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The Syrian Massacres and the Cretan Rebellion: Mid-Victorian Humanitarianism and Britain's Eastern Policy

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THE SYRIAN MASSACRES AND THE CRETAN REBELLION: MID-VICTORIAN HUMANITARIANISM AND BRITAIN'S EASTERN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to prove the existence and strength of mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment. The British government's policy and response to the Syrian massacres and the Cretan rebellion serve as vehicles to show the vitality and power of humanitarianism that was a part of the Evangelical revival. This study will further document the attempted reconciliation of this humanitarian sentiment and Britain's policy in the Near East.

In a general characterization of the unique mid-Victorian period of British history, humanitarianism will be isolated. A humanitarian desire to help will be shown to be a basis for the British government's response to the Syrian massacres and to France's proposal to intervene directly. A motivating force in Russell's decision to cooperate with the French was the fear of offending mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment. The thesis will also discuss Lord Stanley's claim that non-intervention in the Cretan rebellion was more humanitarian than intervention or refugee removal.

The debates in the British Parliament, the correspondence of the principals, and the Sessional Papers of the House of Commons will

document the government's attempts to cloak its self-interested policies with the mantle of humanitarianism. The feasibility of such a maneuver will be demonstrated by the success of both Russell and Stanley in the defense of their respective policies.

CHAPTER I

Mid-Victorian Humanitarianism

The mid-Victorian period, 1851 to 1867, was an era of equilibrium without parallel in British history. Unique balances were found and maintained in the economic, social, and political aspects of British life. The industrial and agricultural problems of the previous decade were much less severe, as Chartist unrest was a memory and the agricultural interests found unexpected prosperity in Free Trade. A spirit of compromise pervaded English life, and it was only with the depressions of the 1870's that this "Age of Equipoise" dissolved again into economic and social conflict.

Mid-Victorian economic equilibrium was based on prosperity, and British agriculture and industry enjoyed an unprecedented prosperity from 1851 to 1867. Food was cheaper with the repeal of the Corn Laws. Consumer items were more readily available and of better quality,[1] because of the great advances resulting from English industriousness, business efficiency, and private enterprise.[2]

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[1]Asa Briggs, "1851," in From Metternich to Hitler: Aspects of British and Foreign History, 1814-1939, ed. by William N. Medlicott (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1963), p. 70.

[2]David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1950), p. 100.

ıproved methods of transportation, resulting from the development of railroad system, added to English prosperity.[3] Real wages rose from 300 to 1850; and they continued to rise from 1850 to 1874,[4] as much as fty per cent for most of the chief occupations.[5] As the material life f the nation improved vastly during the era, a spirit of materialism ecame widespread It actually was possible to raise one's status; hence ıe prospects of the middle and lower classes were improved.[6] Prosperity essened class conflict, as the poverty of the lower classes became elatively less and the opportunities of the poor became theoretically reater.

The Crystal Palace and its contents from around the world gave oncrete proof of an improvement in life. The mid-Victorians had great ıopes for the future of international relations, as the great nations of the vorld provided exhibits of their own progress. Events such as the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Sultan's visit to Europe in 1867 increased the impression that progress was possible in international cooperation. The

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[3]David C. Somervell, "The Victorian Age," in From Metternich to Hitler: Aspects of British and Foreign History, 1814-1939, ed. by William N. Medlicott (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1963), p. 74.

[4]R. Max Hartwell, "The Rising Standard of Living in England, 1800-1850," in European Political History, 1815-1870: Aspects of Liberalism, ed. by Eugene C. Black (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 13-45.

[5]Agnes F. Young and Elwyn T. Ashton, British Social Work in the Nineteenth Century (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 24.

[6]William L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise; a Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 68.

Crystal Palace contained the products of world industrial progress and was an example of what the world could do, if nations cooperated. Europe seemed to be on the brink of a new era of peace and stability. The visit of the Sultan created the impression that even tyrants could be dealt with reasonably and would accept the precepts of world cooperation and peace. English society was brought to a feeling of optimism and hope for the future by such international events and because of the benefits of the industrial revolution.[7]

Prosperity and optimism created an environment in which the mid-Victorians believed that they, as individuals, could improve their condition. Social mobility, whether real or illusionary, was an important factor in reconciling the people to British industrial society and civilization. If a man felt that his prospects were good, he would more readily accept the conditions of his present existence; and he often desired merely a larger share of the wealth. Social change appeared more attractive to him only if he felt locked in his status. A member of the middle-class, an industrial laborer, or an agricultural worker was able to feel that he could rise to a higher rank in his hierarchy. If a tenant believed that it was possible for him to become the owner, he was less likely to revolt against such an elastic system.

The mid-Victorians believed that an individual had complete

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[7]Asa Briggs, Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-67 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 25-53.

control over his own fate. Everyone had the power of will, the innate energy, and the opportunity to improve his position on the social scale. A disadvantaged individual could fight his way up in society by means of self-help. Difficulties and suffering acted as stimuli to the "true-hearted" laborer to discipline himself, and thus, naturally raise his status spiritually and morally.[8] Society was good; those in poverty were responsible for their failings. Because of this belief in the responsibility of each person for his own condition, an upper-class mid-Victorian was often complacent since he expected others to help themselves. The benefits of the scientific and technological advances of the industrial revolution were clearly recognized. The mid-Victorians believed that laissez faire contributed to the progress of British society and to the expectation of further progress. New inventions and ideas would eliminate many of the evils of the present.

As England was demonstrating that it was "possible to reconcile economic change and individual mobility with traditional social balance and stability,"[9] prosperity and complacency were producing a political equilibrium. These attitudes deflated political feelings, and politics and issues were relegated to a personal level. The conflicts over protection in the 1840's were mellowing, and the strongly party-oriented confrontations between Gladstone and Disreali were in the future. The British

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[8]Burn, The Age of Equipoise, p. 100.

[9]Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1959), p. 404.

were distracted from the problems of franchise reform by Palmerston's skillful employment of foreign affairs. This avoidance of reform was not really disliked by any of the political groups, as even the Radicals, Cobden and Bright, advocated only a slight widening of the franchise. A manipulator, such as Lord Palmerston, was able to dominate the government, because the three main groups in British society, the agriculturalists, the industrialists, and the artisan class could counter-balance one another. The great party movements of the 1870's and 1880's would be completely alien to the 1850's and 1860's. Mid-Victorian politicians were not democrats, but they did believe that institutions should be responsive to the desires of the governed. Progress would come through free discussion, which was encouraged in a nominally representative parliament. They believed that people should be satisfied with a limited role in this government.[10] Politicians generally were not bound by strict principles and were wise enough to adjust to evolving circumstances. With prosperity and complacency, there was little pressure for real change on the political level, thus through compromise and discussion a political equilibrium was maintained throughout the mid-Victorian years.

The social equilibrium of the mid-Victorian period was also a product of the prosperity of the era. An important factor in this social

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[10]British Broadcasting Corporation, Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: An Historic Revaluation of the Victorian Age (London: Sylvan Press, 1949), p. 337.

balance was a humanitarianism produced by evangelical religious beliefs. The Evangelical Movement "transformed the whole character of English society and imparted to the Victorian age that moral earnestness which was its distinguishing characteristic."[11] Although organized religion in England was atrophying, the attitudes and ideals of the Evangelical Movement were becoming an integral belief of all Englishmen: Anglicans, dissenters, and unbelievers. Being Calvinistic, it permitted those with wealth to feel better about it, because they were of the "elect." God would naturally favor in this life those who were saved. Those who had little were encouraged to look forward to their reward in the next world. "The elite of the working class, the hardworking and capable bourgeois, had been imbued by the Evangelical Movement with a spirit from which the established order had nothing to fear."[12] Englishmen who were imbued with the ideals of the Evangelical Movement were slow to act against society, because these religious convictions had produced a tremendous devotion and respect for the social order.

Wesleyism induced a "sober morality," while respectability and society were sanctified by religion. The Evangelical ideal encouraged moral reform, then social reform, and eventually political reform.

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[11]Elie Halevy, Victorian Years, 1841-1895, trans. by E. I. Watkins (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1962), p. 437.

[12]Elie Halevy, England in 1815, trans. by E. I. Watkins and D. A. Barker (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), pp. 424-25.

Private philanthropy was the duty of a good Christian. What mattered was not how wealth was acquired, but how it was spent. God entrusted men with personal wealth from which they were to extract their just due. The remainder was to be given back to God through the medium of aid to the poor. Philanthropic endeavors became popular and these efforts promoted the sanctification of the nation through voluntary societies and limited government action.[13] The usefulness of good works was reason enough for mid-Victorians to engage in humanitarian endeavors as a means of self-help to improve themselves in the eyes of their Creator. The real driving force behind humanitarianism was religion, because reform could be a means of repentance and atonement.[14]

This humanitarianism explained why the mid-Victorians considered themselves enlightened enough not to need, or even desire, state interference in their lives.[15] Although rugged individualism and laissez faire were ideals of the mid-Victorian generation, their effective practice was alleviated by other factors; a genuine humanitarianism was expected to lessen conflict and exploitation. The mid-Victorians believed that employers would act in a humane manner simply because those in control could see positive gains in good working and living conditions for the

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[13]Josef L. Altholz, The Church in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 32-33.

[14]British Broadcasting Corporation, Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, pp. 247-52.

[15]William L. Burn, "The Age of Equipoise: England, 1848-1868," The Nineteenth Century, CXLVI (October, 1949), 224.

lower classes. Humanitarianism was in the best interests of all, and thus, the optimistic mid-Victorians believed society would naturally adopt it. They were complacent and optimistic enough to believe that because of the spiritual gain from philanthropy there was little need of anything more than a passive encouragement of this virtue by the government. The upper class would gain spiritual consolation and reward by their endeavors, while the lower class would receive material benefits from these gifts and attain spiritual rewards by accepting the status quo.

The mid-Victorians considered these feelings of humanitarian interest in the welfare of the human race as one of their primary characteristics. It was also an important element in the equilibrium established in mid-Victorian Britain. British governments had to take care that their policies were acceptable to these sentiments. If an opportunity to aid suffering people presented itself, many mid-Victorians expected the government to participate in any ameliorating activities. Ideally, these acts of philanthropy were supposed to be in the interests of the recipients and not for any ulterior British interests. Despite these attitudes, the British government had to maintain certain policies simply because of self-interest. Various administrations proceeded to cloak their selfish policies in a mantle of humanitarian concern. This method of defending policy is evident in the British handling of the Syrian crisis of 1860 and the Cretan rebellion of 1866 to 1869.

Any national or religious conflict within the Ottoman empire naturally involved the resolution of the Eastern Question. The Eastern

Question was the problem of who was to replace the Ottoman empire in the Balkans and on the Straits. This heterogeneous and strategically located state continued to exist primarily because the powers could not agree on a division of the spoils. The failure of the Ottoman government to advance into the nineteenth century and the sad condition of its administration were the prime causes for the long expected dissolution of the empire. The abominable condition of Turkish rule often served as an excuse for the powers to meddle in Ottoman internal affairs. This meddling could involve a temporary intervention that could grow into a permanent occupation. The Porte, the Turkish government, was attempting to reform itself, and, thereby, forestall any further dismemberment by the Christian European powers.

The powers rivaled each other throughout the empire in their schemes either to reform and maintain the integrity of the empire or to destroy and replace it. Britain, and often France, cooperated to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire because a weak Turkish rule was preferable to a strong Russian dominated state that would be economically and politically unfriendly to Britain and France.

The British government sought to forestall the resolution of the Eastern Question because it was afraid that the problem would not be settled in the best interests of England. Although the government refrained from direct intervention and from definite future commitments, it tried to maintain the integrity of the empire by advising the Turkish government and by giving it verbal support in diplomatic matters. Britain became

more involved in Ottoman problems when Lord Palmerston, as foreign secretary, promised to help the Turks as much as foreign government properly could. This support was primarily in the form of aid to help the Turkish state fulfill the reform principles proclaimed in the Hatti-Sharif of Guhaneh of November 3, 1839.[16] One of the main objectives of this reform edict was to raise the status of the Christians of the Ottoman empire.

Although Palmerston's interest in the condition of the Ottoman empire was based on its practical use as a block to Russian expansion, some British politicians and humanitarians, as coreligionists, altruistically displayed a particular interest in the Ottoman Christians throughout the nineteenth century. This interest was built on a genuine concern for their condition and partially on motives of self-interest. If the Turks treated their Christian subjects reasonably well, the powers would not have the mistreatment of Christians as a pretext to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs.

After the Crimean War, which was fought to protect the Ottoman Christians, to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire, and to

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[16]Frederick S. Rodkey, "Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1830-41," Part II, Journal of Modern History, II (June, 1930), 205. Palmerston was supporting the Ottoman empire against an Egyptian attack and trying to counter the Russian dominance produced by the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi of 1833 which had virtually placed Turkey under the military protection of an expansionist Russia. The reform edict promised: security of life and property, a fixed method of tax collection, military reforms, and a somewhat representative council.

contain Russian expansion, the Turkish government promulgated the Hatti Humayun of February 18, 1856. Issued in response to the suggestions of France and Britain, this reform edict promised "complete personal liberty, equality before the law, freedom of conscience, eligibility for civil and military office, equality of taxation, equal representation in the communal and provincial councils and in the Supreme Court of Justice, and complete security of person and property."[17] In other words, the Turkish government attempted through legislation a complete reform of Ottoman life and total reversal of the trends of the previous three hundred years.

These reforms were not mere hypocrisy to satisfy French and British pressure, but perhaps honest attempts by the Turks to maintain the Ottoman Empire on the basis of fusion between the Moslems and the Ch . ians.[18] Besides immense economic difficulties which made reform almost impossible,[19] the reforms were defeated by Moslem intolerance and inertia, the Christians' desire to be free of Turkish control,

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[17]Gordon Iseminger, "The Hatti-Humayun, 1856-1860: An Attempt at Precipitate Westernization," North Dakota Quarterly, XXXVI (Winter, 1968), 33.

[18]Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century," American Historical Review, LIX (July, 1954), 849.

[19]Frederick S. Rodkey, "Ottoman Concern about Western Economic Penetration in the Levant, 1849-1856," Journal of Modern History, XXX (March, 1958), 348.

the lack of good administrative personnel, a haphazard execution of the law, and foreign interference in Ottoman internal affairs.[20] Without these modernizing reforms, the fusion and brotherhood, on which a heterogeneous empire could be built, was impossible.[21] This failure and slowness of Ottoman reform set the stage for the two crises that aroused British concern in the Levant in 1860 and again in 1866. The British government based its response on self-interest, but defended its policy by citing humanitarian motives.

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[20]Roderic H. Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 92.

[21]Davison, "Turkish Attitudes," p. 864.

CHAPTER II

Massacres in Syria and Lebanon

The British government's response to the crisis in Syria and Lebanon in 1860 serves as an illustration of the strength of humanitarian sentiment during the mid-Victorian era. The response also demonstrates the willingness to cloak a policy based on self-interest with a professed desire to aid a wretched and helpless people.

In late May of 1860, violence broke out in Lebanon between the Maronites and the Druses. The latter, provoked by the murders and threats of the Maronites and being by nature more warlike, soon got the better of the conflict, slaughtering hundreds of Maronites and devastating their land. At Deir-el-Kamar the Turks cooperated with the Druses and arranged the slaughter of some Maronites whom they were supposed to be protecting.[1] Consul-General Niven Moore of Beirut later related that many refugees were undergoing great suffering and deprivation. Women, children, the old, and the infirm were wandering the countryside hunted like wild beasts by the Druses.[2]

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[1]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXIX (1860), Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860 [hereafter cited as Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860], inclosure no. 10 in no. 4, Moore to Bulwer, June 3, 1860.

[2]Ibid., inclosure no. 5 in no. 17, Moore to Bulwer, June 21, 1860.

On July 5, 1860, Edouard-Antoine Thouvenel, the French foreign minister, spoke with Lord Cowley, the capable British ambassador at Paris, about the slaughter occurring in Lebanon and the Turkish response to the events. He also inquired how France and Britain might cooperate to alleviate the problem. Thouvenel cited the impotency of the Turks and the great public indignation in France over the massacres as causes for his concern. Cowley replied that the Maronites had foolishly threatened and provoked the Druses and that according to the Treaty of Paris of 1856, the powers had no right to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs.[3]

On July 9, a large number of Moslems of Damascus attacked and massacred thousands of Christians. Envy and the traditional hatred between Moslems and Christians were the primary catalysts of this slaughter and looting. Having heard about the success of the Druses, the Moslem citizens of Damascus gladly attacked the city's Christian population. Once again the Turkish officials were considered to be partially responsible, either out of connivance or incapacity. Consul James Brant, who was in the city reported that the Ottoman officials

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[3]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXVIII (1861), Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I [hereafter cited as Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I], no. 1, Cowley to Russell, July 5, 1860.

were at fault and had actually helped in the slaughter and looting. Brandt called the conduct of the Turkish governor of Damascus, Ahmed Pasha, shameful and believed that firm Turkish efforts to restore order would have quickly stopped the massacres.[4] Ottoman incapacity to govern and to protect the native Christians from Moslem fanaticism was once again demonstrated to Europe. The situation appeared to demand an intervention by the powers in order to protect the Maronites and the Christians of Damascus. The British government was faced with a dilemma. To maintain the traditional British policy of non-intervention in the face of such action by the local oficials of the Ottoman government was clearly going to be difficult for the government of Lord Palmerston.

The horrors that took place in Damascus caused Napoleon III and Thouvenel to resolve on definite action. The French proposed that a military force and a joint commission of inquiry be sent directly to Syria and Lebanon. France offered to act as the agent of the other powers and supply most of the needed military force. A protocol was to be negotiated by the powers, and later a convention was to make the agreement official. This protocol was to determine the number of troops

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[4]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXIX (1860), Further Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860 [hereafter cited as Further Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860], inclosure no. 7 in no. 21, Brant to Moore, July 10, 1860; no. 23, Brant to Russell, July 16, 1860.

to be involved and to set a date for their return from Syria, barring unforeseen circumstances. The expedition was to cooperate with the Turks and put an end to the carnage. France was trying to help the Christians of Syria by protecting them from Moslem fanaticism.[5] Thouvenel was requesting British cooperation in the venture which was designed to be an act of charity for the victims of Turkish perfidy or incapacity. Unless the British Cabinet was willing to risk offending mid-Victorian sentiments that demanded aid to suffering and deprived human beings, it had to cooperate with the proposed French aid.

Thouvenel consistently emphasized the humanitarianism of the intervention by citing the cruelty of the Moslems and the Turks' lack of action. French public opinion demanded the expedition because it was an aid to a needy and persecuted people. While admitting France's special interest in the Maronites, Thouvenel claimed that intervention was necessary to maintain peace in the Levant and to protect the integrity of the Ottoman empire.[6]

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[5] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 9, Cowley to Russell, July 17, 1860; no. 11, Thouvenel to Persigny, July 17, 1860.

[6] Alyce E. Mange, The Near Eastern Policy of the Emperor Napoleon III, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. XXV, nos. 1-2 (Urbana, Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1940), pp. 83-88.

There can be little doubt that humanitarian interests did motivate the French to intervene,[7] but there were other reasons. The intervention was also designed to distract and reconcile Catholics who had been alienated by Napoleon's actions in Italy.[8] Added to these political considerations were France's economic interests in Syria and Lebanon. A vague plot existed to help a transplanted Algerian, Abd-el-Kader, to establish an Arab state that would naturally be friendly to French plans for a Suez canal.[9] The French government also had a scheme to aid the depressed cloth industry of Lyons with cheap Syrian silk,[10] and the French Algerian army considered Syria an excellent area from which to procure horses.[11] It was not pure humanitarianism which motivated the French, but the British government, while recognizing France's self-interest, based its cooperation on France's arguments for an altruistic intervention to save lives and property.

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[7]Adolphus W. Ward and George Peabody Gooch, The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919 (3 vols.; New York: MacMillan Co., 1923), II, 451.

[8]Mange, Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, pp. 91-92; William Miller, The Ottoman Empire, 1801-1913 (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1913), p. 301.

[9]Marcel Emerit, "La crise Syrienne et l'expansion economique francais en 1860," Revue Historique, CCVII (Avril-Juin), 1952), 217-18.

[10]Ibid., p. 221.

[11]Ibid., p. 227.

Lord John Russell, the British foreign secretary, believed that Britain had to thwart the ambitions of France by maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman empire. Despite this desire, Russell reluctantly agreed to cooperate in the expedition. He claimed that this cooperation was to placate the mid-Victorian desire to aid the Ottoman Christians and to make it possible for Britain to have a voice in any agreements that were made about the intervention and the future of Syria.

The massacres had resulted from the failure of Turkish reform in Syria and the traditional animosity between the nominally Roman Catholic Maronites and the vaguely Moslem Druses. The Turks maintained a tenuous rule over the province, and the British government was trying to maintain Ottoman rule in the area by giving open support to the Ottoman reform movement. The Hatti-Humayun had increased Moslem bigotry by its proclamation of equality between Christians and Moslems. The new laws were not adequate to overcome the traditional dislike of Moslems for Christianity. The Christians had always been second class citizens, and social change of such magnitude was not to be tolerated by the Islamic faith. The bigotry, combined with the lack of capable and sincere administrators, served to emasculate any genuine reform within the Ottoman empire.

The constant shifting of the location of all the Turkish administrators resulted in incapable rulers who had little regard for honesty [illegible] to the needs of the local population.[12] The Turks made no effort at maintaining personal security for the population, which was the core of the "Hat" of 1856. In Lebanon, there existed the common practice of assassination among the Druses and Maronites, but the Turks failed to investigate the seven hundred murders in Lebanon from 1850 to 1860.[13] Although reforms were decreed the complete administrative machinery of the two provinces remained corrupt, because all the needs of an efficient civil service and despotic military administration were still lacking throughout the region.[14]

The British government was finding it hard to continue to support the Ottoman empire because there were ample reports that the incapacity of the Turks extended even to cooperating in the slaughter.[15]

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[12]Ward and Gooch, Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, II, 452.

[13]Philip K. Hitti, Lebanon in History (3rd ed.; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 437.

[14]Moshe Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 61-65.

[15]Further Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860, inclosure no. 3 in no. 14, Paynter to Martin, July 5, 1860; inclosure in no. 9, Abela to Moore, June 16, 1860; Papers Relating to the Disturbances in Syria: June 1860, inclosure in no. 19, Moore to Bulwer, June 23, 1860; inclosure no. 2 in no. 21, Paynter to Martin, June 25, 1860.

Clearly, these massacres presented an opportunity to give aid to the victims of Turkish misrule and perfidy. The British government also had to continue to prevent the Turkish empire from being partitioned by intervention undertaken for the welfare of the Ottoman empire. If such a precedent was ever set, the Ottoman empire would soon dissolve into anarchy as the various groups of Christians revolted with the expectation of European aid. The problem was intensified by the sentiment for aid that was aroused in England. Fear of abusing these feelings of mid-Victorian humanitarianism was a primary consideration of the British government.

The British cabinet had ample warning about the failure of Ottoman reform, and it was informed about the rumors foretelling a massacre of Christians in Syria. Consul-General Niven Moore, writing from Beirut in 1858, complained of insecure roads, a depressed commerce, the inability to collect debts, and the weakness and venality of the Ottoman executive authority.[16] Other reports documented the mismanagement of the Ottoman authorities, the lack of justice in the courts, and the "contemptible" Turkish garrison throughout Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon.[17]

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[16]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXIX (1860), Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant, Respecting Past or Apprehended Disturbances in Syria, 1858 to 1860 [hereafter cited as Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant, Respecting Past or Apprehended Disturbances in Syria, 1858 to 1860], no. 47, Moore to Malmesbury, September 14, 1858.

[17]Ibid., no. 21, Finn to Malmesbury, May 26, 1858.

In 1858, Consul James Finn of Jersusalem described a panic among the Christians on the Mountain who had heard about the rumors of a general massacre. He further reported that the number of robberies and assassinations was higher than usual and that perhaps these rumors did have some substance.[18]

In October of 1859, the representatives of the European powers presented a joint memorandum to the Turkish government, complaining about the dismal lack of progress in applying the measures of the charter of reforms of 1856.[19] Combined with this paralysis of reform were the insecure position of the easily removable Ottoman officials; the provocation of the native Christians, basking in their new official equality; the animosity felt toward the ambitions of the powers; and the Moslems' anger and jealousy at the Turks' catering to the Christians.[20]

Besides these difficulties, the British government had to cope with the rivalry that existed among the powers, who were trying to exploit religious differences in order to gain economic advantages in Syria and Lebanon.[21] The various non-Moslem sects each turned to one of the

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[18]Ibid., no. 66, Finn to Malmesbury, November 7, 1858.

[19]Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 119.

[20]Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, p. 235.

[21]Ward and Gooch, Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, II, 452.

powers as both an economic and political patron. The Maronites looked toward the French who gladly supported them because of a common Catholicism and a tradition dating back to the crusades. The Druses sought the support of the British, and the few Orthodox adherents tried to gain Russian protection. Britain would not abandon the Druses, because they were her best instruments by which to gain an economic foothold in Syria to combat the penetration of the other powers.

In a vain attempt to defeat this unwanted extension of foreign influence, the Turks tried to maintain their nominal rule over Lebanon by also encouraging sectarian conflicts from which neither side would emerge with any real strength. The Porte sought to centralize the administration and make it into a purely Ottoman rule.[22] This was to be accomplished by:

> . . . keeping up a state of fermentation to compel both the people and their chiefs to ask for Turkish direct rule, or, at least; to render it impossible for the Lebanese to prosper under the native administration granted to them by the established system of government.[23]

A genuine desire to improve government would have demanded some local rule in a mountainous and sectarianly divided area such as Lebanon. Instead of such a policy, the Turks were sacrificing the welfare and tranquility of the people of the Mountain to gain their own selfish objectives.[24]

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[22] Ibid., p. 452; Hitti, Lebanon in History, p. 433.

[23] Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant, Respecting Past or Apprehended Disturbances in Syria, 1858 to 1860, inclosure no. 1 in no. 97, Moore to Bulwer, June 30, 1860.

[24] Ibid., inclosure no. 1 in no. 74, Moore to Bulwer, November 29, 1858.

Although possessing sufficient power in the area to suppress disorders, the Turks were actually fostering anarchy.[25] The Druses would probably defeat the less-warlike Maronites, and then the Turks, with the support of Europe, could effect a devastating punishment upon the Druses.

The maneuvers of the Turks were successful because the Syrian crisis occurred at an especially inopportune time in Anglo-French relations. The British response to the Syrian crisis was formed in an environment of suspicion and fear of the French Emperor. Napoleon's ambitions and machinations in the unification of Italy had enhanced British suspicion of him. Palmerston disliked Napoleon's bargaining for Nice and Savoy and his vague talk about the excellent harbor at Naples. The race between France and Britain to build "ironclads" and Napoleon's announced desire to remake the map of Europe were hardly conducive to a growth of British confidence in the Second Empire.[26] The British government was also concerned about a possible Franco-Russina rapprochement in which Napoleon would trade an advantage in the Near East for Russian support for French moves on the Rhine. Lord Palmerston had been worried about such a possibility since the Treaty

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[25] Ibid., inclosure no. 1 in no. 114, Moore to Bulwer, December 31, 1859.

[26] Mange, Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, pp. 83-88.

of Paris in 1856. Although the French never admitted it, he believed that the integrity of Turkey was no longer of great importance to Napoleon.[27] On March 15, 1860, Palmerston wrote to Lord John Russell the foreign secretary, about the Emperor's Near East policy:

> There seems good reason for thinking that Napoleon has great schemes in his head for which he is trying to get the concurrence and cooperation of Russia and that the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire is the object he will next aim at, afterwards the Rhine and perhaps Belgium, but all in the most friendly manner and spirit towards England.[28]

In April, after noting Louis Napoleon's tendency to present Europe with faites accomplis, Palmerston wrote to Lord Cowley that "the Emperor's mind seems as full of schemes as a warren is full of rabbits, and like rabbits, his schemes go to ground for the moment to avoid notice of antagonism.[29] Clearly it would take a strong motivating force to make the British cooperate in a French violation of the integrity of the Ottoman empire.

Russell's immediate response to the events and this threatened intervention was to urge the Porte to take strong measures to regain

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[27]Werner E. Mosse, The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855-71: The Story of a Peace Settlement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 2.

[28]Herbert C. F. Bell, Lord Palmerston (2 vols.; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), II, 250.

[29]Evelyn Ashley, The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston: 1846-1865 (2 vols.; London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1876), II, 182.

control of the area and to put an end to the atrocities of the Druses. He further warned the Turks that Great Britain would be forced to cooperate in an act of intervention if the massacres continued.[30] On July 23, in response to Thouvenel's call for intervention, Russell, after much hesitation, agreed to the French proposals. As reasons, he cited the frightful accounts of the events taking place in Damascus and Lebanon and the Turkish role as inactive spectators or accomplices in the slaughter. Russell linked his agreement with a statement that Britain was reluctantly agreeing to the project and was attaching certain conditions to her cooperation. Russell strongly urged that the French army not go into the interior of Syria and requested that the expedition be evacuated as soon as possible, perhaps within six months.[31] Russell later demanded that a protocol be signed by the powers and Turkey stipulating that the occupation be definitely limited to not more than six months, barring unforeseen circumstances. Russell believed that these measures would satisfy the needs of humanitarian sentiment and effect a return to order within the Sultan's domain.[32]

Russell explained to Palmerston that he had agreed to the French intervention out of a "fear" of European public opinion and diplomatic

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[30] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 2, Russell to Cowley, July 6, 1860; no. 4, Russell to Bulwer, July 10, 1860.

[31] Ibid., no. 22, Russell to Cowley, July 23, 1860.

[32] Ibid., no. 37, Russell to Cowley, July 28, 1860.

complications. Because of the indefensible conduct of the Turkish government, public opinion would turn against the British government if it refused to aid in the mission. France and Russia would perhaps cooperate in the expedition anyway, and Britain would be diplomatically isolated on the Eastern Question and unable to contain French ambitions.[33] Russell claimed that a principal reason for cooperation was the lamentable state of the victims of Turkish misrule and Moslem atrocity. No other course of action appeared possible to Russell. To object to or prevent this act of charity was to invite the recrimination of world and mid-Victorian opinion. The situation demanded aid, and this response was the most obvious.[34] Lord Palmerston agreed that the desire to limit French ambition and to avoid arousing mid-Victorian humanitarian sympathy was paramount in the decision to cooperate with intervention.[35]

Fear of humanitarian sentiment and desire not to let France act alone overcame the traditional British policy of non-intervention and negated her government's reluctance to permit French troops to land in the Levant. Since the massacres could spread beyond Syria and into the rest of the Ottoman empire, it appeared to be an act of charity that the powers come to the aid of the Ottoman Christians. Russell and the British government would not bear the responsibility of obstructing such

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[33]Mange, Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, p. 88.

[34]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 160 (1860), pp. 15-16.

[35]Bell, Lord Palmerston, II, 269.

an obviously humanitarian mission. The limitations on France, that were embodied in the protocol and convention, served British self-interest. If the British government managed to get Napoleon to agree to specific terms, Russell had some leverage to bargain with the French Emperor.

The Times agreed that the expedition had to be sent to help the Ottoman Christians. On July 10, an editorial declared that Britain would not be true to her nature if she did not take action in response to the massacres in Lebanon. The writer believed that the Turks were deeply implicated and that political objectives should not make the British government forget the welfare of human beings.[36] On July 12, an editorial came out strongly for intervention and urged that British troops be in the vanguard of the expedition. The English, "who search the earth through to find objects for our philanthropy," should not fail to respond to the cry of their fellow Christians.[37]

Since Napoleon was anxious to get troops to Syria, only a protocol was to be drawn up, but a formal convention was to be signed shortly thereafter. On August 3, 1860, the powers agreed to a protocol establishing provisions for twelve thousand troops to be sent to Syria. France was to provide the first six thousand men, and if the second half was ever needed the powers were to meet and decide on the composition

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[36] The Times (London), July 10, 1860, p. 8.

[37] Ibid., July 12, 1860, p. 8.

of the force. The powers agreed that six months might be adequate for the occupation, but this limitation could be extended. Further, the Porte was to bear the expenditure of the expedition. The powers also arranged for an international committee to fix responsibility for the massacres, to determine the extent of the guilt of the local Turkish administration, to decide on an idemnity to the victims, and to suggest reforms for the new government of Lebanon.

The French forces arrived in Lebanon on August 16, 1860, and a convention was signed on September 5, 1860 that formally confirmed the measures of the protocol.[38]

While Russell engaged in promoting this convention among the powers, questions were raised in Parliament about the foreign secretary's policy in Syria and Britain's support of the Ottoman empire. Those speaking in favor of the government's action always emphasized the charity and necessity of the French intervention. The expedition was intended to help the Ottoman Christians and was necessary because of Turkish weakness and ineptness. The practicality of cooperation was recognized because French ambitions were to be limited, and Britain would have been ill advised to obstruct a policy agreed upon by Russia and France.

In early July, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the former British ambassador at Constantinople and ardent proponent of the worthiness

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[38]Mange, Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, p. 89.

and feasibility of the Turkish reform movement, cited the importance of Syria to the Ottoman empire and expressed doubt about the Turkish connivance in the massacres. His major point was that Great Britain should try to see that justice be done to all the involved parties, particularly the Druses and the Turks.[39] Lord Wodehouse, who spoke for the government in the House of Lords, admitted the guilt of the Turks and asserted that the terrible condition of the Syrian Christians demanded consideration. Wodehouse explained that the intervention was necessitated, however, by consideration for the welfare of all the Christians in the Ottoman empire. If the massacres spread to other Christian groups, the Eastern Question would be decided by all of the powers being forced to intervene and divide the empire in an effort to protect human lives. To Wodehouse, it did not appear that this division could be accomplished without a confrontation, and eventually war, among the powers.[40]

On August 3, Stratford again pointed out that unless Britain strongly encouraged Turkish reform, crises would continue to develop periodically in the Levant until it became contrary to the best interests of the subjects of the Ottoman empire to maintain the moribund, but strategic, empire.[41]

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[39]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 159 (1860), p. 1651.

[40]Ibid., pp. 1653-54.

[41]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 160 (1860), pp. 607-10.

Lord Wodehouse agreed that Britain had to support Turkey. Judging from the present condition of Syria and the Mountain, Wodehouse considered that vigorous, immediate, and effective action had to be taken by the powers. The situation demanded British cooperation; Wodehouse felt, however, that the signing of the protocol was sufficient to protect British and Ottoman interests.[42]

Lord Granville, the future Liberal foreign secretary, agreed that the Ottoman empire had to be maintained because it had definitely helped to maintain the balance of power and thereby the peace of Europe.[43] Granville believed that the integrity of the empire had to be violated in this instance. However, the intrusion was only temporary, and was necessary if Britain was to continue to support the Ottoman empire. Granville considered the convention to be a means to limit French ambitions and an opportunity for the Turks to strengthen their hold on Syria by successfully effecting a return to law and order within that province. Furthermore, the English public would not permit a governmental policy of support for Turkish rule if massacres continued to occur within that empire. Granville described intervention in Syria and support of the Ottoman empire as acts of philanthropic humanitarianism and as being compatible with British interests in the Levant and on the Continent.

In the House of Commons, Sir James Ferguson, member for Ayrshire,

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[42]Ibid., pp. 619-20.

[43]Ibid., p. 624.

and Seymour Fitzgerald, member for Horsham, expressed concern about French and Russian ambitions in the Levant. They feared the setting of a precedent for direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman empire.[44] Russell tried to mitigate these fears by stating that the Europeans had become involved in order to aid both the Turks and the Ottoman Christians. The foreign secretary emphasized that there was no official provision in the protocol establishing a precedent for future interventions.[45] The British government cooperated with intervention in this instance, but it had been motivated both by necessity and by a humanitarian concern for the welfare of the Ottoman Christians.

John Bright, a mid-Victorian Radical who had denounced the effort expended in the Crimean War, attacked Britain's efforts to support and reform the Ottoman empire. Bright believed that it was an impossible task to reform the Turkish state and that out of common sense and a genuine concern for the citizens of the Ottoman empire, the British government had to quit this hopeless task.[46] Lord Palmerston responded to Bright's charges, declaring that a failure to support the Turks was to invite anarchy in the Levant and a war of major proportions.[47] Palmerston believed that support for Ottoman reform involved temporary appalling

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[44] Ibid., pp. 637-42.

[45] Ibid., pp. 645-46.

[46] Ibid., pp. 647-51.

[47] Ibid., pp. 652-53.

setbacks, but that a strong Turkish empire was the best solution to the Eastern Question. It was only the Turks who were capable of ever being able to rule successfully over such a composite of peoples. Palmerston apparently did not believe that the various Christian groups could rule themselves without a continuous development of crises as the powers ambitiously came to the aid of their respective protegees. The government defended a self-seeking policy by emphasizing the good that it eventually would accomplish and sought to link this policy with a concern for peace and the validity of an act of charity.

The British government had cooperated with the French desire to intervene in the summer of 1860, but by the fall of 1860, the government began to attempt to get the expedition out of syria and Lebanon. After Fuad Pasha, whom the Turks had sent to re-establish order, had suppressed the massacres and open warfare by means of terroristic and punitive measures, the primary question became the effectiveness and value of the force that had been sent by the powers.[48] The Convention of September 5, 1860 had set the length of the occupation at six months, but this provision could be modified to allow a longer period of time. Britain's observers in Lebanon and Syria sent back conflicting and varied reports on the value of the occupation.

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[48]Fuad Pasha and Aali Pasha were the two leading Turkish exponents of Ottoman reform. Fuad's honesty and integrity were never questioned by the powers, and he was respected and feared by the people of Turkey for his administrative and military abilities.

Lord Dufferin, the British representative on the joint commission sent by the powers to investigate, viewed the expeditionary force as giving the Maronites the opportunity for retaliating against the Druses and as prolonging the tension and friction throughout Syria and Lebanon.[49] The Turks, who under all circumstances desired that the Europeans leave as soon as possible, agreed with Dufferin's views.[50] There was doubt that a continuation of the French occupation was either necessary or humanitarian, but the fear of a renewal of the massacres kept the government from demanding an evacuation after six months, as provided by the convention.

James Brant, the British consul at Damascus, perhaps understood the situation more fully than Dufferin and firmly believed in the need for a continued French occupation.[51] Brant saw no real change in the Turkish administration and sensed a rebirth of Moslem fanaticism. As soon as Fuad Pasha left a particular region, that area degenerated into its previous state of anarchy and corruption. The population was cowed but still liable to a fanatical desire to massacre Christians.[52] If Faud ever went back to Constantinople and the powers pulled out their expeditionary force, the massacres could easily be repeated.

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[49]Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, inclosure in no. 155, Dufferin to Fuad, September 29, 1860; no. 278, Dufferin to Russell, January 18, 1860.

[50]Ibid., no. 198, Aali to Musurus, November 28, 1860.

[51]Ibid., no. 145, Brant to Russell, September 20, 1860.

[52]Ibid., inclosure in no. 156, Brant to Bulwer, September 25, 1860; no. 159, Brant to Russell, October 5, 1860.

If France attempted to prolong the occupation, the British cabinet was faced with a dilemma. Its problem was how to foster the appearance of a genuine humanitarian interest in the subjects of the Ottoman empire, and yet thwart any possible French intention to make the occupation into permanent French rule. Some Members of Parliament were concerned lest the British government abandon Syria to France. Seymour Fitzgerald and Sir James Ferguson considered the possible ambitions of France and Russia to be gr ater threats to British interests than any consequences from a renewal of the massacres. Both thought that Britain would best serve the interests of world peace and the welfare of the Ottoman Christians by working to get the French out of Syria and Lebanon.[53] Henry A. Layard, member for Southwark and a known Turkophile, blamed the Maronites for causing their own problem and suggested that Britain protect the Druses, who had acted only to protect themselves. He noted that France had intervened to help, but her continued presence was damaging the authority of the Turks and giving the local Christians an opportunity to carry out vendettas. Layard sought an immediate end to British sanction of the venture.[54] These attacks on Russell's policy of cooperation were a call for an immediate effort by the government to push harder to get the French out of Lebanon.

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[53]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 161 (1861), pp. 1094-1105.

[54]Ibid., pp. 1109-13.

After testing the British government's reaction to a prolongation on several occasions, Thouvenel, on January 11, 1861, formally sought the British government's attitude on a continuance of the occupation. Thouvenel claimed that Napoleon wanted to evacuate, but feared that massacres would follow the departure of the troops.[55] The French had no desire to prolong their stay, as it was costing them a large amount of money; but, if they left prematurely, their previous efforts would appear to have been wasted.[56] Both Thouvenel and Prince Gorchkov, the Russian foreign minister, expressed fear about the consequences of an evacuation, because they believed that there was no strong central authority in Syria and that there was no security or guarantee for the protection of the Ottoman Christians.[57] If the evacuation resulted in a renewal of the massacres, the powers would be responsible, and Britain and France would have to answer to an aroused populace.[58]

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[55] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 232, Cowley to Russell, January 11, 1861.

[56] Ibid., no. 267, Cowley to Russell, January 28, 1861.

[57] Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXVIII (1861), Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part II [hereafter cited as Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-1861, Part II], no. 30, Cowley to Russell, May 2, 1861; inclosure no. 8 in no. 46, Gorchakoff to Kisseleff, May 2, 1861.

[58] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 134, Cowley to Russell, September 21, 1860; no. 180, Cowley to Russell, November 13, 1860; no. 227, Cowley to Russell, January 4, 1861.

Britain's primary objective had been to limit the disasters as much as possible. With regard to extension of the occupation, Russell believed that intervention had been useful at the beginning, but it now had to be ended by February 5, 1861 as stipulated by the convention of September 5.[59] The British government believed that the stationing of ships-of-war and marines off the Syrian coast was adequate security against a renewal of the massacres.[60] Russell resisted French and Russian pressure, which he believed was designed to enable the French to stay permanently, by citing the lack of a genuine need and the peaceful condition of the area.[61] Russell pointed out to Thouvenel that any prolongation would be a provocation to the Moslems and a step toward a French colonial state.[62] The foreign secretary considered a prolongation to be a menace to British interests in the Mediterranean, particularly the route to India, and a precedent for further invasions undertaken as humanitarian aid to the Christians within the empire.[63] Russell warned the Turks that if they wanted to forestall any permanent foreign occupation, they had to take a firm stand against any renewal of the massacres.

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[59]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 161 (1861), pp. 1114-22.

[60]Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 254, Russell to Cowley, January 24, 1861; no. 312, Cowley to Russell, February 19, 1861.

[61]Ibid., no. 172, Russell to Cowley, November 7, 1860.

[62]Ward and Gooch, Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, II, 455.

[63]Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part II, no. 8, Russell to Bulwer, April 8, 1861.

He warned them that Europe held them responsible for any such massacres.[64]

Obviously, Russell did not relish the prospect of a prolongation, but he found it hard to demand that the French get out of Syria because he had to avoid offending the humanitarian sentiment of the mid-Victorians. A renewal of the massacres resulting from British obstructionism and refusal to permit a prolongation would be costly to the cabinet of Lord Palmerston and to the public image of Great Britain both at home and abroad. Not until March 7, 1861, did the French and British agree on June 5 as the day by which the evacuation was to be completed.[65] Cowley warned Thouvenel, however, that Britain would not tolerate any more delays based on France's "patented excuses."[66] Reasoning that Lebanon was not worth such a strong British animosity and financial expenditure, the French decided to stop requesting a prolongation of the occupation. The French completed the evacuation by June 10, and the response of the population of Syria and Lebanon was absolute indifference.[67]

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[64] Ibid., inclosure in no. 15, Fraser to Dufferin, April 4, 1861; no. 44, Dufferin to Russell, May 11, 1861; no. 65, Rogers to Russell, June 1, 1861.

[65] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part I, no. 335, Russell to Cowley, March 7, 1861; no. 337, Cowley to Russell, March 7, 1861.

[66] Ibid., no. 357, Cowley to Russell, March 14, 1861.

[67] Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Syria: 1860-61, Part II, inclosure no. 1 in no. 66, Fraser to Bulwer, June 7, 1861; inclosure no. 1 in no. 72, Fraser to Bulwer, June 11, 1861.

Previous to the evacuation, the powers and Turkey had been trying to establish a new system of government for the whole of the province of Syria, but the Turks managed to limit the discussions to Lebanon alone. There was a new government in Lebanon when the evacuation was completed, but it had been agreed upon only after long bargaining among the powers who were represented on the joint commission. In the deliberations of this commission, the British, represented by Lord Dufferin, usually cooperated with the Turks to defeat French proposals to unite Lebanon under a Maronite ruler. Russell disliked these proposals because it was doubtful that the Druses would be justly governed under such a system, and a Maronite would probably follow the dictates of the French government. Instead of this arrangement, France, Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Turkey finally agreed that Lebanon be governed by a Christian, who was not a Maronite and who was appointed by the Turkish government. This agreement further guaranteed that the rights of each minority were to be protected by giving them a voice in an effective advisory council and by redistributing the various sects geographically.[68] This system worked; and, after the departure of the expedition, Lebanon enjoyed a much improved administration, while Moslem respect for the Turkish government was not

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[68]Miller, The Ottoman Empire, p. 303; Mange, The Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, p. 99; Hitti, Lebanon in History, p. 441. Fuad Pasha, who presided over the meetings of the commission, easily dominated the weak French minister. Lord Dufferin and Fuad often combined to bend the commission into aiding Ottoman and British interests.

destroyed by too much Ottoman deference to the Christian powers. The intervention succeeded in aiding the natives of Lebanon by giving them good government and by restoring some order and tranquility to the rest of the province of Syria.

Russell also fulfilled his goals of thwarting any possible French ambitions and of satisfying mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment. The integrity of the Ottoman empire had been temporarily violated, but even the strength of humanitarian sentiment, that had made Russell cooperate with the French, had not forced him to sacrifice Britain's traditional interests and policy. Self-interest had dictated cooperation in this particular venture, and Russell successfully cloaked Francophobia and the maintenance of British interests in the Levant with the aura of a humanitarian concern for the Christian and Moslem subjects of the Porte.

CHAPTER III

The Cretan Rebellion and Refugee Removal

Five years after the conclusion of the Syrian intervention and a year after the death of Lord Palmerston, a revolt occurred on Crete that renewed the European powers' interest in the problems of the Levant. The Porte's subjects on the island of Crete had been especially waiting for genuine Ottoman reform since the "Hat" of 1856. The Cretan Christians desired reunion with Greece, with which they had strong ethnic ties. In 1830, after the Greek war for independence, the Protocol of London separated the Cretans from Greece, which was allowed to leave the Ottoman empire. Besides this desire for reunification and the Porte's failure to implement the reforms of the Hatti-Humayun of 1856, the Cretans complained of extortionate and irregular taxation, unequal treatment of Christians and Moslems, and denial of justice in the courts.[1] In addition to these complaints, antagonism between the Christian

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[1]J. A. R. Marriott, The Eastern Question, an Historical Study in European Diplomacy (4th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 376.

majority and the Moslem minority was strong. Another conflict existed between the small landlord class, who controlled the fertile plains, and the rest of the population, who were left with hillside plots, or with nothing at all.[2] As was the usual case in the Ottoman empire, it was not a mere matter of Moslem oppression and Christian suffering. Rather, it was the ruling class, which contained numerous Christians, exploiting those under its control.[3]

The problems of Crete occurred within the context of a waning British interest in perpetuating the employment of the Ottoman empire as a block to the expansion of the other powers. The oppressive system of government that the Turks permitted to exist on the island of Crete contributed to this doubt. The traditional policy of supporting the Turks had become open to doubt, because it was well known that "the cruelty and corruption of the regime were tempered only by incompetence."[4] Lord Stanley, a foreign secretary during the crisis, professed "neither sympathy nor special interest for the Turks," and admitted that his only concern was who was to replace the Turks in the Levant.[5]

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[2]Leften S. Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958), p. 470.

[3]Roderic H. Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 158-61.

[4]Robert Blake, Disreali. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 550.

[5]Harold W.V. Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt to Salisbury (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1938), p. 306.

Lord Lyons, a shrewd and experienced diplomat, observed that in 1866 there was not much feeling in England in favor of the Ottoman state.[6] On March 24, 1866, Lord Clarendon, the other foreign secretary during the Cretan crisis, wrote:

> . . . old Turkish proclivities were rapidly evanescing as people know more about the united ignorance and stupidity of the Mahomedans who squat in some of the fairest regions of the world in order to prevent their being productive.[7]

British politicians were beginning to lose faith in the possibility of genuine Ottoman reform. Without reform the Turkish state could not, and should not, continue to exist. Stanley himself had lost faith in the future of the Ottoman empire by 1864, and his attitude did not change when he took office in 1866.[8] Although skepticism about the value of Turkey was in its embryonic stages and limited to only a few people in government, British foreign secretaries had to be more circumspect in their support of the empire. It still appeared to be essential to Britain's interests to sustain the Ottoman empire, but British politicians were beginning to respond to a gradually changing public opinion. Since the government was charged with callousness about the condition of the subjects of the Ottoman empire, it became good policy to make Near

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[6]Lyons to Cowley, June 6, 1866, as quoted in Richard Millman, British Foreign Policy and the Coming of the Franco-Prussian War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 29.

[7]Werner E. Mosse, The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855-71: The Story of a Peace Settlement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 4.

[8]Kenneth Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt, 1866-69," Slavonic and Eastern European Review, XXXV (October, 1956), 75.

Eastern policy appear to be humanitarian.

The traditional policy of non-intervention was reinforced by this discouragement over the lack of Turkish reform. When the other powers sought to aid the Cretans, Stanley, who believed that self-interest dictated non-intervention, tried to make non-intervention appear more humanitarian than intervention. It was good strategy to make policy appeal to mid-Victorian sympathy and to show that policy was designed to give genuine aid to the victims.

On September 2, 1866, in response to the empty promises of the Turks and to the Porte's threats of an Egyptian controlled administration for the island, the Cretan General Assembly, an illegal representative group which had been meeting at Sphakia since May, declared the island's independence from the Ottoman empire and its union with Greece.[9] The rebellion had grown from a movement striving for reform into a nationalistic attempt at a formal reunion with Greece. In 1858 and 1864, Turkish promises had placated the Cretans, but by 1866 nothing except union with Greece was going to satisfy them. The Greek government, always intent on gaining more territory, willingly accepted patronage of the rebellion, and on August 14, 1866, called for foreign intervention to aid the Cretans.[10]

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[9]Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 376.

[10]Matthew S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1966), p. 159.

The British government based its response to this proposal on several considerations. In regard to Crete, the British government had to consider the welfare of the large Turkish minority under a Greek Cretan government, the example that such a dismemberment would set for other minority groups in the Ottoman empire, and the terrible financial and political condition of the Greek state. The British were more concerned about the Suez Canal and the route to India that would be endangered, if the Ottoman empire dissolved into anarchy. Although the route was not directly threatened by a Cretan separation from the Porte's domain, the maintenance of a viable Ottoman empire was still central to British interests in the Near East. Fear of Russian expansion in the Levant was a definite factor in the formation of British policy because the Russians were possible patrons of both the island of Crete and the Greek kingdom.

The Cretan rebellion became a diplomatic issue during a critical period of British domestic politics. It was contemporary with the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867 and the elections that followed it. Besides concern over political reform, Englishmen were worried about the violence of Fenianism, the financial recession, and the formation of the Canadian constitution. Politicians chose not to make an issue out of non-intervention or continued British support of the Ottoman empire because a specific foreign policy could hurt a political party, both in the election and after taking office. There was also a general lack of interest in

England about foreign affairs. Diplomatic policy was considered a "matter of taste" and, therefore, of little real importance to one's life.[11]

Lord Clarendon, the British foreign secretary in the Liberal government of Lord John Russell, maintained an official attitude of non-intervention throughout the spring of 1866. The British government refused to accept any Cretan petitions for aid and urged conciliation upon the Porte. Lord Stanley, the son of the new Prime Minister, took office on July 5, 1866 as foreign secretary in Lord Derby's Conservative government. A. J. P. Taylor has characterized Stanley as "the most isolationalist foreign secretary that Great Britain has ever known."[12] Lord Clarendon gives us a further idea of Stanley's thinking: Stanley had "strange theories about our being only a manufacturing nation" and that Great Britain had "no business to meddle with foreign affairs."[13] Stanley, reacting to the noisy threats of intervention of the previous administrations of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, stated that he was "not a supporter of the system of advising

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[11]Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 223.

[12]A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 233.

[13]As quoted in Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 30.

foreign governments." He thought that this right had been abused by Palmerston and Russell and that Britain's prestige had suffered.[14] Lord Stanley, whose ideas were much in the favor of the middle class, was reserved by nature, adverse to taking extreme measures, and contantly aware of the difficulties of any course of action. Consequently, he was anxious to avoid raising any fundamental issues, and he made a virtue out of the necessity of being inactive.[15] The tendency to follow the traditional policy of non-intervention was increased by Stanley's personality and beliefs.

Stanley considered the reported Ottoman atrocities on Crete as distortions and stated that "every kind of exaggeration and calumny" was being used by the partisans of Cretan unification with Greece to discredit the Turkish government.[16] In general, he was against a continuation of Ottoman rule on the island, but the condition of Greece and the mixed population of Crete were also factors to be considered in the Cretan problem.[17]

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[14]Temperley and Penson, Foundations of British Foreign Policy, p. 306.

[15]Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 75.

[16]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXXIV (1867), Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67 [hereafter cited as Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67], no. 36, Stanley to Lyons, September 4, 1866.

[17]Stanley to Gladstone, September 3, 1866, quoted in Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 58.

In the earlier stages of the rebellion, Stanley's foreign policy attempted to urge conciliation upon the Porte in its suppression of the rebellion and advised the Turks to avoid arousing European sympathies for the rebellious Cretan Christians. Stanley wrote to Lord Lyons, the ambassador at Constantinople:

> I have to instruct you to inform Aali Pasha that Her Majesty's government strongly advises the Porte to deal with the Cretans with utmost forebearance and in a conciliatory spirit to redress any grievances of which they may have cause to complain. In the present state of the Continent it would be a great misfortune to Turkey if any question were to arise which should excite the sympathies of Europe in favor of the Christian subjects of the Porte.[18]

This course of action would soothe mid-Victorian feeling for the Cretans and help Stanley keep the other powers from intervening to aid the Cretans. Stanley, a great procrastinator, was perfectly willing to let the Cretan affair resolve itself without involving the other major European powers and British politics.

Later, as the rebellion became more bloody and the powers showed more concern, Lord Stanley made it clear to Lord Lyons what he believed to be the proper course for the Turks. He made it equally as clear that

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[18]Stanley to Lyons, August 13, 1866, Ibid., p. 57. Europe was in the process of recovering from the Austro-Prussian war. Britain was watching the formation of the North German Confederation and Napoleon's desire for compensation on the Rhine.

Great Britain was not going to force such a course on the Porte. He said:

> The Porte can devise no surer method of allaying feelings of this description [sympathy] than that of clemency towards the vanquished, and the promise of an equitable and mild administration for the time to come; and, without pressing the point beyond what a friendly and allied government may fairly do your Excellency will inculcate this course on the Turkish ministers whenever a favourable opportunity offers for your so doing.[19]

Lord Lyons had reported earlier that he had received "positive assurances" that Mustapha Pasha, the new Ottoman governor for Crete, had "instructions to act with kindness and forbearance towards the Christians in Crete, and to make every possible effort to restore order in the island without having recourse to force."[20]

The British ambassadors at Paris and Constantinople were ordered to maintain a "careful neutrality," as it would serve no one's interest, except Russia's, to see chaos in the Near East.[21] The British government attempted to prove to the British people the good intentions of the Porte. Any real discussion of the evils of Ottoman rule and the justness of the Cretan grievances was studiously beclouded by grand declarations of British good intentions.

The condition of the Greek state aided Stanley's defense of non-

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[19] Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, no. 89, Stanley to Lyons, November 2, 1866.

[20] Ibid., no. 50, Lyons to Dickson, September 7, 1866.

[21] Ibid., no. 47, Stanley to Cowley, September 18, 1866; no. 50, Stanley to Lyons, September 22, 1866.

intervention. Since the Cretans had openly sought union with Greece, a contrast of the government of the Ottoman empire with the government of the kingdom of Greece was significant in the British decision to refrain from intervention. In other words, Great Britain would not really be aiding the Cretans by helping them gain unification with Greece. Stanley, and the others who were in favor of strict non-intervention, made ample use of the mismanagement and misgovernment of the Greek kingdom. Cretan union with Greece was portrayed as a possible disaster for the Cretan people.

The Greeks had encouraged reunion by engaging in direct aid since the proclamation of Cretan unity with Greece. They had sent hundreds of volunteers, adequate munitions, and enough army officers to lead the rebels.[22] The British government realized that the Cretan rebellion would not end until Greek aid was ended.[23] Stanley, who wanted the rebellion to end, viewed intervention by anyone as harmful to the welfare of the people of the Levant, because it was "a matter of humanity" to discourage aid to the rebels. Greek aid deluded the Cretans into believing that some great power would intervene on their behalf.[24]

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[22] Ibid., no. 74, Erskine to Stanley, October 11, 1866.

[23] Ibid., no. 120, Lyons to Stanley, November 28, 1866.

[24] Ibid., no. 118, Dickson to Stanley, November 17, 1866.

Since rebellion was futile, foreign aid would only prolong the suffering of the Cretan people.[25] Lord Stanley thought that Greece was "bankrupt, anarchical, without an honest politician or a class which can be trusted with power."[26] He even wrote to the British ambassador at Athens, Lord Erskine, that the motives for Greece's aid were selfish and unrealistic since Greece had encouraged futile warfare, which served only to "protract the miseries of the inhabitants and the desolation of the country."[27] Lord Lyons wrote to Stanley on December 19, 1866 to explain the desire of Greece to protract the struggle. "Greece is bent upon mischief," wrote the ambassador "and the question, whether we are or not to have an Eastern Question forced upon us in the spring depends upon whether or not Greece can be kept in order."[28]

The British consul at Athens, Lord Erskine, doubted that the Cretans would enjoy any better government under the Greeks than under the Turks.[29] If the British aided Crete in her quest for unity with Greece, Britain would then become responsible for Greek rule on the

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[25] Ibid., no. 66, Stanley to Lyons, October 12, 1866.

[26] As quoted in Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 59.

[27] Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, no. 124, Stanley to Erskine, December 11, 1866.

[28] Thomas Wodehouse Legh Newton, Second Baron, Lord Lyons, (2 vols.; London: E. Arnold, 1913), I, 159-60.

[29] Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, no. 25, Erskine to Stanley, August 8, 1866.

island. The Ionian Islands was a concrete example, often cited by the defenders of non-intervention, of what the Greeks could do to the administration of a newly acquired area. From a well administered territory, the Ionian Islands were treated as a conquered country and as "fiefs of the politicians at Athens."[30] Stanley and his supporters often pointed out another consideration: if Greek government mistreated the Ionian Greeks, the large minority of Moslems on Crete could not expect to be treated well under this same Greek Christian government.

The general condition of the whole Greek kingdom was obviously not much better than the Turkish administration on Crete. Many Greeks left the impoverished Greek state for the Ottoman empire, because it was generally known that a Christian village in the Ottoman empire was more prosperous than a similar one in Greece.[31] Most of the problem in Greece was based on Greece's imperialistic ambition to regain all the land where Greeks were predominant. The Times noted that the Greeks should tend to internal matters before attempting to expand their boundaries.[32] The impressions and descriptions of Greece served as excellent grist for Stanley's propaganda mill to defend his policy of non-intervention.

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[30]William Miller, The Ottoman Empire, 1801-1913 (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1913), p. 308. The British government had taken over the Ionian Islands during the Napoleonic Wars and in 1862 ceded them to the new Greek king, both as a gesture of good will and as a bribe for his refraining from causing problems in the Near East.

[31]Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, p. 296.

[32]The Times (London), October 20, 1866, p. 8.

Lord Stanley's main objective on the diplomatic front was to keep Russia and France from acting together, since their joint action was the only real threat to keeping the Cretan rebellion a problem among the Greeks, Cretans, and Turks. Stanley, and most Englishmen, still believed that Russia wanted to destroy the Ottoman empire and seize control of the Straits. It was further believed that France might cooperate with the Russians in the East, and the Russians might then support the French against suspected future German intentions.[33] Napoleon III and Tsar Alexander II had discussed such a policy in September of 1859, but the differences between the two nations were too great to enable them to cooperate. Napoleon was not ready to give Alexander a free hand to expand in the Levant or to overturn completely the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The Tsar would not support France on the Rhine.[34] Nevertheless, in the late 1860's, this failure to cooperate was not obvious, and the image of Franco-Russian cooperation haunted European chancelleries.

In the earliest stages of the revolt, Thouvenel displayed little interest in direct action, remarking only that France believed that "good government was desirable whether in Crete or Greece."[35] At

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[33]Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 62.

[34]Benedict H. Sumner, "The Secret Franco-Russian Treaty of 3 March 1859," English Historical Review, XLVIII (January, 1933), 81.

[35]Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, no. 31, Cowley to Stanley, August 28, 1866.

first the Russians hoped that the ambassadors at Constantinople would act together to force concessions from the Porte. Stanley defeated this proposal to make the Turks give in by seeking to delay any threats by the powers until after the actions of the new Ottoman commissioner on Crete could be ascertained.[36] Stanley further claimed that it was the Porte's duty to put the rebellion down by armed force, since the rebellion sought the separation of Crete from the Ottoman empire.

Russia was not prepared in 1867 for a major commitment in the Near East. Despite a strong desire to overturn the terms of the Treaty of Paris, particularly the neutralization of the Black Sea, she needed the cooperation of another power to counter Britain's strong support of the treaty. Russian finances were as bad as ever, while her southern railroads were not yet completed. Along with peasant unrest, she was involved in expansion into Central Asia and with Polish revolts. Nevertheless, the Russians as protectors of Slavs and the Orthodox Church, had to maintain their image as a defender of the Christians within the Ottoman empire. This protection could not be allowed to become the responsibility of local rivals, such as Greece or Romania, or the great powers, Austria or France.[37] Prince Gorchakov, Russia's foreign minister, attempted to maintain a conservative, but vocal policy.

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[36] Ibid., no. 36, Stanley to Lyons, September 4, 1866.

[37] Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 78; Benedict H. Sumner, "Ignatyev at Constantinople, 1864-1874," Part I, Slavonic and East European Review, XI (January, 1933), 347.

He threatened the Turks and cautioned the Greeks.[38] Gorchakov was anxious to cooperate with France and Britain, but also sought to keep the problem alive until an opportunity arose to force a revocation of the neutralization of the Black Sea.[39]

Although the British government remained formally committed to a policy of strict non-intervention, one of its representatives in the Near East decided to depart from this policy in December of 1866. C.H. Dickson, the veteran British consul on Crete, gave orders to Commander Pym, a British naval captain who was cruising near Crete, that he could accept Cretan refugees on his craft and convey them to Greece, if they so desired.[40] The British commander soon used his discretion and removed two hundred refugees from Crete, transporting them to Greece. Russia, France, Prussia, Austria, and the United States immediately allowed their naval commanders to follow Pym's example. The effect of this removal was a service to the rebels and contrary to British policy. Dickson received a mild reprimand from his government, but The Times approved of the action as one done in the service of humanity and consistent with the duty of a good Englishman.[41]

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[38]Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, LXXIV (1867), no. 56, Gould to Stanley, September 22, 1866; no. 151, Buchanan to Stanley, December 25, 1866.

[39]Sumner, "Ignatyev at Constantinople," Part I, p. 347; Newton, Lord Lyons, I, 166.

[40]Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, inclosure no. 4 in no. 143, Dickson to Pym, December 8, 1866.

[41]The Times (London), December 24, 1866, p. 8.

Refugee removal offered the British government an excellent opportunity to take an outwardly humanitarian course of action. To evacuate these poor refugees, who were fleeing the barbarous Turkish irregulars, would be doing them a service by removing them from a situation in which they had little hope of improvement. Besides this "good," however, there also existed the "evil" of demonstrating sympathy for the rebellion which might lead other subjects of the Porte to revolt and seek outside aid against the Turks. Refugee removal also set an example of intervention for the other powers. Open sympathy and aid were actions that absolutely had to be avoided in the Near East; thus the British government repudiated Pym's action and continued its policy of strict non-intervention.

St. Vincent Lloyd, the British consul at Syra, Greece's major port, warned Stanley that the Greeks regarded any action, such as refugee removal, as a definite show of sympathy for the rebellious Cretan Christians. Lloyd also related how he explained Pym's action to the Greeks. It was to be understood as "purely and simply a spontaneous act of philanthropy" by an individual.[42] Neither the Greeks nor the Cretans believed him, and both continued in their expectations of further British aid.

In March of 1867, The Times correspondent at Athens, obviously

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[42]Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1866-67, no. 133, Lloyd to Stanley, December 15, 1866.

in sympathy with the government's disapproval of the removal, emphasized the danger of a policy of intervention. If the British acted on any pretext, the other powers would soon imitate them and attempt to outbid England to gain "their potential ends."[43]

The British government built its case on the future consequences of any actions, and therefore had to sacrifice the smaller good of refugee removal for the greater good of containing the conflict. The humanitarianism of such acts as refugee removal was illusory, as their ultimate results were contrary to the welfare of the receivers. Mid-Victorian humanitarianism demanded an intervention to relieve the sufferings of the Cretans, but Stanley and his supporters counteracted this desire by turning humanitarianism into a reason for non-intervention. They were not about to let their feelings subvert their chief objectives--the maintenance of the balance of power and the protection of British interests in the Near East. They wished to accomplish this by protecting the integrity of the Ottoman empire, but at the same time by following the traditional policy of non-intervention.

On February 15, 1867, the major discussion of Britain's policy of non-intervention and refugee removal took place in the House of Commons. W. H. Gregory, a Liberal representing Dublin and a known philhellene, did not limit his suggestions to Crete, but brought up the whole Eastern Question. He considered British support of the Ottoman empire to be

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[43] The Times (London), March 14, 1867, p. 12.

"inconsistent, mistaken, and unwise." Gregory claimed that the traditional policy was wrong in every respect, and that it had failed miserably in its two principal objectives. The Ottoman empire had not really contained Russian expansion and the Turkish government had not reformed itself. The Ottoman empire was doomed despite British aid, and all that the British government was accomplishing was prolonging the agony of its collapse. Christian control of the Levant was obviously the wave of the future. Assuming that Christian control meant better government, the British were blocking the positive progress of the Christian subjects of the Porte. Furthermore, the British government was hypocritical and inconsistent in its support of revolutions that supposedly aimed at freedom and expulsion of foreign rule. Where it had been advantageous to support revolutions, as in South America and Italy, Great Britain had been ardent in her support of the rebels. When the benefits for England were nebulous or non-existent, as in the Levant, the British government was either lacking in interest or in league with the oppressive Turks. Regretting that Crete had been left in the Ottoman empire in 1830 and discounting the condition of the Ionians, Gregory requested that Britain aid the Cretans and any other subject people of Turkey that asked for help. The British government had to end its obstructionism to the progress of the Ottoman Christians and help educate these people so that they might form good governments after leaving Turkish misrule. In regard to the Cretan revolt, Gregory minimized the role of Athens in the insurrection and cited the amount of

Turkish misgovernment and cruel repression. The Cretan grievances of unfair taxation, injustice, poor educational facilities, and inadequate transportation were considered to be legitimate. The Cretans were seeking better government, which they hoped to receive from the Greeks.[44] Gregory hoped that the British government, while working for an eventual separation of Crete from the Ottoman empire, now would do its duty and aid in the removal of refugees.[45] Gregory's speech was a scalding attack on Britain's Levantine policy and an inquiry into the wisdom of Stanley's policy of non-intervention.[46]

Gregory was unusual in the House of Commons in his objections to non-intervention, and as he was not a prominent member his attack by itself should not be given too much significance. However, it is worthy of note because it exemplified a humanitarian attack on the government's alleged humanitarian policy of non-intervention. Gregory was appealing to mid-Victorian sympathy for these suffering people. If the government did not give an adequate defense of its policy, then non-intervention in the Cretan rebellion would become a real issue.

Henry A. Layard, a man of forceful personality and the excavator of Nineveh, approved the government's policy of non-intervention, although it appeared unfeeling. He considered the success of the Cretans improbable and British aid in the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire exceedingly

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[44]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 185 (1867), pp. 412-13.

[45]Ibid., p. 416.

[46]Ibid., pp. 406-21.

unwise. Any aid to the insurgents only raised false hopes and caused more bloodshed and destruction.[47] Immediate "feelings of humanity" had to be suppressed in favor of a realistic policy and the general welfare of all the involved parties.[48] Layard suggested that Greek imperial ambitions were actually hurting the Christians within the Ottoman empire by making reform more difficult.[49] After citing Greece's mismanagement of the Ionian Islands, Layard suggested that foreign intervention, unless it was overwhelming, would quickly cause the Turks to revoke many of the improvements that had been gained by the subjects of the Porte.[50] He believed British support of the Ottoman empire, or at least non-intervention, to be the correct policy.

William Ewart Gladstone, already a prominent Liberal, strongly supported non-intervention. Declaring that practicality must overcome immediate feelings of sympathy, Gladstone espoused Stanley's policy. Coming from someone who, as a humanitarian and high-church politician, was capable of arousing a large amount of righteous indignation about governmental policy, Gladstone's support of non-intervention was a real aid to Stanley.

With regard to Gregory's charge of wanton cruelty in the Turkish suppression, Stanley stated that some cruelty was only natural among

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[47] Ibid., p. 426.

[48] Ibid., p. 425.

[49] Ibid., pp. 428-30.

[50] Ibid., p. 439.

such barbarous people. The Turks were sincerely attempting to minimize the suffering of the peaceful Cretan population.[51] Although strict non-intervention, the course Britain had to take, was causing him some qualms of conscience, Stanley claimed that non-intervention was the only course open to the government. To intervene in any manner would cause "ten times as much suffering."[52] He said that if Crete were given autonomy, the whole structure of the Ottoman empire would dissolve into nationalistic revolutions. The Eastern Question would be opened, and Stanley was reluctant even to contemplate the results of that.

In March of 1867, a debate occurred in the House of Lords, specifically about the removal of refugees from war-torn Crete. The Duke of Argyll, a Turkophobe, related that he was not opposed to the government's general plan of non-intervention, but that he was concerned about the refusal of Her Majesty's government to aid in the removal of refugees. He believed that non-intervention was acceptable, "provided the use of force did not degenerate into mere brutality, and that the recognized customs of war were observed."[53] The Duke disliked the use of Albanian mercenaries and Cretan Moslem irregulars. In its use of such troops, the Porte was showing little regard for the welfare of the

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[51] Ibid., p. 447.

[52] Ibid., pp. 447-48.

[53] Ibid., p. 1520.

Cretan population. In Argyll's opinion, Dickson's instructions to aid in the removal of refugees had been "worthy of the highest honours and a fine demonstration of moral courage."[54] The circumstances of each situation had to be taken into consideration, and, at the very least, the government had to make its orders to British representatives more explicit. Argyll suggested that the British had been "far more Turkish than the government at Constantinople" in their strict adherence to non-intervention and that for the sake of the Cretan refugees the British had to aid in their removal.[55] These helpless refugees were starving and being massacred by Moslem irregulars. It was Britain's duty to come to their aid, otherwise Britain was shirking its moral obligation to prevent bloodshed and to aid a deprived and powerless people.

Argyll presented humanitarian and altruistic reasons for removal of the Cretan refugees, but he was also being shortsighted. He was making no provision for the care of the refugees once they got to Greece, and Argyll further failed to recognize that if Britain removed the refugees she was responsible for their condition under their new rulers.

Responding to Argyll's allegations, Lord Derby took the position that even such infringements of neutrality as removal of refugees served only to encourage revolt in the Levant and would lead to "the immediate and bloody renewal of the whole Eastern Question."

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[54] Ibid., p. 1522.

[55] Ibid., p. 1523.

While non-intervention was debated, the Cretan rebellion expanded, despite Stanley's efforts, from an affair of the Ottoman empire into a crisis of European importance. On January 24, 1867, the Marquis de Moustier, the French foreign minister, told Julian Fane, the British charge d'affaires at Paris, that Crete was the "nucleus of gangrene" that might poison the whole Ottoman empire. He suggested that Crete be given local autonomy and eventually be added to Greece, which was to be expanded to include all its ethnic territory.[56] The Russians gave little support to this proposal because they did not want a strong and expanded Greek state to replace Turkey in the Levant. Lord Stanley told Earl Cowley that only if suppression appeared impossible, which it did not, would England support such a proposal because the Porte would have to be forced to agree to a separation of Crete.[57] Stanley would not go to war to force the Porte into action because he realized that it would require a military encounter resulting in a massive Turkish defeat as at Navarino.[58] It was not a charitable act to slaughter a nation's army and navy to force her to fulfill another nation's desires, even though

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[56]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXXIII (1867-68), Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867 [hereafter cited as Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867] no. 5, Fane to Stanley, January 24, 1867.

[57]Ibid., no. 56, Stanley to Cowley, March 27, 1867.

[58]Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 61; Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867, no. 85, Lyons to Stanley, March 29, 1867.

these desires might be in the best interests of some of that government's subjects.

Stanley's own policy of urging reform and reconciliation upon the Ottoman government was floundering. Since it could blame its failure on the other powers, the government was not reluctant to explain away its lack of success in this endeavor. Lord Lyons explained:

> I can do nothing with the Turks about Crete, because they mistrust the intentions of France. The Russian Ambassador tells them plainly that Russia is determined that Crete shall be annexed to Greece and declares that France has given Russia assurances that the object of all the steps taken by France is to place the Porte in a position in which it cannot escape from this.[59]

In March of 1867, the French and Russians suggested a plebiscite on Crete, but Stanley promptly turned this proposal down for he knew the implications of such a step.[60] Many other subject peoples of the Ottoman empire would demand such a course of action and the empire would soon disintegrate. Stanley finally reluctantly agreed to cooperate with the French government in urging specific and limited reforms on the Porte. These reforms, which he believed would be beneficial to the subjects of the Porte, included military and naval reforms, economic improvements, better transportation systems, and improved educational facilities.[6]

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[59]Lyons to Cowley, June 19, 1867, as quoted in Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 98.

[60]Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867, no. 45, Stanley to Cowley, March 13, 1867.

[61]Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 82.

Although having little faith in the ability of the Turks and the Christians ever to live together in harmony, Stanley urged cooperation on these reform measures because he wanted to limit Franco-Russian cooperation.[62] The Tsar's government did not agree to the program because it would strengthen the Ottoman empire.

By April of 1867, the French, trying to cooperate with Russia, proposed cessation of hostilities and a joint commission of inquiry into the Cretan grievances.[63] Again Stanley refused to back this proposal, thereby removing the "teeth" of the idea. The Porte had learned that any such demands could be met with impunity, if Britain did not also make the request. After the Turks refused to fulfill the suggestions of the powers, Stanley and Lyons agreed that the Turks acted wisely and were actually following the British government's desires. If the Turks manifested hesitation and weakness in the face of a nationalistic revolt, they only encouraged further bloodshed within the Ottoman empire. A quick, mild suppression was the most humane course of action.[64] Stanley when he defeated the proposals of France and Russia, demonstrated a concern for Turkey and all its subjects.

In the summer of 1867, when the Turks began a reign of terror to crush the rebellion, they stopped following Stanley's advice that they

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[62] Ibid., p. 84-85.

[63] Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867, no. 98, Cowley to Stanley, April 19, 1867.

[64] Ibid., no. 212, Lyons to Stanley, July 11, 1867.

mildly suppress the revolt. They employed large numbers of Turkish irregulars, well known for their brutality, and made it a policy to starve out the rebels.[65] Such atrocities brought the weight of European public opinion to bear on their respective governments. Stanley's policy of non-intervention was threatened by a barrage of humanitarian objections. The Turks claimed that concessions to the Christians would be a sign of weakness to the Ottoman Moslems and a stimulus to other Christians to revolt. Stanley was close to despair for the continuation of non-intervention, both because of the incapacity and cruelty of the Turks and the growing pressure from France and Russia. If these problems continued, Stanley believed that the island was lost to Turkey.[66]

Although Stanley limited the intervention of the powers to refugee removal, there was still doubt in Britain that the government should not aid in this endeavor. The Duke of Argyll continued, in 1868, to maintain his interest in the conditions on Crete. After disavowing any intentions of attacking Stanley's basic ideas, he commented in the House of Lords on Stanley's failure to aid in the removal of Cretan refugees, an action in which all of the powers were then engaged. Having expressed doubt that conditions would improve on the island, Argyll declared that Stanley was merely allowing matters to take their own course.

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[65] Ibid., no. 172, Dickson to Stanley, June 3, 1867.

[66] Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 87.

Regretting the further barbarities perpetrated by the Albanians and the Turkish irregulars, Argyll noted that the atrocities certainly must be of great extent because even Dickson, "a good friend of Turkey," reported their common occurrence.[67]

The Earl of Malmesbury, who had some experience at the Foreign Office, raised the point that those refugees who had been removed to Greece were seeking a return to Crete. Malmesbury believed that "this showed that in flying from their country they had not bettered their conditions."[68] Earl Russell sarcastically commented that a few Cretans were now starving in Greece instead of living in Crete.[69]

After this last debate, Stanley concluded that his policy reflected the opinion of parliament. He wrote to Lyons that "the debate of Friday last showed great indifference on the Cretan question and that "the general wish appeared to be to continue to keep us as much out of the quarrel as possible."[70]

By January of 1868, there developed among the powers who had transported refugees to Greece more of a concern about the conditions of the

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[67]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 191 (1868), pp. 806-11.

[68]Ibid., p. 817.

[69]Ibid., p. 817

[70]Stanley to Lyons, April 28, 1868, as quoted in Millman, British Foreign Policy, p. 111.

Cretans in Greece than about those remaining on Crete. The conditions in the refugee camps were abominable, and many children were dying of starvation.[71] Many of these refugees desired to return to Crete, but the Greek government would not permit their departure. Stanley's concern about the results of their removal from Crete had been proven valid, because the Greeks were as incompetent as the British had pictured them to be. Stanley's policy of non-intervention was proved to be the more humanitarian course of action; the removal of refugees was obviously not an aid to the suffering Cretans.

In April of 1868, Moustier attempted to get Stanley to cooperate in a note protesting the Greek's treatment of the refugees, and to aid in their return to Crete. Stanley protested their treatment, but refused to aid in their removal. In September, 1868, when the conditions of the refugees were even worse, Stanley still refused to become involved. He stated that if Britain removed the refugees from Greece, Britain would be responsible if the Cretans were mistreated on Crete. Stanley succeeded in stopping French intervention, but at the cost of suffering by the Cretan refugees,[72] whose privations were made the responsibility of Greece.[73] By transferring the burden of guilt to the Greeks, Stanley made

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[71]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXXIII (1867-68), Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete [hereafter cited as Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete], no. 54, Erskine to Stanley, January 29, 1868.

[72]Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 89.

[73]Ibid., p. 90.

refugee removal and Cretan union with the Greek state much less attractive. Non-intervention appeared all the more humanitarian.

Lord Stanley successfully made his policy of not aiding in refugee removal acceptable to the mid-Victorians. The removal of refugees was superficially humanitarian, but its ultimate result was proved to be of no service to the Cretans. The government also claimed that its policy was aimed at keeping the peace; the price that was being paid for peace and for British interests was obscured by pious rhetoric. Stanley was determined to fulfill his objectives by giving his actions a glow of benevolence and humanitarianism. By doing this, he could only strengthen his case in the mind of a mid-Victorian.

Stanley did take some positive measures in the Near East, but they seem to have been more for public consumption than anything else. As a gesture toward reconciling the powers and the Cretans, he urged the Porte to appoint a Christian governor who was respected by the Cretans.[74] By urging such an appointment, Stanley was trying to appear humanitarian, and at the same time aid his own cause. A Christian governor would probably reconcile a large number of Cretans to Ottoman rule and possibly give them good government with more autonomy within the Turkish empire. The appointment would also conveniently strengthen that empire's hold on the island and undercut some of the powers' concern over the treatment

[74] Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete, no. 33, Stanley to Elliott, January 11, 1868.

of the Cretan Christians. The French approved of the suggestion,[75] but the Turks continued their stalling tactics and the appointment was never made.

Although the Turks refused to listen to the suggestions of all outsiders, they did publicize some reforms and promises for Crete. In December of 1867, for example, the Porte offered the Cretans exemption from taxes for a certain number of years, monetary aid to rebuild destroyed houses, tax revision, abolition of the exemption from the military tax, an agricultural bank, and the dredging of the harbors of Crete.[76] In December of 1868, the Turks issued a series of reforms called the "Organic Statute." They promised the Cretans a government balanced between Christian and Moslem, more local rule, mixed tribunals to handle legal investigations, and the cessation of all religious persecution and oppressive taxation.[77] Elliot believed that most Cretans would accept a reformed Ottoman administration and that only those who favored union with Greece were continuing the rebellion.[78] The Ottoman empire was portrayed, in British public documents, in a favorable light, while the Cretan rebels were seen as only seeking union with the corrupt and bankrupt Greek kingdom.

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[75] Ibid., no. 32, Elliott to Stanley, December 30, 1867.

[76] Further Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete: 1867, inclosure in no. 24, Elliott to Dickson, December 16, 1867.

[77] Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 376.

[78] Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in Crete, no. 73, Elliott to Stanley, March 8, 1868.

Both Lord Stanley and Lord Clarendon knew that the key to bringing about a satisfactory conclusion to the Cretan rebellion was getting Greece to stop her aid to the rebels. Neither foreign secretary wanted to force the Greeks to cease their aid, but they were not averse to seeing the Turks coerce the Greeks, although it had to be done without a war or a major humiliation for the Greeks. On December 10, 1868, the exasperated Turks issued an ultimatum to the Greeks, who had been acting with little discretion because they believed that the powers would protect the Greek state. The Porte demanded the dispersion of all volunteer units for Crete within five days, a ban on their formation in the future, the dismantling of the blockade runners, the return of all Cretan refugees, punishment for those who had attacked a Turkish officer at Syra, and a promise that the Greeks conduct themselves according to existing treaties.[79] The Greeks refused the terms, and relations were broken off immediately.

Agreeing with Stanley's basic ideals, Lord Clarendon, the new foreign secretary, attempted to insure that British interests would not be harmed in any way by the settlement of the threatened war and the resolution of the Cretan rebellion. Napoleon III proposed a convention to mediate the differences between Turkey and Greece. Clarendon reluctantly agreed to this meeting and successfully formulated the ground rules for the coming congress in which he hoped to stop the Russians from

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[79] The Times (London), December 17, 1868, p. .

expanding the scope of the proceedings to include the whole Eastern Question. The integrity of the Ottoman empire under all circumstances was not to be violated,[80] and no force was to be used to enforce the decisions of the powers.[81] While they were meeting, the British restrained the Turks and warned them not to take any inhumane measures against the Greeks living in the Ottoman empire,[82] but the British government refused to go so far as to accept responsibility for the protection of these Greeks.[83]

The powers met in Paris on January 9, 1869 and decided that Turkey was justified in her ultimatum to Greece, but they refused to force Greece to fulfill the ultimatum's terms.[84] The conference condemned Greece's actions, but it also seemed to offer Turkey an invitation to teach the Greeks a lesson.[85] If the Turks defeated the Greeks, their victory would

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[80]Great Britain, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, LXIV (1868-69), Correspondence Respecting the Rupture of Diplomatic Relations Between Turkey and Greece, 1868-69 [hereafter cited as Correspondence Respecting the Rupture of Diplomatic Relations Between Turkey and Greece, 1868-69], no. 51, Clarendon to Lyons, December 23, 1868.

[81]Ibid., no. 73, Clarendon to Lyons, December 29, 1868.

[82]Ibid., no. 100, Elliott to Clarendon, December 24, 1868.

[83]Ibid., no. 146, Clarendon to Elliott, January 18, 1869.

[84]Ibid., inclosures in nos. 137-80, protocols of the conference, January 9-20, 1869.

[85]Bourne, "Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt," p. 93.

cause such European alarm that the powers would be forced to intervene. Since this might involve destruction of the Ottoman empire, the British applied strong pressure on the Porte to give the Greeks an opportunity to comply.[86]

After much unobtrusive pressure from the powers, the Greeks reluctantly gave in and fulfilled the conditions that Turkey demanded. Without Greek support, the Cretan rebellion died and an uneasy peace was restored to the island. Lord Lyons commented that by remaining neutral and restraining the other powers, Great Britain followed a "wise and humane" policy.[87]

Stanley and Clarendon had persistently linked their policies with humanitarianism and service to humanity. They also managed to get the mid-Victorians to accept some actions that were not superficially humanitarian, such as Britain's failure to aid in refugee removal. Above all else, England was determined to maintain the Ottoman empire and the balance of power in Europe. To help the Cretans leave the empire could cause the Turkish state to dissolve into its heterogeneous parts. Its subjects would suffer greatly and the powers would go to war to divide the empire among themselves. The Cretan uprising was also a hopeless revolt and aid would only prolong the suffering of the islanders.

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[86] Correspondence Respecting the Rupture of Diplomatic Relations Between Turkey and Greece, no. 181, Clarendon to Elliott, February 6, 1869.

[87] Ibid., no. 208, Lyons to Clarendon, February 23, 1869.

To help even in the removal of refugees was not humanitarian, since they were transported to Greece where their condition was worse than it was on Crete. For these reasons and because of the jealousy and suspicion toward the other powers, the British government attempted to restrict their intervention. The best course of action for the British was to urge the Ottoman government to offer conciliation and reasonable concessions to the Cretans. To suppress immediate feelings of sympathy in favor of the long-range benefits of non-intervention was made to look like the most humanitarian course of action. Since self-interest dictated non-intervention and the defeat of the solutions of the other powers, Lord Stanley naturally used any characteristic of the mid-Victorians as a defense of his policy. His use of humanitarian reasons to defeat humanitarian objections to non-intervention was a skillful and helpful success.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

Mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment was an essential element in the unique equilibrium of British society from 1851 to 1867. The ideals of the Evangelical revival, which had become part of every Englishman, suggested humanitarian philanthropy as a means of atonement and a way to alleviate the worst abuses of the industrial revolution without destroying individualism. British politicians, responding to this sentiment, respected its strength and existence by making their policies appear to be in the best interests of human beings. This desire to help suffering people extended to foreign affairs. The British government, therefore, had to manipulate mid-Victorian sentiment so that it protected policies based essentially on self-interest. The government's response to the Syrian massacres and the Cretan rebellion and the defense of its policy verify the desire of the government to make selfish objectives appear to be in the interests of suffering people.

British self-interest dictated that the Ottoman empire continue to exist, thus avoiding any answer to the Eastern Question. The only way that this corrupt and inefficient empire could continue to exist was by reforming its administration. Therefore, Britain was a staunch supporter of Ottoman reform.

These attempts at reform eventually broke down; the perfidy, incapacity, and corruption of the Turkish administration permitted Moslems to massacre thousands of Christians in Lebanon and Syria. When the French requested British cooperation to send a European expeditionary force to help restore order, Lord John Russell reluctantly agreed. Although he was somewhat fearful of offending mid-Victorian humanitarian sentiment if he did not help in Syria, the foreign secretary really wanted to limit the ambitions of France and to see that the integrity of the Ottoman empire was not permanently violated. Russell remained suspicious of Napoleon throughout the crisis, but always defended his action by citing the humanitarianism of going to the aid of the Christians of Syria and Lebanon. After Fuad Pasha, with aid from the European expeditionary force, had restored order and some tranquility to Syria, Russell tried to get the French to evacuate as soon as possible. Despite a strong desire to accomplish this, Russell hesitated to force a hasty evacuation because he was afraid of the sympathy that might be aroused by a renewal of the massacres. By June 10, 1861, however, the French had successfully fulfilled the objectives of protecting the Ottoman empire and of appearing to respond to humanitarian considerations, so the troops could safely be withdrawn.

Five years later, a rebellion broke out on Crete. This revolt sought a nationalistic reunion with Greece, but British self-interest demanded that there could not be any precedents for aid to groups trying to leave the Ottoman empire. Lord Stanley tried to protect Britain's interests by

pursuing a policy of non-intervention and by defeating, as much as possible, the plans of the other powers. The foreign secretary defended his efforts by claiming that it was more humanitarian not to intervene than to intervene. He consistently condemned aid to the rebels as merely prolonging the bloodshed in a futile revolt against legitimate authority. Reunion with Greece was portrayed in official dispatches as [illegible] staying in th[illegible] man[illegible]. Stanley asked how it could be a real aid to the Cretans to transfer them to that chaotic and corrupt state. Britain even avoided the removal of refugees from the war area by pointing to their eventual destination. Stanley did not want to help the rebels in any manner, and he considered even this aid as an encouragement to a doomed rebellion. After three years of bloody and devastating warfare, the Cretan rebellion died out. Although appearing humanitarian, Stanley had successfully fulfilled his goal, since Crete remained in the Ottoman empire.

In these two instances, British self-interest was not totally contrary to the interests of the natives of the Ottoman empire. The expedition that was sent to Syria did help restore order and some security to the province, and it was doubtful that the Cretan refugees would have been much better off in Greece than on Crete. The British government was capable, however, of playing upon the ideals and sentiment of the English people to defend policies that were in Britain's favor, but not necessarily in the best interests of the recipients. In other words, the government was quite ready to sacrifice some group, if the interest of

Britain demanded such a response. The foreign secretary might then make even this sacrifice acceptable if he could make the policy appeal to a characteristic belief of his contemporaries. Humanitarianism was a mid-Victorian characteristic, and British foreign secretaries did use it to cloak self-interest in respectability.

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