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The Expansion of the British Empire in the Middle East After the Ottoman Heritage (1882-1923)

Osmanlı Mirası Sonrasında İngiliz İmparatorluğu'nun Orta Doğu'da Genişlemesi (1882-1923)

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Abstract: As today, Middle East was not just only a geographical region to define its location in the world era for Britain. The 19th century was the base of the British interests in the Middle East, with the increasing economic resources during the fall of the Ottoman Empire. It is equally clear that one of the significant aspects of British policy towards the Porte was the status of Christian subjects under the Turkish rule in addition to economic and political underpinnings. Subsequent to Crimean War, Britain had developed a strong intimacy with the Ottoman Empire which was based on mutual trust and friendship. Besides, she started to expand the empire by acquiring the Middle Eastern regions at the same time.

This study will try to analyse this transform of the British Empire from the guardian to the heir of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. The analysis of the process will be based on the British imperialism towards the Middle East from the 19th century until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey subsequent to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Basically, the reasons of why the British rule aimed to rule Aden Wharf, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan will be particularly examined in order to prove the main analysis. On the other hand, this research would not simply address the Anglo-Ottoman relations or the British influence over the relations between the Sublime Porte and the Arabs.

Keywords: British imperialism, Middle East, Egypt, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire

Öz: Bugün olduğu gibi Orta Doğu Britanya için yalnızca konumu belirtmek için kullanılan bir coğrafi terim değildir. 19. Yüzyıl dağılmakta olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu üzerinde var olan İngiliz çıkarlarının temelini oluşturan bir dönemdir. Ekonomik ve politik unsurların yanında İngiliz politikasını Bab-i Ali'ye karşı belirleyen Hristiyan tebaanın Türk hâkimiyeti altındaki durumu olmuştur. Kırım Savaşı sonrasında, Britanya Osmanlı'yla karşılıklı güven ve dostluğa dayanan yakın ilişkiler kurmuştu. Buna karşılık, imparatorluğunun sınırlarını gün geçtikçe Osmanlı'nın Orta Doğu bölgeleriyle genişletmekteydi.

Bu çalışma İngiliz İmparatorluğu'nun Orta Doğu'da koruyuculuktan, Osmanlı'nın varisi konumuna olan dönüşümünü analiz edecektir. Bu sürecin analizini 19.yy'dan başlayarak, Osmanlı'nın yıkılışının ardından kurulan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşuna kadar uzanan dönemde İngilizlerin Orta Doğu emperyalizmi oluşacaktır. Özellikle, İngilizlerin Aden Körfezi'ni, Kıbrıs'ı, Mısır'ı, Irak'ı, Filistin'i ve Ürdün'ü ele geçirmeye çalışmasının nedenleri araştırmanın temel argümanını kuvvetlendirecektir. Öte yandan, bu araştırma yalnızca Osmanlı-İngiliz ilişkilerini ya da Bab-i Ali-Arap ilişkileri üzerindeki İngiliz etkisini ele almayacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngiliz emperyalizmi, Orta Doğu, Mısır, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çöküşü

I. Introduction

From the beginning of the eighteenth century, particularly after the French Revolution, the time started to pass against the Ottoman Empire's hegemony. Even though the Ottomans tried to preserve certain traditions in the face of the conditions urged the institutions, it was time for the empire to revolt. During the process of the revolutions, inside the empire had to cope with the rebels and the expectant heirs outside the empire. Shortly before his death in 1774, Sultan Mustafa (r.1757-74) composed a quatrain describing the state of the Ottoman Empire:

*"The world is turning upside down, with no hope for better during our reign,
Wicked fate has delivered the state into the hands of despicable men,
Our bureaucrats are villains, who prowl through the streets of Istanbul,
We can do nothing but beg God for mercy"*¹

During the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, she was surrounded by economic and ideological coercions. One of the strongest powers was the British Empire which had different kind of aims inside the Sick Man of the Europe. Particularly the Middle East was vital in order to protect and redouble her sovereignty over the colonies.

The French Revolution brought the nationalistic currents along together which caused the independence revolts under the Ottoman Empire. However, there had been some rebels inside the Ottoman Empire during her age, the nineteenth century was exceptional. In the Balkan, Anatolian and Arab provinces, it is clear that these movements vigorously aimed to set new territories from Ottoman sovereignty and laid the foundations of new 'independent, sovereign states subordinate to no higher political authority'² Most of these movements were supported by the Great Powers of the period like Russia, France and Britain.

Until the First World War, the European powers avoided the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and she was survived by the reforms which were the tools for this remaining. As Kedourie points out 'the Ottoman Empire was to remain inviolate, and yet the Ottoman Empire was not able to defend itself.'³ Additionally, these were the terms in which the British diplomat Stratford Canning and almost everybody who followed him in England and Europe saw the Ottoman problem: 'the Ottoman Empire was a living perversity, an unnatural growth, and rotten to its core.'⁴ This can also be seen in the Ottoman army that 'had to be revised and orientate it to the Western army'⁵. Moreover, not only the army and navy, the capitulations were repressive on the Empire's economic conditions. Additionally, the Western liberal strategies were adopted in the Ottoman economy.

¹ Şükrü Hanioglu, *A brief history of the late Ottoman Empire*, The United States of America: Princeton University, 2008, p. 6.

² Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 55.

³ Elie Kedourie, *England & The Middle East: The Destruction Of The Ottoman Empire 1914-1921*, London: Bowers & Bowers Ltd., 1956, p.11.

⁴ Kedourie, *Ibid*, p.15.

⁵ For further information about the relations between the two empires: Ottoman and British during the revolutionary period in the 19th century, Edward Ingram, (ed.), *Anglo-Ottoman encounters in the age of revolution collected essays of Alan Cunningham: volume one*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1993, especially chapters II, III and IV.

II. The basics of the British interests and the origin of the expansion: The Aden Wharf (1839)

Basically, the British Empire's interest for the Middle East started in this fundamental century with this rivalry of the powerful European states. In response to the increasing ambitions of France and Russia on the domains of the Ottoman Empire, Britain found herself in this contention. Palmerston and Ponsonby's decision was to remain faithful to 'independence and integrity' of the Ottoman Empire which was to be alive until 1914 which was known as 'the most cogent and most durable doctrine about the Middle East that Europe has known in modern times.'⁶

During the 19th century, The British Empire had economic and social aims for the empire's own integrity and she became a part of the widest struggle between the European states for the Middle East. Russia and France were the two traditional rivals for the empire who also had plans for the Middle East regions. It is possible to argue that Britain had two strategies: 'to prevent Russian influence entering the Mediterranean and if possible to avoid Russian control over the Black Sea straits and to keep French influence out of Egypt and away from the southern of the two overland routes.'⁷ Additionally, the British Empire foreign policy based on two significance territories for the integrity of the Empire: India and Persia. India was vital for the Empire both economically and socially. In order to protect the lands, reaching the Persian Gulf had the initiative importance. Although, Germany was not involved in the struggle for the Middle East, she tried to expand her territories and to strengthen her economy. And even Bismarck eventually was brought to realise the value of the colonies for securing (in his words) 'new markets for German industry, the expansion of trade, a new field for German activity, civilisation and capital.'⁸

However, from British point view, the reasons for taking apart in the Middle East was clear, the social conditions were not simply acquirable. There had been intense traditional links between the Middle Eastern nations and Ottoman Empire from history like religion, Islam. Different from other regions of her colonies, Middle East was exceptional. Furthermore, the reforms and the revolutions were too remote for the orientation of the whole of the Ottoman Empire because of this discrepancy. Although, there had been encouragement in order to progress the Western reforms inside the Ottoman Empire like Stratford Canning to the Porte, the reality seemed different to the policymakers. As Kedourie argues, 'even if they had not been so, they were still bound to produce disturbances; if only for the reason that they were advocated by Christians and foreigners whose primary aim was to safeguard the interests of their countries, and who were, therefore, always suspect of enmity towards Islam and the Ottoman Empire.'⁹

In the 19th century, the adventure of British imperialism in the Middle East started with the rule of Aden Wharf in 1839. The Aden Wharf had been in a strategic location which linked the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. This geography meant more than a colonial region for the British Empire. Aden, 'the eye of the Yemen', henceforward had an important role to play as South Arabia's eye upon this now more interesting outer world.¹⁰ The acquirement of the Aden

⁶ Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, p. 10.

⁷ Elizabeth Monroe, *British Interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, issued under the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London: University of Oxford, 1958, p. 2.

⁸ Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share A Short History of British Imperialism 1850-2004 Fourth Edition*, London: Pearson Education Limited, 2004, p. 84.

⁹ Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, p. 19.

¹⁰ Robert J. Gavin, *Aden Under The British Rule, 1839-1967*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1975, p. 7.

Wharf was the first step for the empire in order to achieve her aims. Although under the Ottoman rule, Aden maintained the stability for a while, the internal struggle especially for the trade brought the chaos together to the region. Additionally, under the days' circumstances, there had been some oppositions and suspicions for the safeguard of the British Empire to the Aden Wharf. However, in August 1838, 'Kharrack and Aden would make us very strong in those parts and would ere long become important centres of radiation for our commerce' wrote Palmerston and Hobhouse.¹¹

III. The expansion of the British Empire in the Middle East

The chain circles started to link with the first step by the domain of the Aden Wharf. This dominance was the first inherit from the Ottoman heritage in the Middle East while she was remaining still. Additionally, the vital circle in the Mediterranean Sea was the island Cyprus whose region was a kind of control panel in the British Empire's way in order to reach the Middle East. After the Ottoman-Russian War, sultan Abdülhamit was under pressure to sign the Ayastefanos which meant the end for the Ottoman Empire.

"When Russia and Turkey signed a peace treaty at San Stefano in March 1878, Britain browbeat Russia to revise it (at the congress of Berlin) in a way which still guaranteed Ottoman Control of Straits. At the same time, she took Cyprus for herself as a kind of insurance. It was not the first time Britain had acted as Turkey's guardian angel, nor would it be the last".¹²

It comes clear that Porter's argument is logical since the alliance was for the British Middle Eastern aims and the sultan confirmed the British Empire as a guardian angel in consideration of the British rule in Cyprus in the treaty in 4 June 1878¹³. The insurance meant a territorial defence in addition to the guardian of the colonies for the British Empire. Thus, Disraeli was convinced that in Cyprus lay the key to Western Asia and the passage to India¹⁴. After this insurance for herself in order to achieve upwards of the territories, the Ottoman Empire regions in the Middle East would made the whole circle.

However, the first adventure started with the Aden Wharf and was completed with Cyprus; the Empire's first essence achievement was the occupation of Egypt in 1882.

i. The British occupation of Egypt (1882)

The struggle for the Middle East between the European States, particularly between France and Britain continued until the late nineteenth century. Egypt was the first witness for this rivalry. However, Napoleon invaded the territory for a short period (1798-1802), the Ottoman Empire defended Egypt with the Muhammad Ali's self-governance until the British Empire's dominance. 'Having secured his domestic front with the massacre of the Mamluks,' It is now apparent that 'Muhammed Ali, in the spirit of Napoleon and with the aid of European know-how and expertise, embarked on his long, arduous, and ambitious program of

¹¹ Gavin, *Aden Under the British Rule*, p.33.

¹² Porter, *The Lion's Share*, p.95.

¹³ Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Imperial Majesty of the Sultan, being mutually animated with the sincere desire of extending and strengthening the relations of friendship happily existing between their two Empires, have resolved upon the conclusion of a Convention of Defence Alliance with the object of securing for the future the territories in Asia of His Imperial Majesty of Sultan. Murat M. Hakki, *The Cyprus Issue: A Documentary History 1878-2006*, London: I&B Tauris & Co Ltd., 2007, p.3.

¹⁴ Andrew Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, (The United States of America: Praeger, 2000, p. 20.

modernization.¹⁵ As an Ottoman governor, he desired to create a moderated and westernized Egypt which would be different from a Middle Eastern country. Due to disruption of the economic and social conditions of the country with the Muhammad Ali's governance, eventually Britain became dominance in Egypt in 1882.

At this juncture, the question was essential to ask: While the British Empire was supporting the governance of Mohammed Ali in order to control over Egypt, Why did she occupy the territory? Was it a real occupation or volunteer pact between the British and Ottoman Empire? The answers were concealed in the British foreign policy towards the Middle East and the general conditions of the Ottoman Empire. Under the days' circumstances, The Ottoman Empire preferred to strengthen the relations between the British Empire in contrast to the other Great Powers. Sultan Abdülhamit II offered the British diplomats to rule Egypt two times by calling the policy maker Lord Dufferin. Karsh et. al explain the reasons for Abdülhamit's act that 'it was not a question of lost prestige or a mere strategic setback; it was a matter of life and death, and he knew that Britain was the only power capable of helping him stop the chain reaction caused by Urabi's nationalist surge.'¹⁶ Basically, the British interests in Egypt based on the economic reasons which meant; the Suez Canal. In reference to B. Porter's categorization¹⁷ for the British reasons to invade Egypt supported that, not only the economic reasons also the Ottoman Empire's situation was the main reason for the Empire's policy. While the reasons for the occupation based on these foreign policies, the Liberals views were summarized by Lord Milner inside Egypt as an invasion strategy:

*'We could not let you continue in the old paths because they were a proved failure. Had you had the capacity and the character to keep things straight, there would have been no insolvency, no revolution, no necessity for our interference. But, on the other hand, we English don't want to stay in your country forever.'*¹⁸

In addition to this promise, in a circular to the Great Powers on January 3, 1883, Granville promised that Britain would withdraw from Egypt 'as soon as the state of the country, and the organization of proper means for the maintenance of the Khedive's authority, will admit it.'¹⁹ According to Karsh et. al this promise was to be repeated sixty-six times between 1882 and 1922, until Egypt became an independent state.²⁰

The British rule in Egypt caused some after effects outside Egypt, particularly on the Egyptian nationalists and inside the British Empire. While she was gaining ground in the Middle East by this second step, she had some retreats inside and some threats outside the Empire. In occupying Egypt, Britain abandoned the policy by which she had relied fundamentally on sea power with occasional land operations held in reserve and her

¹⁵ Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh, *Empires Of The Sand The Struggle For Mastery In The Middle East 1789-1923*, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 2001, p. 28.

¹⁶ Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 62.

¹⁷ In the first place, Britain would have not been allowed by other European powers to make Turkey a protectorate; secondly the internal threat to British interests; thirdly, although Turkey still had a prominent place in British calculations of their foreign strategy right into the 1890s, by the 1880s Egypt was more important: Britain's commerce with her bigger, and expanding; her capital investment there larger; and her strategic priorities-as Disraeli's 1875 coup emphasised- very firmly centred now on the Suez Canal. Porter, *The Lion's Share*, p. 99.

¹⁸ Kedourie, *England & The Middle East*, p. 25.

¹⁹ Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 65-66.

²⁰ Karsh and Karsh, *Ibid*, p. 65-66.

occupation of Egypt became 'a target' for whatever European power sought to do her damage.²¹

IV. The basics of the new British policies towards the Middle East in the long decade 20th century

At the beginning of the 20th for the British Empire's strategies for the Middle East acquired a different character. Particularly, the oil in the Middle Eastern regions had the primacy significance. Additionally, the moguls²² and mandarins²³ had influences on this foreign policy and economic strategies of the British Empire towards the Middle East. However, the rivalry for the Middle Eastern prosperity existed between the Great Powers, Britain challenged with this existence in the region inside and outside the Empire. Concerned to maintain British supremacy in an area considered vital to the defence of India and to communications with the Eastern Empire in general, Britain could uphold this interest by upholding two others of long standing: her commercial and political dominance in the region.²⁴ Moreover, in order to define this dynamics, the reasons and the events were essential.

V. The British Empire inside the Ottoman Empire

Prior to the Great War period, while the British Empire was establishing particularly in Egypt, generally in the Middle East, she became more interested in the Turkish politics inside the Ottoman Empire. In respect of the analysis of Gallagher and Robinson²⁵ the British Empire attended to two matters. The first set concerns the internal influences underlying British policy towards overseas expansion and the second set of problems for British informal empire are external ones.²⁶ That meant for the British Empire: to achieve the balance between the local and external empire dynamics which could be possible inside the Ottoman Empire. Thus, she preferred to proceed inside the Ottoman Empire by being as a counsel in order to prosper in the Middle East. Moreover, what is clear from examining the British government's attitude towards all these enterprises, including banking²⁷, is that its policy in the region was not an economic policy as such: commerce served definite political ends.²⁸ However, this alliance was interrupted by the other territorial powers whose interests were similar with the British Empire.

i. The Young Turks and the British Empire

During the increasing pressure of the nationalistic movements inside the Ottoman Empire, The Young Turks intended to prevent the disintegration and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire by the reforms. The reforms and the movement were most supported by the British Empire. At the same time, the reasons for this support based on the economic reasons and

²¹ Monroe, *British Interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 4.

²² Moguls were not just oil magnates but big business interests, whether bankers, shippers or traders. Marian Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins Oil Imperialism and the Middle East in British Foreign Policy, 1900-1940*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1993, Introduction.

²³ The mandarins were Britain's government representatives, whether politicians, civil servants or diplomats (occasionally serving officers), and the contacts between two groups both moulded and gave effect to official policy. Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins*, Introduction.

²⁴ Marian Kent 'Great Britain and The End of The Ottoman Empire 1900-1923' in Marian Kent, *The Great Powers and The End of The Ottoman Empire*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1984, p.172.

²⁵ For further information of the analysis Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins Oil Imperialism*, notes 1, p. 28.

²⁶ Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins Oil Imperialism*, p. 9-10.

²⁷ For further information about the relations between the National Bank of Turkey and the British foreign policy, Marian Kent, 'Agent of Empire? The National Bank of Turkey and British Foreign Policy', *The Historical Journal*, June 1975, 18 (2), p. 367-389.

²⁸ Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins Oil Imperialism*, p.16.

eliminate the other Great Powers which had the similar ambitions about the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, both the Board of Trade and the Admiralty Director of Naval Intelligence drew up memoranda on trade and shipping in the Persian Gulf, and in February 1908 the Foreign Office set out its traditional concerns in a 'Memorandum respecting British interests in the Persian Gulf'.²⁹ Monroe points out that 'a wide welcome was given to the seizure of power in 1908 by a Turkish nationalist movement' which 'centred on the younger army officers; but in the previous year the Anglo-Russian Entente concluded', and it is clear that The Young Turks should ally with Germany rather than approach to Britain for their leadership.³⁰ The enthusiasm for the Germany and inconvenient policies in contrast to the salvation of the empire speeded the collapse. After the Balkan wars and the occupation of Libya by Italy, unconsciously or not, the situation created the new rivalry Ottoman territories between Germany, Russia and the British Empire. Additionally, this contest became one of the main reasons for the Great War in 1914.

ii. *The Wartime Promises, The Arab Revolt and the Sykes-Picot Agreement (16 May 1916)*

Although the Entente Powers effectively offered the Ottoman Empire a defence pact-and at no price at all³¹ which meant the survivability of the empire by the neutrality, she took the possession of German 'Goeben' and 'Breslau' warships which caused the participation in the Great War with the alliance with Germany. While the Ottoman adherence to the Great War was a vigorous support for the Central Powers, the weakness of the country became her as a target in the Entente powers' strategies. The British policymakers, notably First Lord of the Admiralty Churchill and Secretary of War Kitchener, 'suggested throwing the Central Powers off balance by striking at their Achilles' heel-'The Sick Man of Europe.'³² One of the courses of the strategies towards the Ottoman Empire was the disruption inside the Empire by using the nationalistic and independence rebellions.

Besides, with the collaboration of French and British powers, The Sykes-Picot Agreement (16 May 1916) proved the sharing of the regions for the Middle East. To the French, the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 'promised to recognize a French zone in Syria and a wider sphere of French influence, while to the international Zionist agencies, Britain promised a National Home in Palestine by the Balfour Declaration of 1917.'³³ While the promises of the British Empire existing towards his alliance France with Sykes-Picot over Syria and Lebanon, she promised the Arabs independence under British rule, the liberal reforms for India and the self-governance for Egypt. Additionally, by the end of the war the Middle East 'was a tangle of promises which Britain had made to the Arabs, to the Jews, to France and to herself.'³⁴

Still, the Ottoman Empire was alive whose territories in the Middle East were essential. In conjunction with the Entente's failure pressure in Gallipoli and the sustainability of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Middle Eastern policies became vital in order to win a victory. The Sharif of Mecca had first expressed in his initial letter, dated July 14, 1915, about 'the independence of the Arab countries', but it was difficult to be specific with him about the Levant while negotiations were in progress with the French.³⁵ Awaking the Arab nationality

²⁹ Kent, *Ibid*, p.12.

³⁰ Monroe, *British Interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, p.5.

³¹ Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 127.

³² Karsh and Karsh, *Ibid*, p. 142.

³³ Monroe, *British Interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East*, p. 6.

³⁴ Porter, *The Lion's Share*, p. 237.

³⁵ Elizabeth Monroe *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*, London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1981, p. 31.

and merging the hostile in Arab tribes which had been in chaos for long decades were the main missions for the British Empire in order to manage them against the Ottoman Empire. However, there had not been a real Arab nationality and possibility for the establishment of an independent Arab Empire; the Arabs were convinced of the virtual situation for the future.

*'... to make a new nation, to restore a lost influence, to give twenty millions of Semites the foundation on which to build an inspired dream-palace,' 'to extrude the Turk from all Arabic-speaking lands in Asia,' 'to assert the Arabic-speaking peoples' desire or desert of freedom and self-government'*³⁶

E. T. Lawrence wrote above quotation as his memories in his book *'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'*.³⁷ As a British military responsible for the encouragement of the Arab nations against the Ottoman rule, he contributed his mission to the British purposes in the Middle East between 1916 and 1918.

iii. The definition of the death of 'the Sick Man' in the Middle East for the British Empire

At the end of the Great War, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire meant the new territories for the Entente Powers, particularly for the British Empire to rule. Whilst the peace conditions were settling down, the strategies towards the Middle East shifted to the diplomacy. The British officials whose job was 'to plan for the Middle East with these new uncertainties in mind met in an inter-departmental committee under the chairmanship of Curzon.'³⁸

During the peace meetings, particularly for the Middle Eastern territories were the creation of the new regions under the French and British rule. The Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918 was 'a compromise between the British desire to overturn the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the French desire to keep it in place.'³⁹ In British point of view, the reasons to undo the agreement were the doubts about the French rule over the Middle East.

The solution and peace conditions were clear for The British Empire not to face the Ottoman's destiny in the future because of the increasing demands and independence rebellions in the future: self-governed mandatory regimes. Already in November, 1918, the British and French governments 'proclaimed their goal in the liberated Arab world when they declared their intention of setting up national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the indigenous populations: the French in Syria and Lebanon, the British in Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan.'⁴⁰

VI. The general juncture of the relations between The Republic of Turkey and the British Empire towards the Middle East in 1923

With the Turkish revolutionist movement under the leadership Mustafa Kemal and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey opened a new era for the relations. The Lausanne Agreement (1923) was the declaration of the independent Turkish Republic whose negotiators were Lord Curzon and General İsmet Pasha. 'Having retained his influential position in the new cabinet owing to a last-minute collusion with Bonar Law', Karsh et. al argues that 'Curzon was bent on making Lausanne the climax of his career, if not the stepping stone to the

³⁶ Kedourie, *England & The Middle East*, p. 96.

³⁷ For further information about his memories, Thomas E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom A Triumph*, London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1979.

³⁸ Monroe, *Britain's Moment*, p. 52. For further information about the Curzon's Middle Eastern policy: John Fisher, *Curzon and British imperialism in the Middle East 1916-1919*, New York: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999

³⁹ Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 262.

⁴⁰ John Troutbeck, 'Britain in the Middle East', *Current History*, 30:178 (1956: June), pp. 321-326, p.323-4.

premiership, by asserting British influence and prestige in the Middle East at Turkey's expense.⁴¹

Although the situation of Musul between Turkey and Britain remained as a problem until 1926, the diplomacy established the peaceful relations. Further, the protection of the territory of the new Republic was essential for the new policy makers of Turkey. Thus, the new Republic took the consideration of the establishment of economic and social reforms rather than attending to the Middle Eastern policies.

Conclusion

The Tsar Nicholas told the British ambassador (Sir George Hamilton Seymour) of his fear that the fall of the Ottoman Empire was a foregone conclusion and that Britain and Russia should therefore reach a general understanding about what was to be done "when the Bear dies" or, more important, about "what shall not to be done upon that event taking place:

"We have on our hands a sick man-a very sick man,"⁴²

While the Tsar of Russia was expressing these best known words in 1853, in the run up to the Crimean War, the actuality of the Ottoman Empire's collapse noticed one decade before: in the 18th century. Further, the Western assistance with the economic and social reforms were like emulsions in order to survive the Sick Man for their interest inside the Empire.

Basically, The British Empire was interested in the Middle Eastern regions inside the Ottoman Empire whose territories were essential to expand the Empire both economically and military. Whilst, the reforms were not able to meet the British interests, the mission was clear for the British Empire: to take action in the Middle East. At the same time, this meant, to win the victory for her between the other European states which had the same interests in the same regions.

The first step was the Aden Wharf which also brought the responsibility for the Ottoman authority for Britain together. During the 19th century, the struggle for the Ottoman was vital for the British Empire as like a guardian angel. In 1878 the rule in Cyprus became an eye in the Mediterranean Sea over the Middle East, prior to the occupation Egypt in 1882. After the local strategies inside the Egypt by Mohammed Ali governance, Egypt supplies the main heritage for the British Empire in the Middle East from the Ottoman Empire, especially after the Great War.

The long decade 20th century transformed the British policies into the particularly oil-based, generally oil based strategies. On the other hand, while the Young Turk governance banished the British-Turkish relations, the wartime promises, secret diplomacy (the Sykes-Picot Agreement) ,the intern politics inside the Middle East (the Arab Revolt) against the Ottomans eased the transaction of the Middle East to the British Empire during the Great War.

After the war Britain's policy towards the defeated Ottoman Empire was based on the same fundamental precept as before the war: 'to ensure Britain's strategic communications with her Empire in the East: responsibility, expense and bother for two mandates, Iraq and Palestine (and, as it turned out, a third-Transjordan-created in 1921), in addition, to control of Cyprus, Egypt and Aden.'⁴³ 'It so happened that in a war in which Britain, just much as Turkey', Kent finally states, 'was fighting for its survival Britain won and, in exacting the

⁴¹ Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 339.

⁴² Karsh and Karsh, *Empires of the Sand*, p. 71-72.

⁴³ Kent, 'Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire' in Kent, *the Great Powers*, p. 189.

traditional compensation of a victor as well as rewards for her allies, helped destroy the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴

Finally, despite Mosul remained as a problem until 1926, these victories after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire completed the transform of the guardian angel to the heir of the Middle East: the British Empire. That meant a new life for both aspects: the Middle East and the British Empire.

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⁴⁴ Kent, *Ibid*, p. 195.