkey, [was] the only kind of pressure available in certain cases.²⁵ In a later reflection, he admitted that ‘It may be thought that “the luck” was marvellous, under which the threat had become known and had operated on the Sultan like a black dose, without its having caught an inkling of its at least partial failure...Force in perspective was proved to be the truest way obviating all necessity for actual force.’²⁶

It could be argued that Gladstone’s denunciation of Sultan Abdulhamid as ‘the Great Assassin’ when replying to Mr. Edward Evans who wrote him on the subject of attending the Liverpool demonstration was an embodiment of his moral judgements towards the Sultan.²⁷ When Gladstone made his last major public speech at Hengler’s Circus in Liverpool on 24 September 1896, he not only raised a number of significant points on Armenian affairs but also he outlined his experience with the Ottoman Empire since his early life. Indeed, it was his considered opinion that Armenia was ‘not the first time that we have been discussing horrible outrages perpetrated in Turkey, and perpetrated not by Mohammedan fanaticism but by the deliberate policy of the Government. The every same happened in 1876.’²⁸ He was, furthermore, so convinced with the Sultan’s personal responsibility in this chain of events that Gladstone claimed that it was the Sultan whom ‘paraded [the] massacre under the eyes of the representatives of every court in Europe. He remains unpunished and intact, and boldly asserts his incision and his merit.’²⁹ Therefore, it was as a humanitarian and moralist that Gladstone presented his proposals to the public. Since Gladstone was so convinced that the Turkish government had broken solemn promises to introduce his primary objective into

²⁵ BL GP Add MS 44776 fols. 145-53, fols. 152-3, 8 April 1895, ‘Memorandum of proceedings in 1880 with relation to the unfulfilled covenants of the Treaty of Berlin.’

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See the letter, ‘The Armenian Massacres’, *the Times*, 11 September 1896.

²⁸ ‘Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian question’, *the Times*, 25 September 1896.

²⁹ Ibid.

Armenia, which was to require Turkey to fulfil her obligations, he urged the recall of the British Ambassador from Constantinople as well as the corresponding dismissal of the Turkish ambassador from London. ‘Upon this withdrawal of diplomatic relations with England informs the Sultan’, he declared ‘she shall take into consideration the means of enforcing—if it is force alone that is available – of enforcing obligations of her just, legal and humane demands.’³⁰

What is often not appreciated in Gladstone’s speech is his reiterated statement that ‘this is not a crusade against Mohammedanism. The crowd broke out into loud applause when bidden to remember that the agitation is not on British or European but [on] humane grounds.’³¹ Nonetheless, there is a difference between the Turkish and the British historiography as to Gladstone’s views and declarations on Islam, particularly in his late life. Karaca explicitly suggests that ‘Gladstone dedicated his life to destroy Quran-i Karim and destroy the Ottoman Empire.’³² This is particularly apparent in the Islamist-rooted researchers’ criticism regarding Gladstone’s thinking towards Islam. Ahmed Akgunduz claims that there is much censorship in the British newspaper archives today in regards to Gladstone’s words on the Qur’an-I Karim as ‘the accursed book.’³³ In 1918, when Ahmed Rustem Bey, defined the religious spirit of Western countries for religious fanaticism in its attitude towards its Christian subjects, he referred to Gladstone’s contested words that: ‘So long as there will be believers

³⁰ ‘Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian question’, *the Times*, 25 September 1896.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid, p. 18.

³³ Akgunduz gives the extract as follows, ‘As long as there were followers of this accursed book, Europe would know no peace.’ Ahmet Akgunduz, ‘Bediüzzaman ve Seyid Kutub’un Gladstone’a Cevapları’, accessed on 5 July 2015. <http://www.risaleajans.com/nur-alemi/bediuzzaman-ve-seyid-kutubun-gladstonea-cevaplari> For further websites, see <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2009/01/so-long-as-there-is-this-book-there-will-be-no-peace-in-the-world/>; <http://www.risalehaber.com/kuran-i-yok-edelim-diyen-gladstoneun-niyeti-neydi-99172h.htm> ; <http://www.al-islam.org/islamic-stories/al-quran-great-and-holy-book>

in this damned book (Quran), Europe will never be at peace.’³⁴ Based on Ahmed Rustem Pasha’s acquaintance with Gladstone and the year that he published his work is worthy of consideration regardless of truth or falsity of the fact. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that there is no evidence in the parliamentary debates or the Gladstone Papers that he ever made this statement.

Mustafa Armagan defines Gladstone as the ‘enemy of the Turks’ and, therefore, justifies the suspicions of Sultan Abdulhamid against a British alliance.³⁵ Furthermore, Armagan argued that Abdulhamid’s policy of Pan-Islamism can be associated with Gladstone’s thoughts of Islam when Gladstone became the Prime Minister in 1880.³⁶ In their article Enis Sahin and Mustafa Sari referred to Gladstone’s articles in *The Times* they argue that he was the main party who was responsible in the narrative promotion of the Armenian question whereby he transformed it into an international problem of humanity.³⁷ On this basis, Jeremy Salt describes Gladstone’s rhetoric as ‘inflammatory’ that he ‘whipped up the “Bulgarian atrocity” propaganda of the 1870s and tried to do the same in the 1890s’ to which ‘the sultan entered history as Abdul the Damned, Abdul the Assassin and the Red Sultan.’³⁸ Since Gladstone employed consistency and inflammatory rhetoric in defence of the rights of Christian subjects, he was perceived as the enemy of the Turks and Islam from the Ottoman point of view. Along with the rise of Sultan Abdulhamid’s autocratic control of state,

³⁴ Ahmed Rustem Bey, Stephen Cambron (trans.), *The World War and the Turco-Armenian Question*, for the full book: https://issuu.com/lalemis/docs/ahmet_rustem_bey__the_world_war_and_eefa2138b0a267 last accessed on 22 July 2016.

³⁵ Mustafa Armagan, *Abdulhamid’in Kurtlarla Dansı*, (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 2011), p. 109.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 108.

³⁷ Enis Sahin & Mustafa Sari, ‘Batı Basınına Göre İngiliz Başvekil Gladstone ve Ermeni Meselesi’ <http://turksandarmerians.marmara.edu.tr/tr/bati-basinina-gore-ingiliz-basvekil-gladstone-ve-ermeni-meselesi/> accessed on 1 June 2015.

³⁸ Jeremy Salt, ‘The Narrative Gap in Ottoman Armenian History’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jan. 2013), pp. 19-36, at p. 25.

Gladstone was also aware that the Sultan viewed him as his greatest enemy. He told Lord Rosebery,

There was then no other foundation for it than that I had perhaps spoke the most plainly, but I think he may have inflicted himself injury through that erroneous belief. In what you say of me, you are safely within the mark. Desiring to be just to him I have thought he seemed to behave well in the Bulgarian business since the Union; and my Egyptian view lie in the same directions as his, unless he seeks, as he may, to encroach on Egyptian privileges. I am afraid that both the Sultanate and the Popedom have in so far become stark from their old age that even the advent of a really great man could perhaps do no effectual good.³⁹

By the same token, after he received Gladstone's reply Munir Pasha reproachfully wrote that 'Mr. Gladstone invented an adjective in connection with us to the English language with the word "unspeakable"'.⁴⁰ Since the Ottomans were very suspicious of Gladstone's role in the Bulgarian Question, Rustem Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador in London, had asked Gladstone not to give countenance to the Armenians in 1893. Despite Gladstone's well-known dislike of the Turkish Empire, Pasha believed that Gladstone's neutrality would help the situation in favour of the Porte.⁴¹ It had been suggested to Rustem ask for Gladstone's assurance and seek a guarantee from Britain to stop these Armenian hostile uprisings against the Turkish government especially in London and other English cities.⁴² Following their meeting, Pasha

³⁹ 'Gladstone to Lord Rosebery on 24 August 1892', Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. xiii, p. 65

⁴⁰ BL GP Add MS 44520 ff.170-3, 'Munir Pasha to Gladstone on 2 May 1895'

⁴¹ BOA (Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives), ESA (Yildiz Foreign section), 17/79 10 July 1893 in *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives, II*, pp. 107-8.

⁴² BOA HR.SYS (Ottoman Foreign Ministerial Archives, Political Section) 2819/28_2 13 June 1893 in *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives (1891-1893)*, Vol. II, (Istanbul: General Directorate of State Archives of Prime Ministry, 2004), pp. 66-7.

reported that Gladstone had conveyed his ideas to him directly and informed him that since he was dealing with internal affairs and his bad health, he was unconscious of what the Armenian question had so rapidly become. Furthermore, Gladstone had strongly denied the accusations of provoking the Armenians and assured the ambassador that he had never supported anarchism and incitements which was a part of his consistent line during his long life.⁴³ It is also clear that Gladstone was pleased with Salisbury's sensitivity to the Christian subjects in the conduct of British policy towards the Porte which considerably allayed his concerns.

⁴³ BOA HR.SYS 2819/39 23 June 1893 in *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives, II*, p. 77

Concluding remarks

By examining the determining factors of foreign policy towards the Porte, the chapters have shown Gladstone's wider engagement with Ottoman affairs in order to push an agenda that was informed by humanitarian and moral objectives. During his second administration, Gladstone made persistent and laborious efforts to modify British policy towards the Porte. Beyond his belief in the power of the European concert and 'the special purpose of the administration of 1880' that gave effect to the Treaty of Berlin, it has been argued that Gladstone executed his consistent principles in Eastern affairs in defence of equal rights for Christian subjects of the Porte.¹ This understanding and scheme of conduct was reinforced by both Lord Granville at the Foreign Office and by Goschen's ambassadorship at Constantinople.² It is equally clear that 'a change of tone' was adopted and Britain moved away from its traditional protective policy towards the Porte while ceasing to recommend humanitarian reforms to the Turkish Government. Indeed, the Abdulhamid factor was an important component in Gladstone's thinking and was discussed in reference to his previous thoughts as to Turkish government. Since Gladstone had made clear his general distrust of Abdulhamid's policy measures, his belief in the imperative notion of a European conscience increased incrementally with the concerted action at Smyrna. Along with Gladstone's intense interest in the case, the concerted naval demonstration in Smyrna with respect to the territorial question of Thessaly marked an important stage for showing 'the necessity of coercive pressure upon Turkey, [which was] the only kind of pressure available in certain

¹ Brooke and Sorensen, (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone Volume III: Autobiographical Memoranda*, 'Appendix 2, Additions to Volume I', p. 252.

² On the day Mr. Goschen left Constantinople, Gladstone told him that, 'I write principally for the purpose of offering you my hearty congratulations on the place you have taken in diplomacy by force of mind and character, and on the services which, in thus far serving the most honourable aims a man can have, you have rendered to liberty and humanity.' Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone 1809-1859*, Vol. III, p. 12.

cases.’³ In contradistinction to the Crimean alliance, Gladstone had already stated firmly that British friendship to the Sultan was conditional upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment. As the ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ pamphlet of 1876 had provided the rhetorical text for Gladstone’s pioneering adjustment of British policy towards the Porte, the naval demonstration showed Gladstone’s passionate concern for the fulfilment of the stipulations of Treaty of Berlin and it also helps to explain his consistency in defence for the rights of the minorities of the Porte. It has been suggested that Gladstone made a clear discrimination between Turkey’s Asian and European provinces with regards to administration. He firmly believed in the liberal principles for the effectual development of local liberty and took such steps to vindicate the efficiency of practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, Gladstone believed it was a ‘sham and a farce to continue to recommend reforms and to hold this language to the Turkish Government.’⁴ There were certainly elements of continuity in his attitude towards the Ottoman Empire where he principally supported the maintenance of the Turkish Empire while eagerly setting advocating the emancipation of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

Yet, it is an obvious fact that in 1882 British policy was not directed at protecting Ottoman territorial integrity. Gladstone was now at a critical point in his career as he faced the realities of his principles in both conception and execution. This shift in policy culminated in the occupation of Egypt. However, a further point to recall is the impact of the promotion of human rights which became a key component of Britain's attitude towards the Porte during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875–78. In that respect, one may argue that the British investment in the Ottoman Empire, facilitated by trade policies and British imperial motives, helped to

³ BL GP Add MS 44776 fols. 145-53, fols. 152-3, 8 April 1895, ‘Memorandum of proceedings in 1880 with relation to the unfulfilled covenants of the Treaty of Berlin.’

⁴ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 256 (4 September 1880), cc1298-328.

shape British policy towards Ottoman territorial integrity. Over the years leading up to the Ottoman deficit, and as a consequence of subsequent loans, and a decision to unilaterally default on the interest payments of her foreign debts, Britain not only took joint control (with France) of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration over the Porte's finance, but also occupied Egypt in order to defend British commercial and bondholders' interests. Gladstone's sympathies towards the Egyptian people never entirely disappeared but this was not apparent as much as in the case of other liberal nationalist movements. It was, therefore, hardly to be expected that Gladstone would have imposed his own humanitarian ideals interrelatedly since he drew his principles from the prevailing circumstances. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that Gladstone's actions were based on the firm belief that the sultan's role had a significant influence for establishing a stronger grip over the Empire's Muslim subjects. Underlying his deep concern was the case of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects. However, he made it clear that the political system of Islam should be responsible for all the affairs of Muslims. Defining himself as 'a labourer in the cause of peace', Gladstone's longstanding enthusiasm for the individual's right to freedom also manifested itself in the case of Egypt, and consequently he became convinced that the British occupation was the only means to maintain both international peace and stability and to also secure British interests.⁵

The question of minority rights in the case of Armenians occupied most of Gladstone's thought towards the end of his life. The public meetings that Gladstone supported were not in favour of any party or section of the government in particular. Rather he offered his support for these meetings in the name of humanity and with cordial support for securing Armenian reforms. It has been argued that his concern never drifted from Turkish maladministration

⁵ 'Conversation with John Bright on 14 July 1882' in Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, Vol. III, pp. 94-5.

over her Christian subjects. Consistent with a view that he had originally put forward during the Near Eastern Crisis of 1876-8, the importance of Gladstone's attitude to Islam in determining his political approach is emphasised with his reiterated statement that 'this is not a crusade against Mohammedanism.'⁶ In regards to British policy, however, he had no such apprehension as in the times of the Bulgarian agitation. Since the Treaty of Berlin as foreign secretary Lord Salisbury was of the opinion to compel the Porte to amend her course over the Christian population. It is, therefore, clear that Gladstone had confidence in Salisbury's conduct of vigorous diplomacy. This also indicates a change in the British policy along with liberal objectives and Gladstone's greater emphasis in foreign policy particularly since his second Premiership. Yet, Gladstone's cumulative indignation to the Sultan should not be overlooked either. In particular, it must be noted that he was angered with 'the shifts & falsehoods'⁷ of the Sultan since his second Premiership and Armenia was a point of utmost exhaustion.

⁶ 'The question of the East is not a question of Christianity against Islamism.' BL GP Add MS 44454 fols.20-2, 'Mr. Gladstone to Negropontis at Constantinople' on 9 January 1877, translation made on 13 September 1877; 'Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian question', *the Times*, 25 September 1896.

⁷ BL GP Add MS 44544 fol. 65, 'Gladstone to Madame O. Novikov, 25 September 1880', William T. Stead, *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff*, 2 vols (London: Melrose, 1909), I, p. 95.

CONCLUSION

Here is my first principle in foreign policy: good government at home. My second principle of foreign policy is this-that its aim ought to be to preserve to the nations of the world, and especially, were it but for shame, when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians, especially to the Christian nations of the world.

Gladstone on 27 November 1879 at Midlothian Speech at West Calder¹

I made no charge against the Turks at large, but against the Turkish Government, and claim to have been a better friend to the Ottoman Empire than the Sultan.

Gladstone in a letter to Khalil of Angora, 10 August 1895²

I write without the smallest pretension to authority: but I cannot escape or disclaim the moral responsibility of one, who, for a period of 45 years from the year of 1850, frequently had an active concern in the foreign affairs of the country, and who for many years lived, as Prime Minister, in incessant and most intimate relations of confidence with the Foreign Minister of the day. I may perhaps add that I have had rather special opportunities for knowing of what material the present Sultan, with all his seeming obstinacy, is made...In the face of civilised mankind he has recorded the final condemnation, first of foremost of himself, but next and not less effectually, of those who has been willing, brutal and sanguinary tools.

W. E. Gladstone in a letter to Lord Bishop, 20 October 1896³

¹ William E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879 with an Introduction by M. R. D. Foot*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 115.

² 'Today's telegrams', *The Star*, 10 August 1895.

³ 'Gladstone to Lord Bishop', 'The Armenian Question, meeting in St. James Hall', *Morning Post*, 20 October 1896.

In 1898, when Gladstone died after a painful illness, his contribution to humanity for the liberty and justice of oppressed nations was universally recognised. The Bulgarian, Servian, Montenegrin and Greek communities in various parts of the world sent large numbers to attend his funeral, while political associations, representing all parties, all over the country sent their condolences. Prince Nicholas of Montenegro telegraphed to Mrs. Gladstone, and wrote — “In your illustrious husband Montenegro has lost a true, powerful friend, whose name is entwined in the hearts of Montenegrins.”⁴ The King of Greece in a letter to the family stated that ‘Greece will ever remember with the sincerest gratitude the great English statesman, whose wonderful voice so often supported the nation’s aspirations. His memory will ever remain dear to this country.’⁵ A crimson embroiled silk handkerchief given by the Armenian deputation who visited Hawarden covered his feet.⁶ Not surprisingly, as Sultan Abdulhamid had strictly ordered, there was no Turkish representative at Gladstone’s funeral.⁷ Whatever the sincerity of Gladstone’s views, they hardly appealed to Turkish rulers. Traditionally, there is a clear distinction between Ottoman-centric and British historiography regarding perceptions of Gladstone and the Eastern Question. It has been argued in this thesis that there is a wide measure of unanimity between British historians as to Gladstone’s morality. Nevertheless, the perception from the Ottoman-centric point of view is more related to Gladstone’s fervent fanaticism with respect to Christianity. This is natural enough. Nonetheless, this research has shown that Gladstone viewed himself as a moral influence on Ottoman affairs and consistently acted with intense and explosive energy in line with humanitarianism to modify British policy. This trend is well illustrated in the cases of nationalist movements largely left untouched by historians; namely how Gladstone’s vision

⁴ ‘Gladstone’s funeral’, *The Dundee Courier & Argus*, 24 May 1898.

⁵ ‘The Dead Leader’, *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 21 May 1898.

⁶ ‘The Death of Mr. Gladstone’, *The Times*, 25 May 1898.

⁷ BOA HR.SYS 385/41 20 May 1898 June 1893 in *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives, II*, p. 234.

affected British policy towards the Porte. What this study challenges is the idea of Gladstone's aim was to destroy the Ottoman Empire and the assumption that he was an antagonist of Islam.

A critical re-evaluation of Gladstone's life and his attitudes towards the Ottoman government reveals his emphasis upon humanitarian concerns in foreign policy against the Porte. Therefore, a large measure of understanding gives a general picture of the principles on which Gladstone's Eastern policy was founded. It is important to emphasize that while Gladstone's religious beliefs motivated his apprehension about the situation of Christian minorities, the reasoning behind his concern resulted from his early career thoughts and his subsequent declarations about the conduct of the Turkish government in Crete, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Armenia. From this point of view, Gladstone's international statesmanship was built upon his earlier intentions and was strengthened by liberal ideas of progress and he always remained faithful to his strong morality – which was especially evident in the case of the Ottoman Empire and the campaign for the liberation of Balkan states. To Gladstone, absolute power was established under the direct government of the Turks in a 'wretched system' despite the socio-ethnic structure of the society and the number of different -religious identities.⁸ It is true that Gladstone espoused the cause of sovereignty of Mahometan masters over the Christian races. The special role of Islam in the Turkish government's system was an important factor in stirring his anxiety. This was particularly obvious when he made it clear that 'the question of the East is not a question of Christianity against Islamism' which puts into proper perspective the effect of his idea of 'Islamism' in the policies of the Turkish government towards non-Muslim subjects.⁹

⁸ William E. Gladstone, *The Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire*, (London, 1877), p. 16

⁹ 'It is, however a question of the Christians against the Porte and the governing Ottomans, because all the grievances of Mussulman and Jewish subjects, and much without doubt they ought to disappear in the act of

This thesis has demonstrated that the Crimean experience gave him a wider perspective from which to judge Lord Palmerston's policy due to the possible British alliance with the 'oppressive Turks' and the fact that the policy lacked an obligation to advocate moral responsibility for the Christian subjects of the Porte. Nonetheless, as seen in Chapter IV, Gladstone accepted British responsibility to maintain the law and institutions of Turkey as a Mahomedan State as the treaty of Paris envisaged.¹⁰ Since he was committed to financing the war through an increase in taxation, he remained sceptical about Turkish loans which would further influence his understanding of the economic implications of British support for the Ottoman Empire. On a prudential basis, it has also been argued that his holding of Egyptian Tribute loans was a factor that led him to emphasize bondholder's point of views.

It is difficult to regard Gladstone as having sympathy for Turkish culture and Muslims in spite of his receptive frame of mind and enthusiasm for Eastern Christians as a result of his role in the Ionian Islands and Ottoman provinces. Nonetheless, it was not until the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876 that he had decided what policy should be followed in regard to the Ottoman Empire and this provoked a splendid cry of indignation from him. What is often overlooked is the nature of his consistent attitude towards the Ottoman Empire, the anger and bitterness which he experienced, and the rhetoric which he employed in all this. Seen in this light, his Bulgarian pamphlet was a milestone in which he succeeded in appealing to the masses with respect to the agitation occurring inside the Ottoman Empire. This remarkable moral fervour could not have been produced without the experience of the previous years. By 1876, Gladstone was well aware of the maladministration of the Turkish authorities over her Christian subjects and he roundly attacked the Tory government's handling of the Eastern

applying on efficacious remedy to such grievances of the Christians, who form the men of the oppressed.' BL GP Add MS 44454 fols.20-2, 'Mr. Gladstone to Negropontis at Constantinople' on 9 January 1877, translation made on 13 September 1877.

¹⁰ *Hansard, Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 142 (6 May 1856), cc17-136.

Question. Simultaneously, Disraeli's maintenance of a pro-Turkish foreign policy allowed Gladstone to develop his rhetoric in line with Christian humanitarianism and the Concert of Europe. There has been a long debate about whether Gladstone's rhetorical indignation in his 'Bulgarian Horrors' pamphlet was a call for the 'clearing the Turks out of Europe as the anti-specimen of humanity with bag and baggage' or an incitement to the Christian nations to rise up against Turkish rule. For instance, in the case of Negroponte affair in Chapter VI and the Armenians in Chapter IX, it has been argued that Gladstone strongly denied that he had urged the Greeks or Armenians to revolt.¹¹ To Gladstone, instead of urging the Porte to meet minorities' demand with reforms, safeguarding their rights under the collective guarantees of the Concert of Europe or the people's right for self-government within the Ottoman system was the best solution for the Eastern Question.

When Gladstone became Prime Minister in April 1880, his contribution to the determination of British policy cannot be overstated. He paid particular attention to the implementation of certain articles of the Treaty of Berlin that concerned Greece, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Armenia. A new foreign policy was created under Lord Granville as Foreign Secretary, with George Goschen serving as special ambassador to Constantinople. The fact that this development has been neglected in historical studies is surprising since it shows the execution of his political ideas which was as important as his consistent behaviour with respect to the liberty of Christian subjects of the Porte. Gladstone's suggestion in October 1880 to compel the Porte with the use of a joint naval demonstration at Smyrna revealed his commitment to the Concert of Europe instead of urging the Porte to implement pledged rectifications by reforms. To Gladstone, a framework that favoured humanitarian intervention in the Ottoman Empire in the form of coercive diplomacy towards the Ottoman

¹¹ For the accounts see BL GP Add MS 44455 fols. 98-104, 'Apology', BOA HR.SYS 2819/39 23 June 1893 in *British-Armenian relations in Ottoman Archives, II*, p. 77.

government, was not only a step towards the liberation of Christian subjects but it was also morally justifiable. As Rodogno emphasizes ‘Gladstone here makes a famous case for “the principles of humanity” overruling national sovereignty in international relations—in line with a developing trend of “humanitarianism” throughout the nineteenth century.’¹² It is equally important to remember that while keeping in view the fundamental objectives of British foreign policy, Gladstone and Lord Granville adopted and pursued certain principles. Indeed, the conditions in respect to the British friendship to the Sultan was mainly based upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment, the execution of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin and the maintenance of peace within the Concert of Europe.¹³ It has been suggested that Gladstone's idea for self-government in the Ottoman case was unrealistic due to the Balkan people's national aspirations in favour of full independence, the nature of a gathering system of Ottoman autocracy and his inspiration from Aristotle's virtue of the ‘capacity to govern’. It is clear that Gladstone saw a direct connection between the Sultan's sovereignty and the local liberties of inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Nonetheless, this was by no means a declaration of full confidence in the Sultan's authority. Yet, the research presented in Chapters VII and IX has shown how important mutual antagonism was between Gladstone and Sultan Abdulhamid II. Gladstone's strong defence of the rights of Eastern Christians in the Ottoman Empire was arguably perceived as a provocation for the freedom of Christians against Muslim oppression and a component of his plan to ruin the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ By the same token, Abdulhamid's perceptions had changed since the Russo-Turkish War due to the withdrawal of British support which he had previously expected. One of the solutions for his diplomacy was his belief in the influence of Islam, namely Pan-

¹² Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914*, p. 265.

¹³ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, ‘Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 10 June 1880’, p. 134.

¹⁴ Karaca, *İngiltere Basbakani Gladstone'un Osmanlı'yi yıkma Planı*, p. 18.

Islamism, whilst searching for new remedies for his policies and the Empire. This reveals the tension that concerned Gladstone's role and that afflicted the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations.

An analysis of the British occupation of Egypt has helped to distinguish Gladstone's consistent ideals to promote national aspirations between the realities of his principles in both conception and execution. Besides Gladstone's concern on merits of the measure of the Turkish loans or debt, he believed in supporting British intervention instead of the Egyptian nationalist movement. This thesis also proposes a transnational approach to the study of Gladstone's attitude towards Islam as it reveals important connections between Gladstone's consistent thoughts about the subject of Islamic governance and Ottoman territorial integrity. It is clear that a deep sense of disappointment can be discerned from Gladstone's correspondence regarding the case of Christian subjects in Europe. However, he made it clear that the political system of Islam should be responsible for all the affairs of Muslims in Asian territories. Gladstone regarded the Sultan's role as a significant influence for establishing a stronger grip over the Empire's Muslim subjects. It was on these grounds that he endeavoured to appeal to the policy of independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire by upholding the treaties of 1856 and 1871.¹⁵ By undertaking a critical synthesis of Gladstone's responsibilities along with an analysis of the relations between Gladstone and Wilfrid Blunt over the Egyptian national movement and Arabi Pasha, this investigation reveals that Gladstone was far from convinced that Arabi represented the liberties of Egyptian people as did Blunt's suggestion to 'break up the Ottoman power by setting up Mussulman Princes independent of the Sultan.'¹⁶¹⁷ Despite his support for the ideals of universal justice and

¹⁵ William E. Gladstone, *Agression on Egypt and freedom in the East*: article contributed to the Nineteenth Century in 1877, (Bristol Selected Pamphlets, 1877; 1884), p. 18, p. 20, *Gleanings, IV*, p. 364.

¹⁶ 'Wilfrid Blunt to Edward Hamilton, 15 January 1881', quoted in Villa, A 'Political Education': Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the Arabs and the Egyptian Revolution (1881-82), p. 51.

liberty, his agreement with the sentiment 'Egypt for Egyptians' and his scepticism towards imperialism of the Disraelian variety, Gladstone justified the intervention in Egypt in 1882 by way of economic reasoning. These justifications included the protection of the Suez Canal, and the need to secure the interests of British bondholders which included his own large bond holdings. Beyond any doubt, by emphasizing the importance of self-determination and freedom of religion, Gladstone's great support towards the Ottoman Christian subjects affected not only British foreign strategy in the Porte, but also shook the Ottomans' confidence in the British alliance. It was Gladstone's strong rhetoric and indication during the Near Eastern Crisis that led to Sultan Abdulhamid II receiving such sentiments with a deep-seated antipathy which, in turn, eventually suspended the Anglo-Ottoman alliance. Consequently, it has been emphasized that Gladstone's role in Armenian affairs was not simply a reflection of public or parliamentary reaction but one that had a significant place within broader humanitarian debates which prevailed since the Treaty of Berlin. His cumulative indignation towards the Sultan and Turkish government strengthened the power of his earlier convictions which were pursued in Salisbury's government in defence of Christian subjects of the Porte. Although Lord Salisbury emerged as a Tory leader, he was a follower of Gladstone on the Armenian question. Richard Shannon has claimed that Gladstone 'very much wanted Lord Salisbury to break through diplomatic obstacles.'¹⁸ From this point of view, it can be argued that these humanitarian tendencies were not only consolidated in Liberal political culture but were also pursued by the Conservatives.

From this point of view, it is fair to throw some light on Gladstone's humanitarian legacy to the next generation for Ottoman affairs until the establishment of Republic of Turkey and

¹⁷ Ramm, *The political correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-1880*, I, 'Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville on 8 March 1882', pp. 348-448.

¹⁸ Shannon, *Gladstone: God and Politics*, p. 471.

how his thinking about Islam can be interpreted. In his extensive research on the place of the Balkans in British Liberal politics from the 1870's to 1920's, James Perkins refers to the diplomatic principles of humanitarianism, international diplomacy and the Concert of Europe by arguing that this analysis 'could also be levelled at the approach of British liberals to the Macedonian question and other Balkan issues before 1914.'¹⁹ In that respect Noel and Charles Buxton also represented the 'radical new liberalism' in the Balkan question of 1910s.²⁰ On the other hand, Toynbee's pamphlet titled 'the Murderous Tyranny of the Turks' with a preface by Bryce demonstrated not only perceptions of 'the tyrant Turk' of the Armenian question of 1915 but was also a reminder of Gladstone's call against Turkish tyranny as 'the one voice for liberation against the Turk' in 1876.²¹ In that respect, Prime Minister David Lloyd George's presented a reference to Gladstone's sentiment for 'the Concert of Europe' which revealed his perceptions of British foreign policy against the Ottoman Empire.²² This said, A. E. Montgomery defines Lloyd George as 'a strange amalgam of Gladstonian Liberal and Welsh visionary' and outlines his two principles in the 1920s: 'the Allies should suppress Turkish power, once and for all, by depriving Turkey of her hereditary guardianship of the Straits; and they should wrest from her control all territories which were not exclusively peopled by Turks.'²³ Furthermore, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill's support for the achievement of the 'Megali Idea' for the Greek nation

¹⁹ James Andrew Perkins, 'British liberalism and the Balkans, c. 1875- 1925', unpublished PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, p. 232.

²⁰ Ibid, 105. See Buxton's further works on Armenia and Macedonia; Noel Buxton and Rev. Harold Buxton, 'Travel and Politics in Armenia' (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1914); Noel Buxton and T.P., Conwil-Evans, 'Oppressed Peoples and the League of Nations' (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1922).

²¹ Arnold Toynbee, 'The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks with a preface by Viscount Bryce', (New York: Hodder&Stoughton, 1917), p. 20.

²² '...And in the international settlement I would like to see the best traditions of Mr. Gladstone's life embodied in the settlement of Europe and the affairs of the world: regard for national liberty, national rights, whether nations be great or small. Let us have the best traditions of both and all parties.' David Lloyd George, *The Truth About the Peace Treaties Vol. I*, (London Victor: Gollancz Ltd. 1938), p. 159.

²³ A. E. Montgomery, "The Making of the Treaty of Sevres of 10 August 1920", *the Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Dec., 1972), pp. 775-787, Cambridge University Press, p. 777.

under the leadership of E. Venizelos became an important motivation that led British diplomacy against the Turks until his resignation subsequent to Chanak Crisis in 1922. In order to track the policy of Gladstone, Sedat Cilingir represents the Ottoman-centric point of view by stating that ‘British leaders did not hesitate to slice the Ottoman Empire and distribute to several states as a token of gift, even before the Paris Peace Conference took place.’²⁴ As a consequence, Gladstone’s approach to the Ottoman Empire was interpreted as fragmented and confused. However, what is evident is that Gladstone sought occasions of amelioration of British policy in a series of nationalist movements, which reflected his underlying deep concern for the rights of protection over all non-Muslim subjects.

Above all, Gladstone’s thinking about Islam is still in question, particularly amongst the Islamist-rooted researchers. The alleged reference by Gladstone of the Quran as ‘the accursed book’, still gives rise to a long debate regarding how Gladstone viewed Islam and Muslims.²⁵ Since his definition of Turks as ‘the anti-specimen of humanity’ in his Bulgarian pamphlet²⁶, this perception of his Turcophobic discourse has never left him. Nonetheless, it has been argued that there is no other evidence showing that he was hostile to the Turkish race. Having said that, the Islamic House of Wisdom was founded in 2011 in Gladstone’s home in Hawarden, can be considered as his sincerity to researches on Islam. Peter Francis, the Warden of Gladstone’s Library states that, ‘relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims

²⁴ Sedat Cilingir, ‘Lloyd George and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire’, The Middle East technical University, Unpublished PhD thesis, 2007, p. 32.

²⁵ Akgunduz gives the extract as follows, ‘As long as there were followers of this accursed book, Europe would know no peace.’ Ahmet Akgunduz, ‘Bediüzzaman ve Seyid Kutub’un Gladstone’a Cevapları’, accessed on 5 July 2015. <http://www.risaleajans.com/nur-alemi/bediuzzaman-ve-seyid-kutubun-gladstonea-cevapları> For further websites, see <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2009/01/so-long-as-there-is-this-book-there-will-be-no-peace-in-the-world/>; <http://www.risalehaber.com/kuran-i-yok-edelim-diyen-gladstoneun-niyeti-neydi-99172h.htm> ; <http://www.al-islam.org/islamic-stories/al-quran-great-and-holy-book>

²⁶ Gladstone, ‘Bulgarian Horrors,’ p. 13

would certainly have been amongst Gladstone's central concerns.²⁷ Furthermore, a sound recording that concerned Gladstone's thinking towards Islam assessed by Gladstone's great grandson Christopher Parish and historian Richard Aldous argued that there is no primary evidence of an infamous quote of 'so long as there is this book [of Quran], there will be no peace in the world', which was and still is, attributed to Gladstone.²⁸ Having considered this interview with Parish and Aldous, one may conclude that the opening of the Islamic room in the Gladstone Library may be regarded as a gesture and an expression of good faith towards Islam on the 200th birthday of Gladstone.

This thesis has provided new insights into Gladstone's engagement with Ottoman affairs since his early life which were also underlying aspects of British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. The central argument of this thesis is that Gladstone was adamant in defending the rights of the Christian minorities because he was greatly exercised over the whole Eastern question, and was involved in more than simply the question of whether the Bulgarian pamphlet would cause a great public sensation. Despite the assertions to the contrary, it is also clear that Gladstone clung to his belief in the maintenance of the territorial integrity policy but abandoned the promotion of Turkish reforms under British control. In contradistinction to the Crimean alliance, Gladstone already stated firmly that British friendship to the Sultan was conditional upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment. Seen in this light, Gladstone's second ministry gave rise to Sultan Abdulhamid's suspicions against the Liberal government and Gladstone as the Prime Minister. To underline the impact of Gladstone's image in these affairs, it must be emphasized that the mutual antagonism

²⁷ 'Gladstone's Library opens Islamic House of Wisdom', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-15174474>, accessed on 15 August 2016.

²⁸ 'Gladstone's thinking towards Islam', http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_7846000/7846601.stm , accessed on 15 August 2016. It has been argued that this quotation was said in a House of Commons meeting while Gladstone brandished a copy of Quran. However, this remains as hearsay due to the lack of primary sources that demonstrate the presence of such speech.

between the Sultan and Gladstone also represented the attitudes to foreign policy of their respective countries.

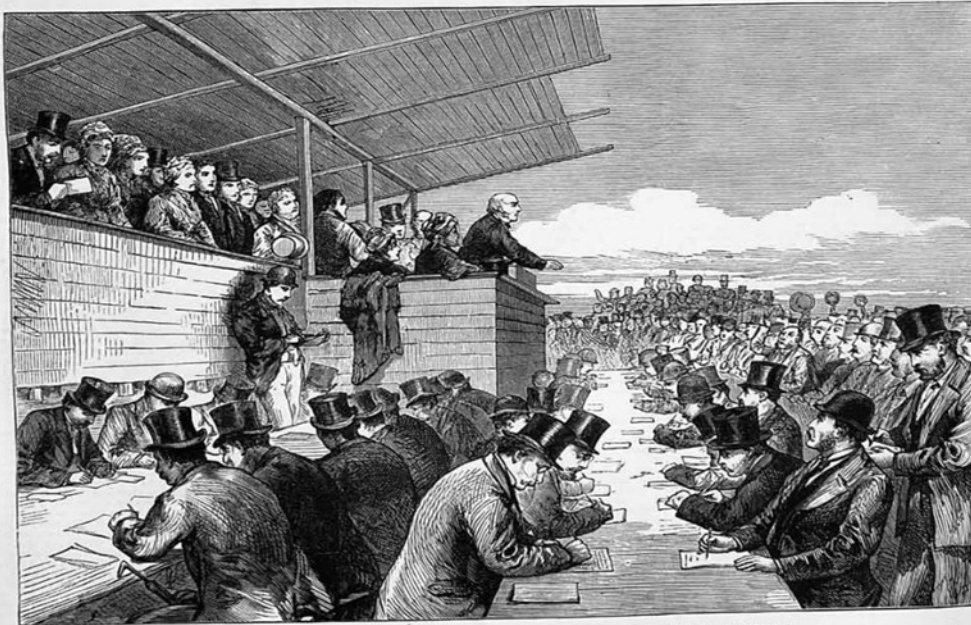
This thesis has argued that Gladstone's moral indignation and anxiety for religious freedom launched a new era for the determination of British policy towards the Porte. Gladstone's main aspiration was the rights of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire based upon the principles of liberalism, including humanitarianism and self-determination. Although his inflammatory rhetoric attacked Turkish governors in the Bulgarian pamphlet, the evidence evaluated in this thesis reveals that he was sincere about the virtues of Ottoman governance in Asian territories. Gladstone's hostility towards Turkish rule derived from the mistreatment of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects as well as Islamic principles behind the Ottoman state that prevented amalgamation which did not truly embrace the mass of subjects but instead aggrandized Turkish ethnicity. The overreaching argument of the thesis is that Gladstone's humanitarian perspectives and the 'Concert of Europe' approach left a substantial influence in British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire for the course of diplomatic affairs between the two countries. Nevertheless, Gladstone's words and actions inadvertently contributed to the decline of 'friendly' Anglo-Ottoman relations in the period subsequent to Palmerston's ministry.

APPENDICES

Figure 1 - 'Plenty of work in hand', ca 1876-1877 (drawn), Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints & Drawings Study Room, level D, case 85, shelf SC, box 15. Artist: Sir Francis Carruthers Gould



ABDUL HAMID II., THE NEW SULTAN OF TURKEY.



OPEN-AIR MEETING AT BLACKHEATH TO HEAR MR. GLADSTONE ON THE TURKISH ATROCITIES.

Figure 2: Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II and Gladstone at Blackheath Speech, *the Illustrated London News*, 16 September 1876.



THE LION AND THE FOX.

BRITISH LION. "GOING TO HELP ME, ARE YOU? THANK YOU FOR NOTHING, MASTER FOX. I BEGAN THE WORK ALONE, AND I MEAN TO FINISH IT!!!"

Figure 3: 'The Lion and the Fox', 5 August 1882 *Punch*.



Figure 4: 22 July 1882, *Harper's weekly*



Figure 5: 27 October 2011 The 145th Anniversary of the First Railway Line in Bulgaria - Ruschuk-Varna

Source: <http://www.stampworld.com/en/stamps/Bulgaria/Postage%20stamps?type=GB>
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One of the relatives of Paulina Irby. For his blog and more memoirs on Paulina Irby:
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