

The Issue of Ionian Neutrality in Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1821–1830

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During the era of the Greek Revolution, the issue of Ionian neutrality often affected the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations. This neutrality was designed to isolate the Ionian Islands from the violent insurrection occurring in Greece, and its strict enforcement displeased the Porte — the Turkish government — whenever British policy in the Greek Revolution did not suit Ottoman interests. As a result, the British government failed to resolve the hostilities in Greece by diplomatic means, while its Levantine interests were endangered since the Porte rejected all efforts by the Foreign Office to mediate on its behalf in the Russo-Ottoman crisis of 1821–1824. Indeed, the issue of Ionian neutrality became such an important feature of Anglo-Ottoman relations that it was re-proclaimed in April 1824. Nevertheless, the Porte still refused to compromise on the issue of Hellenic independence, and the British government felt that this intransigent attitude would inevitably lead to a Russo-Ottoman war over the Greek Revolution. In order to avoid such a conflict, the Foreign Office managed to contain Russian interest in the Hellenic cause with two diplomatic accords, which pledged both signatories to resolve this nationalist struggle by peaceful means, while the British government simultaneously attempted to persuade the Porte to terminate its hostilities in Greece. In the light of Ottoman displeasure with the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality, this latter attempt failed, and Anglo-Ottoman relations were subsequently suspended after the Turkish and Egyptian navies were unexpectedly destroyed by the combined fleets of the British, French, and Russian governments at Navarino in October 1827. While this naval action assured the political independence of Greece, it also led to a Russo-Ottoman war over a non-Hellenic matter, and the Foreign Office now feared that the Greek Revolution, as well as several other issues of the Eastern Question, would be settled on Russian terms exclusively. At the same time, Ionian neutrality was enforced even more strictly, since the destruction of the Turkish forces at Navarino encouraged an invasion of Albania by the Greek army. Fortunately for the British government, Anglo-Ottoman relations at the Ionian level were still cordial, and this cordiality facilitated the restoration of diplomatic rela-

tions between London and Constantinople. Worried by the advance of the Russian army in the Balkans, the Porte accepted a *de facto* armistice to the hostilities in Greece, and Ionian neutrality was quietly rescinded in June 1830, when the Greek Revolution was nearly at an end.

1. The Ionian Islands under British administration

Even though they constituted an independent republic, the Ionian Islands were administered by Great Britain along colonial lines. In accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Paris for November 1815, the British government was entrusted with the military protection of the Ionian Islands, and these islands were transformed during 1817 into a model colony through a series of both political and socio-economic reforms by their first Lord High Commissioner, Sir *Thomas Maitland*¹). The political writ of this British official was absolute, and *Maitland* — who was also the Governor-General of Malta — had no qualms about the arbitrary manner in which he ruled these islands²). Since they had ruled these islands as an independent republic during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the members of the Ionian aristocracy resented the loss of their political power, and their dislike of the British administration of their homeland increased their sentiments of Greek nationalism. Encouraged by the cultural renaissance of Hellenic antiquity during the eighteenth century, native inhabitants of such Greek-speaking regions under foreign domination as the Ionian Islands and the Peloponnese believed that a free Hellenic state could be created, even if

Abbreviations

Admiralty Office

Adm. 1 (Mediterranean)

Colonial Office

C.O. 136 (Ionian Islands)

War Office

W.O. 1 (Letters)

W.O. 80 (Secret Papers)

Foreign Office

F.O. 32 (Greece)

F.O. 78 (Ottoman Empire)

F.O. 92 (European Treaties)

F.O. 95 (Miscellaneous)

F.O. 286 (Greece)

F.O. 352 (Stratford Canning Papers)

F.O. 421 (Secret Papers)

¹) C.O. 136/7: *Maitland* to the Primary Council, 3 Feb. 1817; C.O. 136/186: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 18 June 1817; and C.O. 136/208: *Maitland* to the Legislative Assembly, 5 May 1817. Cf. C. Willis Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations of Sir Thomas Maitland*. London: Frank Cass, 1939, pp. 179—249.

²) C.O. 136/14: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, Private and Confidential, 16 Feb. 1820.

it was only nominally independent like the Ionian republic³). Many Ionian aristocrats anticipated the creation of such a state in Greece, and they accordingly joined the *Philiki Etairia*, a secret society of Greek nationalists who were determined to liberate the Hellenic race from Ottoman dominance⁴). Ionian membership in this secret society was encouraged by the rumour that its leadership had been assumed by Count *John Capodistria*, an aristocratic expatriate from Corfu, who was the junior Foreign Minister of the Russian government. Although *Capodistria* had no formal connexion with the *Philiki Etairia*, his visit to Corfu in 1819 only increased the popularity of this misconception, especially since he was rather critical of the British administration of his homeland⁵). This criticism also increased the distrust of the British authorities in Corfu, who suspected that this prominent expatriate intended to undermine their administration with an open rebellion of the native populace⁶). Indeed, the subsequent participation of Ionian volunteers in the initial hostilities of the Greek Revolution in the Peloponnese during April 1821 convinced these British authorities that an Ionian rebellion was imminent⁷). In the light of Anglo-Ottoman relations, Sir *Frederick Adam* — the acting Lord High Commissioner — declared the official neutrality of the Ionian republic on 7 June 1821, and he stated that he would revoke the diplomatic rights of all Ionian volunteers captured by the Turkish army⁸). While this neutrality was strictly enforced against all belligerent states, the British authorities in Corfu could not realistically punish any local volunteers fighting in Greece, and such limitations in the overall nature of Ionian neutrality became a significant point of contention in Anglo-Ottoman relations for the duration of the Greek Revolution.

³) Cf. Catherine Koumariou, *The Contribution of the Intelligentsia towards the Greek Independence Movement, 1798—1821*. In: *The Struggle for Greek Independence*. Ed. by Richard Clogg. London: Macmillan, 1973, pp. 73—80.

⁴) Cf. Kōstas Kairophyllas, *Hē Zakynthos kai Hē Hellēnikē Epanastasis*. Corfu: Loisiou, 1938, p. 22.

⁵) Cf. Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821—1833*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973, p. 47; Panagiōtis Chiōtis, *Historia tou Ioniou Kratous apo Systaseōs autou mechris Enōseōs (etē 1815—1864)*. 2 vols, Zante: By the Author, 1874—1877, I, pp. 356—367; and C. M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 199—205.

⁶) C.O. 136/429: *Maitland to A'Court*, 19 Apr. 1820; C.O. 136/464: *Nicholas Zen (Tzen) to Petros Zen*, 28 June 1820; and F.O. 78/103: *Meyer to Hankey*, 11 Dec. 1820.

⁷) C.O. 78/98: *Strangford to Castlereagh*, 25 May 1821. Cf. P. Chiōtis, *Historia I*, pp. 349—363.

⁸) C.O. 136/1190: *Adam to Green*, 9 Apr. 1821; and C.O. 136/1085: *Proclamation*, 7 June 1821.

2. Ionian Neutrality and Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1821

In the light of its various interests in both the Levant and India, the British government feared that a Russo-Ottoman war might occur over the issue of the Greek Revolution. Although it was later confined to Greece, the Greek Revolution had been precipitated on 5 March 1821, when General *Alexander Ypsilantis* — a Greek officer serving in the Russian army as an aide-de-camp to Tsar *Alexander I* — led the forces of the *Philiki Etairia* from the Russian province of Bessarabia into the Ottoman territory of the Danubian Principalities, where his forces were soon defeated by the Ottoman army. While this latter force suppressed the Greek rebellion, its prolonged presence in the Danubian Principalities — where a Roumanian rebellion was also in progress — angered the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, Baron *Stroganov*, and he demanded its evacuation in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest of May 1812, which specified that this semi-autonomous region would not be occupied by an armed force. In addition, *Stroganov* demanded that the Porte compensate the Hellenic community of Constantinople for all the damages of property which it suffered during April and May 1821, when a wave of anti-Christian rioting followed the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in the Peloponnese⁹). The harsh manner in which these demands were made led to the suspension of diplomatic relations between Constantinople and St. Petersburg in July 1821, and the British government now acted before the Levantine *status quo* was destroyed by a Russo-Ottoman war. *Viscount Castlereagh*, the Foreign Secretary, felt that the Eastern Question could not be adjusted simply by replacing the Ottoman Empire with an Hellenic state in Greece, and he also felt that the resolution of this matter with a Russo-Ottoman war could threaten the various interests of the British government in both the Levant and India¹⁰). While these latter fears were frequently heard from such outposts of the British Empire as Corfu and Bombay, this theme was now featured in the Liberal press of London. The *Morning Herald* stated that both the Ionian Islands and India would be seriously threatened by Russian intervention in the Greek Revolution, while the *Times* echoed the popular sentiment that the Russian government would soon control the Mediterranean Sea if its armed forces ever reached the Dardanelle Straits¹¹). Even though the Conservative newspapers of London were not alarmed, the Tory Party joined the Whig Party in unearthing their

⁹) F.O. 78/98: *Strangford to Castlereagh*, 10 Mar. 1821.

¹⁰) C.O. 136/438: *Strangford to Maitland*, Private, 16 Mar. 1821.

¹¹) Cf. C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*. 2 vols, London: G. Bell, 1931—1934, II, p. 349, 361, 375f.; and John Howes Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950, pp. 9—61.

traditional Russophobia, which had been rather dormant since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and *Castlereagh* subsequently instructed the British ambassador in Constantinople, *Viscount Strangford*, to ease the current diplomatic tensions between the Russian and Ottoman governments by persuading Baron *Stroganov* that the Greek Revolution was a domestic matter pertaining solely to the Porte¹²).

Although he was alarmed about the possibility of war, *Strangford* believed that Anglo-Ottoman relations could be enhanced by the Russo-Ottoman crisis¹³). The British ambassador led the Porte to believe that the harshness of the Russian demands concerning the Danubian Principalities originated with Count *John Capodistria*, even though he was well-aware that this current diplomatic crisis had harshly been embellished by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, and he encouraged the Ottoman government to ignore all such demands by misleading it to believe that this Corfiote expatriate had actually instigated the Greek Revolution¹⁴). The Porte was easily convinced on this latter point, especially since several Ionian expatriates in the consular service of the Russian government were active participants in the hostilities taking place in the Peloponnese¹⁵). Because the British ambassador did not dispell the inaccurate rumours which connected *Capodistria* with the Hellenic cause for political freedom, Anglo-Russian relations suffered accordingly when Count *Nesselrode*, the senior Foreign Minister in St. Petersburg, complained about these diplomatic tactics. By contrast, *Strangford* was not at all troubled by this complaint¹⁶), and he instead reinforced his pro-Turkish outlook by justifying the Ottoman suppression of the Greek Revolution. The British ambassador described this suppression as an Ottoman effort to differentiate civilians from insurgents in Greece, and he added that these latter individuals were being punished solely for their rebellious conduct, rather than for their religious beliefs¹⁷). *Strangford* also justified the recent executions of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, *Gregory V*, and his bishops, because he mistakenly supposed that all these Greek prelates had been members of the

¹²) F.O. 78/98: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 24 Mar. 1821; and F.O. 78/97: *Castlereagh* to *Strangford*, 13 July 1821.

¹³) C.O. 136/20: *Adam* to *Strangford*, 5 Aug. 1821; and F.O. 78/100: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 6 Aug. 1821.

¹⁴) F.O. 78/98: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 24 Mar. 1821; and F.O. 78/100: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, Confidential, 6. Aug. 1821.

¹⁵) C.O. 136/438: *Strangford* to *Maitland*, Private and Confidential, 31 Mar. 1821; and F.O. 78/98: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 31 Mar. 1821.

¹⁶) F.O. 78/97: *Castlereagh* to *Strangford*, 5 Aug. 1821. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence*. Cambridge: University Press, 1930, pp. 17—22.

¹⁷) F.O. 78/100: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 10 Aug. 1821.

Philiki Etairia, and he explained that the Turkish plundering of Greek churches in Constantinople had been a sporadic event, rather than a deliberate act. Overall, the British ambassador felt that the Russian government could not realistically accuse the Porte of the systematic repression of its Hellenic subjects, especially because he equated all this sectarian violence with the anti-Catholicism which had characterized London society during the 1780s¹⁸). Finally, he claimed that the diplomatic crisis surrounding the events of the Greek Revolution could only be a Russian scheme to attract European sympathy for the Hellenic cause. This latter claim gained additional credibility after the Porte had tentatively accepted an Anglo-Austrian suggestion that an amnesty should be extended to all Greek insurgents¹⁹). Oddly enough, all this diplomatic support which the highly-Turcophil ambassador expressed did not improve the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, which were spoiled suddenly by the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality.

In accordance with strict neutrality, Sir *Frederick Adam* had requested the immediate release of all Ionian sailors from the Ottoman navy. Since all the Greek sailors in its naval forces had already deserted, the Porte was greatly angered by this request because its Ionian personnel were the only qualified seamen remaining in its navy, and their removal would bring all naval activities to a standstill²⁰). Because several of its naval fleets were already crippled by such desertions, the Porte angrily replied that all these Ionian sailors had eagerly joined the Ottoman navy for an enlistment bonus, and it added that these particular seamen constituted a mere minority of recruits in comparison with the 8,000 Ionian volunteers currently serving in the Hellenic forces. The Sultan and his ministers were well-informed about these latter volunteers, especially since they received transcripts of the Ionian gazette in translation, and their overall fear that the Greek Revolution might result in a war with Russia led them to complain that Ionian neutrality was not being strictly enforced on an impartial basis²¹). Confronted with this statement, *Strangford* recommended that *Adam* withdraw his request, because such a traditional ally as the Porte was entitled to diplomatic consideration, and *Adam* soon complied as similar advice had been received from Sir *Thomas Maitland*, who was on furlough in London, where he complained that the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality had been misrepresented in Constantinople by the British ambassador²²).

¹⁸) F.O. 78/99: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 23 July 1821.

¹⁹) F.O. 78/100: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 16 and 18. Aug. 1821.

²⁰) F.O. 78/103: *Meyer* to *Adam*, 21 and 30 June 1821, and *Meyer* to *Castlereagh*, 16 July 1821.

²¹) C.O. 136/438: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 16 July 1821.

²²) F.O. 78/103: *Adam* to *Meyer*, 1 July 1821; and C.O. 136/1085: *Adam* to *Strangford*, Private and Confidential, 5 Aug. 1821.

To antagonize the Porte as little as possible, *Strangford* had omitted certain details about Ionian neutrality²³). The appearance of the Ottoman fleet in Ionian waters had incited a riot of the peasantry on Zante in October 1821, and the Lord High Commissioner subsequently declared that Ionian neutrality would be enforced strictly against all belligerent forces, including the Ottoman navy. This statement was corroborated in London, where *Maitland* added that the recent confirmation of strict neutrality by the Crown prevented him from making any exceptions for even the Ottoman navy²⁴). Since he had not expected the Porte to understand this sudden change in British policy, *Strangford* deliberately withheld this news, especially because he feared that it would affect the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations²⁵). This decision was very foolish since the inability of the British authorities in Corfu to provide the Ottoman forces with munitions obliged the Porte to confiscate such items as gunpowder from all the British registered vessels docked at Constantinople, while its failure to defeat the Greek insurgents had invariably led to further complaints about Ionian neutrality²⁶). Afraid to antagonize the Porte, the British ambassador tacitly accepted these new complaints, and he attempted to repair Anglo-Ottoman relations by despatching the official correspondence of the Porte aboard a British vessel. Though he subsequently evaded all punishment for this unwise act, *Strangford* was reminded about the unofficial neutrality of his own government, which *Castlereagh* considered to be even more important than Ionian neutrality²⁷).

Worried about the Levantine interests of his government, *Castlereagh* focussed his attention on the latest crises in the Eastern Question. Because he was not directly concerned with the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality, the Foreign Secretary stated that the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations was derived from the basic informality of British neutrality, and he insisted that such diplomatic cordiality would enable him to avert a Russo-Ottoman war over the Greek Revolution²⁸). During the European conference of Hanover in October 1821, both *Castlereagh* and the Austrian chancellor, Prince *Metternich*, convinced Tsar *Alexander I* that a Russian offensive in support of the Greek insurgents was incompatible with the

²³) C.O. 136/20: *Adam* to *Strangford*, 5 Aug. 1821; and F.O. 78/100: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 18. Aug. 1821.

²⁴) C.O. 136/1102: *Maitland* to Captain *Bey*, 9 Oct. 1821; and C.O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *Goulburn*, 25 Oct. 1821.

²⁵) C.O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 16 Oct. 1821.

²⁶) C.O. 136/1102: *Maitland* to *Ismail Pasha*, 9 Oct. 1821; F.O. 78/103: *Adam* to *Meyer*, 9 July 1821; and F.O. 78/110: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 3 Sept. 1821.

²⁷) F.O. 78/101: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 10 Oct. 1821.

²⁸) F.O. 78/97: *Castlereagh* to *Strangford*, Most Secret and Confidential, 5 Aug. and 20 Nov. 1821.

principles of the Holy Alliance, which had been formed in 1815 by the Tsar — along with the Austrian and Prussian governments — to resist the spread of revolutionary movements. Further, the Foreign Secretary promised that *Strangford* would work with the Austrian internuncio in Constantinople to persuade the Porte that it should evacuate its armed forces from the Danubian Principalities, as well as restore all the damage done to the Greek Orthodox churches of Constantinople²⁹). Although the Porte was not expected to fulfil these diplomatic obligations immediately, *Castlereagh* expected that the Russo-Ottoman crisis would be defused, especially since most critics did not expect the Greek Revolution to succeed, and he accordingly exaggerated the importance of British neutrality at the expense of the strict nature of Ionian neutrality³⁰). *Castlereagh* hoped that the Russo-Ottoman crisis would be resolved through the normal course of Anglo-Ottoman relations, and he instructed the British ambassador in Constantinople about his plans for this project.

With his pro-Turkish sentiments, *Strangford* constantly supported the foreign policy of the Porte. The British ambassador regarded the Russo-Ottoman crisis as another opportunity to improve Anglo-Ottoman relations, and he advised the Foreign Office to refrain from coercing the Porte on any issue involving the Eastern Question. *Strangford* felt that the Porte would resolve all such matters in its own traditional manner, whereas diplomatic pressure of any sort would incite it to resurrect its embarrassing complaints about Ionian neutrality³¹). Even worse, the Porte might react so violently that the Levantine interests of the British government would be seriously damaged, and this situation could only further inflame those parliamentary critics who were currently attacking the Tory administration of Lord *Liverpool*, the Prime Minister, for its Ionian policy³²). *Castlereagh* was greatly worried by this advice, since it prevented him from fulfilling the promises he had made at Hanover in October 1821, and he now hoped that the Russian government might modify its original demands which concerned the Treaty of Bucharest³³). Unexpectedly, the Porte met these particular conditions during the spring months of 1822, when it evacuated

²⁹) C.O. 136/305: *Castlereagh* to *Bagot*, 28 Oct. 1821. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, p. 23; and Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820—1823*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962, pp. 124, 176f.

³⁰) F.O. 78/105: *Castlereagh* to *Strangford*, 20 Jan. 1822; and F.O. 78/106: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 10 Jan. and 25 Feb. 1822.

³¹) C.O. 136/450: *Strangford* to *Maitland*, Private and Confidential, 12 Mar. 1822; and F.O. 78/110: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 3 Sept. 1822.

³²) C.O. 136/1086: *Maitland* to *Wilmot Horton*, 18 Apr. 1822.

³³) C.O. 136/450: *Stuart* to *Castlereagh*, 24 Dec. 1821; and F.O. 78/105: *Castlereagh* to *Strangford*, Most Secret and Confidential, 29 Apr. 1822. Cf. P. W. Schroeder, *Metternich*, p. 185.

nearly all its armed forces from the Danubian Principalities, where it also appointed new Roumanian, rather than Greek, governors to administer these provinces³⁴). The threat of a Russo-Ottoman war was now reduced greatly, while both the Levantian and Ionian interests of the British government were further assured in August 1822, when *John Capodistria* resigned from the Russian government, after he learned that the Tsar would not discuss the issue of the Greek Revolution at the forth-coming Congress of Verona³⁵). With the news of this resignation, the British authorities in Corfu were convinced that a Russo-Ottoman conflict had finally been averted, even though they were still certain that this Ionian expatriate presented a constant threat to Ionian neutrality³⁶); however, the Foreign Office was hardly concerned with this latter consideration.

On the eve of his death, *Castlereagh* assessed the British role in the current diplomatic issues of the Eastern Question. Although he had avoided a Russo-Ottoman conflict, the Foreign Secretary still hoped that the Porte would fulfil all the Russian demands pertaining to the Treaty of Bucharest, because the renewed threat of war would not be so easily averted again, especially since the Ottoman army had not yet suppressed the Greek Revolution. By 1822, the Hellenic forces had conquered the Peloponnese, and they had also made considerable gains in both Epirus and Thessaly, while the Greek corsairs controlled the shipping lanes between Egypt and the Dardanelle Straits. In the light of this situation, the British government might be forced to recognize officially the belligerent rights of the Hellenic government in conformity with similar decisions made during the Latin rebellions in Spanish America³⁷). Although the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations still took priority over such recognition, the continuation of the Greek Revolution could prompt another diplomatic crisis between St. Petersburg and Constantinople. Aided by the resignation of *Capodistria* from the circles of European diplomacy, *Castlereagh* hoped that he could again divert the attention of the Continental states from all the delicate issues of the Eastern Question, while *Strangford* assisted the Porte to resolve the hostilities in Greece³⁸). Although it was often affected adversely by the

³⁴) F.O. 78/109: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 18 July 1822.

³⁵) C.O. 136/442: *Adam* to *Hankey*, Private, 24 Aug. 1821.

³⁶) C.O. 136/305: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, Private and Confidential, 28 Dec. 1821; C.O. 136/306: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, Confidential, 14 Jan. 1822; C.O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 30 Nov. 1821; and C.O. 136/1106: *Maitland* to *Gordon*, 1 Feb. 1822. Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria*, pp. 268—278; and P. W. Schroeder, *Metternich*, pp. 173—176.

³⁷) Cf. H. G. Schenk, *The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars*. London: Kegan Paul, 1946, pp. 180—210.

³⁸) F.O. 78/49: Instructions by *Castlereagh*, 8—22 Aug. 1822. Cf. C. K. Webster, *Foreign Policy II*, p. 400.

issue of Ionian neutrality, this diplomatic strategy would characterize the Levantine policy of the British government for the next several years, and even the change of leadership in the Foreign Office did not result in any modification of this basic strategy.

3. Anglo-Ottoman Relations and European Diplomacy, 1822—1823

Upon his appointment as Foreign Secretary in September 1822, *George Canning* adopted the Levantine strategy which had been formulated by *Castlereagh*. While he detached his government from the diplomatic policies of the Holy Alliance, *Canning* encouraged the Porte to resolve both the Russo-Ottoman crisis and the Greek Revolution before all the diplomatic efforts already expended by the Foreign Office were reversed by the Russian government. Further, he recommended that the Porte should proclaim a full amnesty for all Greek insurgents, while it should also promise to govern all its Christian subjects in a more benevolent manner. The possibility of further rebellions would be less, while the threat of a Russo-Ottoman war would be greatly reduced, and this situation would also assure both the Ionian and Levantine interests of the British government. Nevertheless, *Canning* would not give an official guarantee to any settlement which pertained to any aspect of the Eastern Question, especially since the enforcement of such accords against either Ottoman, or Hellenic, violations was diplomatically inconsistent with the Levantine policy of the British government, while also being contrary to the growing Philhellenic sentiments of the British populace. Accordingly, *Canning* would not offer anything apart from the impartial mediation of his government in any Ottoman-related matter, and he hoped that the Porte would accept such mediation before its current problems became common issues in the circles of Continental diplomacy³⁹). Fortunately for the Foreign Office, the European states expressed little interest in the Greek Revolution at the Congress of Verona, which was held during November 1822, while both the Tsar and Count *Nesselrode* secretly informed *Strangford* on separate occasions that they would allow the British government to resolve the question of Hellenic independence along the guidelines which had determined the political autonomy of the Serbian nation in 1812⁴⁰). Although this concession would further secure both the Ionian and Levantine interests of his government from a Russo-Ottoman war, *Canning* was determined that the Greek Revolution would be resolved exclusively along British lines⁴¹).

³⁹) F.O. 352/9c: *G. Canning* to *Wellington*, 27 Sept. 1822. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, pp. 25 f.

⁴⁰) F.O. 78/110: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 5 Oct. 1821 and 26 Nov. 1822.

⁴¹) C.O. 136/1087: *Maitland* to *Wellington*, 4 Dec. 1822. Cf. M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774—1923*. London: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 61 f.

Although he was unwilling to commit his government to any formal accords, *Canning* felt that he could resolve the Greek Revolution by arranging a diplomatic reconciliation between the Russian and Ottoman governments. Since diplomatic relations between St. Petersburg and Constantinople had completely been severed, he instructed *Strangford* to create a situation at the Porte which would effect a diplomatic reconciliation by gradual stages, and he added that the initial step in this strategy could involve the securing of navigational rights for neutral shipping in the Black Sea⁴²). Such neutral governments as the Papal States had been allowed since 1774 to enrol their mercantile fleets in the maritime register of the Russian government, whose own national vessels were permitted to sail in the Black Sea, thus securing this same privilege for these neutral vessels in the interest of international commerce. By suggesting that this navigational privilege should be extended to the mercantile fleet of Sardinia, the British ambassador could initiate a diplomatic move which would necessitate the exchange of commercial attachés between St. Petersburg and Constantinople for a discussion on this matter. This preliminary renewal of diplomatic relations could be expanded gradually with other quasi-diplomatic matters until such relations were fully restored, thus enabling both governments to discuss eventually a solution to the Greek Revolution⁴³).

While this plan was diplomatically expedient, the use of maritime matters in achieving a Russo-Ottoman reconciliation would jeopardize the Levantine interests of the British government⁴⁴). The Levantine commerce of both Ionian and British merchants had increased significantly since the beginning of the Greek Revolution, because nearly all direct Russo-Ottoman trade in the Levant had been suspended, and *Strangford* saw no point in encouraging new competitive interests by enrolling the entire commercial fleet of such a neutral state as Sardinia in the maritime register of the Russian government⁴⁵). Even if such action could help to ease the current diplomatic crisis, he knew that the Porte was extremely sensitive about foreign navigation on the Black Sea, and he still reasoned that the current crises in the Eastern Question could be resolved without his official intervention, especially since the Porte was conforming increasingly with the Treaty of Bucharest⁴⁶). Since an actual war had been averted, *Strangford*

⁴²) F.O. 352/9b: *Wellington* to *S. Canning*, 28 Nov. 1822.

⁴³) Cf. Arthur Wellesley, *Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of the Duke of Wellington*. 8 vols, London: John Murray, 1867—1880, I, p. 432.

⁴⁴) C.O. 136/1090: *Maitland* to *Wilmot Horton*, 9 Jan. 1823.

⁴⁵) F.O. 78/110: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 3 Sept. 1822, and *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 12 Nov. 1822.

⁴⁶) F.O. 78/114: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 25 Jan. 1823; and C.O. 136/458: *Strangford* to *Hankey*, Confidential, 1 Feb. 1823. Cf. A. Wellesley, *Despatches*, I, p. 432 f.

reasoned that the Levantine commerce of both British and Ionian merchants should not be recklessly exposed to further competition from foreign states for the sake of diplomatic expediency⁴⁷). Though he incurred strong criticism for his reasoning, *Strangford* steadfastly refrained from actively interfering with the foreign policy of the Porte, and even *Canning* lost interest eventually in his own plan, especially since Anglo-Ottoman relations were again affected by Ionian neutrality.

Displeased by the revolutionary activities of the Ionian volunteers, the Porte now took action against its own community of Ionian residents. Due to their cultural characteristics, the Ionian and Hellenic communities in such Ottoman cities as Constantinople and Smyrna were indistinguishable, and they suffered collectively from the violent wave of Islamic fanaticism which occurred during the initial months of the Greek Revolution⁴⁸). Although they were originally entitled to the diplomatic protection of the British government, these Ionian residents unexpectedly found their rights had inadvertently been renounced in 1819, when the Foreign Office ceded the Ionian dependency of Parga to the Ottoman Empire. This situation became evident only in December 1822, when the Porte suddenly demanded that all such residents either become Turkish citizens, or sell all their property and emigrate to lands beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire⁴⁹). Further, the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople did not hesitate to confiscate the property of those Ionian residents serving in the Hellenic forces, and they even began seizing those Ionian vessels which were enrolled in the maritime register of the British government. Many such vessels had purposely been transferred on the eve of the Greek Revolution from their Hellenic owners to Ionian citizens throughout the Levant in order to avoid the consequences which would result from a popular uprising⁵⁰). Outraged by this arbitrary action, *Strangford* finally broke his own silence to protest this policy, and his repeated complaints about this particular violation of Ionian neutrality resulted in the release of the vessels by the Porte⁵¹). Nevertheless, nothing could be done to preserve the traditional rights of those Ionian citizens residing within the Ottoman Empire, and *George Canning* lamented that this situation could not be expediently

⁴⁷) C.O. 136/1090: *Strangford* to *Maitland*, 1 Feb. 1823; and F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 24 Feb. 1823.

⁴⁸) C.O. 136/438: *Werry* to *Maitland*, 23 Oct. 1821; and F.O. 78/114: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 28. Febr. 1823.

⁴⁹) F.O. 78/111: *T. Hamilton* to *G. Canning*, 20 Dec. 1822; and C.O. 136/1091: *Adam* to *Veja*, 24 Apr. 1824.

⁵⁰) C.O. 136/457: *Strangford* to *Adam*, 18 May 1823.

⁵¹) F.O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 26 May and 10 July 1823.

rectified⁵²), especially in the light of Ottoman displeasure about Ionian neutrality.

4. Anglo-Ottoman Relations and Hellenic Belligerency, 1823

In an effort to protect the neutrality of both Ionian and British shipping, *George Canning* officially acknowledged the belligerent rights of the Hellenic government in March 1823⁵³). Although he refused all requests from this government for political protection, the Foreign Secretary was obliged to acknowledge its provisional authority upon those precedents established in Spanish America during the Latin rebellions of the previous decade. This acknowledgement enabled the British authorities in Corfu to formulate an Anglo-Hellenic agreement on the Greek blockade of the Morea in October 1824, so that the neutrality of Ionian shipping could be protected from unwarranted violations by the Hellenic navy⁵⁴). *Canning* realized that the growing parliamentary support for the Hellenic cause could not be easily ignored by the Tory administration, while the complaints of those British merchants whose Levantine trade had been affected by the informal nature of British neutrality could not be ignored either, especially as an autonomous government in Greece could encourage the growth of this trade. Further, the Foreign Secretary explained that his government could not stand idle while a Christian race was threatened with annihilation, despite the objections of both the Austrian and Ottoman governments to this British attitude, and he urged the Porte to resolve the Greek Revolution, even if it involved granting limited political autonomy to its Hellenic subjects⁵⁵). While the threat of a Russo-Ottoman war was not so imminent as before, the Greek Revolution was still a diplomatic issue which troubled the Levantine *status quo*, and in the light of the neutrality of Ionian shipping, the continuing success of the Greek forces necessitated *Canning* to acknowledge Hellenic belligerency — even at the expense of Anglo-Ottoman relations.

Already resentful over the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality, the Porte was outraged by the British acknowledgement of Hellenic belligerency. With both foreign and domestic crises on every side, it now felt quite bereft of all British support, and it reacted by accusing the Foreign Office

⁵²) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 19 Aug. 1823; and F.O. 78/116: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 10 Oct. 1823.

⁵³) F.O. 78/114: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 10 Apr. 1823.

⁵⁴) C.O. 136/457: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 8 May 1823; and C.O. 136/198: *Wilmot Horton* to *G. Canning*, 27 May 1823.

⁵⁵) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 14 Feb. 1823; and C.O. 136/1090: *Maitland* to *Wilmot Horton*, 18 Feb. 1823.

of having established formal diplomatic relations with the Hellenic government⁵⁶). Although it had expected the British government to resolve the Greek Revolution somehow, the Porte had not expected it to acknowledge Hellenic belligerency, and it flatly refused to accept all reassurances from *Strangford* explaining that the status of Anglo-Ottoman relations was unchanged⁵⁷). British hopes for a Russo-Ottoman reconciliation were momentarily dashed as the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations now reached one of its lowest points in recent years⁵⁸), and the situation became even worse.

Angered by the Greek conquest of the Peloponnese, the Porte now complained about the Ionian asylum which had been extended to Greek refugees. The British authorities in Corfu were obliged to extend an asylum to all destitute refugees from Greece, since Hellenic belligerency had been recognized by their government, and they even established an internment camp for all such refugees on the isolated island of Calamos⁵⁹). Unfortunately for Ionian neutrality, the ranks of these destitute refugees were occasionally infiltrated by both Greek insurgents and Albanian renegades, and the frequently-changed allegiance of this latter group led to numerous complaints from the Ottoman authorities on the mainland⁶⁰). In response, the Porte questioned whether this particular discrepancy in the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality was consistent with Anglo-Ottoman relations, and it added that it would never extend an asylum to any Ionian insurgents who rebelled against the British administration in Corfu. *Adam* chose not to refute this latter Ottoman statement, even though many Ionian malcontents had received asylum in Albania after a riot had been suppressed on the island of St. Maura in 1819, and he subsequently ordered a full investigation into the security of the internment camp on Calamos⁶¹). Nevertheless, his efforts were not readily appreciated in Constantinople as *Strangford* was reluctant to justify the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality before the Porte, and this reluctance led to further Ottoman complaints about Ionian neutrality⁶²).

To restore the cordiality of diplomatic relations between London and Constantinople, the Foreign Office formally acknowledged again the belligerent rights of the Ottoman government⁶³). After he remarked that the

⁵⁶) F.O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 26 May and 16 July 1823.

⁵⁷) F.O. 78/117: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 4 Nov. 1823.

⁵⁸) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 12 July 1823.

⁵⁹) C.O. 136/476: *Wright* to *Adam*, 8 June 1824; and C.O. 136/312: *Bathurst* to *Adam*, 14 Dec. 1825.

⁶⁰) C.O. 136/311: *Turner* to *G. Canning*, 15 Apr. 1825; and F.O. 352/11: *Adam* to *S. Canning*, 25 Dec. 1825.

⁶¹) C.O. 136/1113: *Adam* to *Abbot*, 24 July 1825.

⁶²) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 12 July 1823.

⁶³) F.O. 78/120: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 23 Jan. and 31 Aug. 1824.

recognition of Hellenic belligerency had partly been necessitated by Ionian neutrality, *Canning* stated that no hostility had been directed towards the Porte at any time during the course of the Greek Revolution, and he substantiated this statement by acknowledging the Ottoman blockade of the Morean coast⁶⁴). This blockade was still officially recognized, even though it had effectively been replaced by an Hellenic equivalent, and its extension along the Albanian coast was subsequently acknowledged for a second time by the British authorities in Corfu. At the Ionian level, Anglo-Ottoman relations were usually cordial, because the neutrality of Ionian shipping was basically secure from unwarranted violations committed by the Turkish navy. All the same, the neutrality of this same shipping was frequently violated in open waters along both the Tunisian and Cretan coasts during 1823, and Anglo-Ottoman relations suffered accordingly as these violations were often avenged by the Royal Navy⁶⁵). The Porte was rather disturbed by this naval retaliation, since it willingly paid compensation for nearly all these violations, especially those committed by the Barbary fleets, and the current tensions in Anglo-Tunisian relations over the enslavement of Christians magnified this situation. As a result, Anglo-Ottoman relations were unusually strained as *Strangford* used these particular violations as a means to reassert his own personal prestige at the Porte, and such browbeating tactics prompted the Lord High Commissioner to criticize these provocative tactics, since they only encouraged the Porte to complain further about all the discrepancies which it found supposedly in the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality⁶⁶).

Displeased with all the publicity received by Lord *Byron*, the Porte now complained about Ionian neutrality and British philhellenes⁶⁷). While only a handful of British citizens and expatriates were actually participating in the Greek Revolution, the Philhellenic movement in Great Britain had attracted much attention during March 1823, when the Greek Committee of London had been established by several Radical politicians to support the Hellenic cause for political freedom⁶⁸). The Greek Committee happened to be established during the same month in which Hellenic belligerency had been recognized by the British government, and the Porte mistakenly be-

⁶⁴) F.O. 78/116: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 11 Aug. and 7 Sept. 1823.

⁶⁵) F.O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 26 May 1823; and Adm. 1/440: *Rous* to *Hamilton*, 4 July 1823, and *Hamilton* to *Moore*, 15 Aug. 1823.

⁶⁶) C.O. 136/1090: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 21 Dec. 1823; and Adm. 1/442: *Neale* to *Croker*, 20 July 1824.

⁶⁷) F.O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, Confidential, 16 July 1823; and F.O. 78/123: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 10 Aug. 1824.

⁶⁸) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 12 July 1823. Cf. Douglas Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes during the War of Greek Independence, 1821–1833*. Salonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1955, pp. 42–62.

lieved that this committee had been officially sanctioned, especially as its executive council was headed by several parliamentary members. Consequently, the Porte charged that British philhellenes had enabled the Greek insurgents to prolong their rebellion in the Peloponnese, and it accused the British authorities in Corfu of allowing the Ionian Islands to be transformed into a neutral haven for philhellenic activities⁶⁹). This accusation contained some elements of truth, since the Lord High Commissioner had exhibited no real concern over the movements of British philhellenes in the lesser islands, and he felt that all such individuals were at liberty to ruin their own lives and careers without any interference from his administration⁷⁰). Though he shared this latter view, *Strangford* warned that the Levantine interests of the British government were seriously endangered by the revolutionary activities of both the Philhellenes and the Greek Committee of London, and this warning soon convinced *Maitland*, especially after he learned that the leading members of this committee were the very same politicians who repeatedly attacked his administrative policies in Parliament⁷¹). As a result, such philhellenes as *Byron* and Colonel *Leicester Stanhope* were quietly encouraged to leave the Ionian Islands; however, this development did not appease the Porte, much to the unexpected delight of the British ambassador in Constantinople⁷²).

5. British Policy and the Russo-Ottoman Reconciliation, 1824

In spite of his instructions from the Foreign Office, *Strangford* would not arrange a Russo-Ottoman reconciliation. The British ambassador felt that any such reconciliation was quite incompatible with the Levantine interests of his government⁷³), especially after he claimed that Anglo-Ionian commerce in the Levant had increased by at least six hundred per cent since 1820; a situation so profitable that he refused to modify the existing Anglo-Ottoman agreements on such commerce⁷⁴). Furthermore, he was even more

⁶⁹) F.O. 78/116: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 11 Aug. 1823. Cf. William St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 140—149.

⁷⁰) C.O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *York*, 28 Nov. 1821. Cf. W. David Wrigley, *Dissension in the Ionian Islands: Colonel Charles James Napier and the Commissioners, 1819—1833*, *Balkan Studies*, Vol. XXVI/2 (1975), p. 2.

⁷¹) C.O. 136/1090: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, Private and Confidential, 21 Dec. 1823.

⁷²) F.O. 78/125: *Turner* to *G. Canning*, 11 Nov. 1824.

⁷³) F.O. 78/114: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 28 Feb. and 10 Mar. 1823.

⁷⁴) F.O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 16 July 1823; and C.O. 136/474: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 29 June 1824.

reluctant to arrange any diplomatic reconciliation along the lines originally suggested by *George Canning*, since he knew that the Porte was extremely sensitive about all matters concerning the Black Sea, and he accordingly refrained from enrolling the mercantile fleet of any neutral state in the maritime register of the Russian government⁷⁵). Finally, he rejected all proposals concerning a diplomatic *démarche* of the European ambassadors in Constantinople, since neither he, nor his Austrian counterpart, would approach the Porte with any ultimatum concerning either the Greek Revolution, or the Danubian Principalities, for fear of harming the profitable trade which their respective governments were currently enjoying⁷⁶). *Strangford* concluded that the Russian government was solely responsible for resolving its diplomatic crisis with the Porte, and *Canning* now surprisingly concurred with this conclusion, since it seemed that these diplomatic tensions, as opposed to any actual hostilities, were rather lucrative for the Levantine interests of the British government⁷⁷), even if the Porte was again complaining about Ionian neutrality and the British philhellenes.

Since no analogous situation existed within its own jurisdiction, the Porte could easily complain that Ionian neutrality was not strictly enforced against the British philhellenes. Although it realized that such individuals as Lord *Byron* were expatriates, the Porte questioned the apparent immunity which such philhellenes as *Edward Blaquière*, the Zantiote representative of the Greek Committee, enjoyed from prosecution in the Ionian Islands, and it accused the British authorities, particularly Colonel *Charles James Napier* of Cephalonia, of allowing such philhellenes to transform the lesser islands into a neutral haven for their revolutionary activities⁷⁸). This particular accusation was not completely unfounded as *Napier* had refused to place Lord *Byron* under official surveillance during 1823, while the initial instalment of the first Greek loan, valued at £40,000 in gold sovereigns, had recently been deposited in an Anglo-Ionian bank on Zante, and the Porte was convinced that such a considerable sum could not have been exported without official approval from the British government⁷⁹). Though he explained that the British government regarded this entire loan to be a very minor transaction, *Strangford* felt that these Ottoman complaints were partly justified, and he now recommended that Anglo-Ottoman relations should be suspended until Parliament restricted the revolutionary activities of all British philhellenes⁸⁰). Since his government could not easily inter-

⁷⁵) F.O. 78/117: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 4 and 14 Nov. 1823.

⁷⁶) F.O. 78/116: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, Secret, 7 and 22 Sept. 1823.

⁷⁷) F.O. 78/113: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 11 Oct. 1823.

⁷⁸) F.O. 78/122: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 17 Apr. and 8 May 1824.

⁷⁹) F.O. 78/123: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 26 July 1824.

⁸⁰) C.O. 136/474: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 15 Apr. 1824; and F.O. 78/124: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 8 Oct. 1824.

fere with such activities, Canning again watched as Ottoman complaints about Ionian neutrality frustrated his attempts to resolve the Greek Revolution⁸¹).

Although he was anxious to restore peace in Greece, *Canning* did not realize immediately that Anglo-Ottoman contention about Ionian neutrality was often due actually to the unofficial nature of British neutrality. In spite of his efforts to assist the Porte in resolving the Greek Revolution, he learned eventually that the Ottoman government rarely made any distinction between these various forms of neutrality; therefore, the Porte generally complained about Ionian neutrality whenever its interests in the Greek Revolution were not favoured by the British government, and the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations would suffer accordingly. Its pride was so affected that the Porte took every available opportunity to attribute its losses in the Greek Revolution to Ionian neutrality. After many months of sympathizing with such complaints, *Strangford* reluctantly admitted that it was the unofficial neutrality of his own government, rather than the official nature of Ionian neutrality, which often created these Anglo-Ottoman tensions⁸²). Although he now promised to make some proper amends for this situation, all his attempts to fulfil this promise failed miserably, since they involved procedures which were disapproved by the Foreign Office. For instance, the treasure-hoard of *Veli Pasha*, who was the eldest son of *Ali Pasha*, had been transferred from Corfu to Malta in conformity with Ionian neutrality during the Albanian rebellion of 1819–1822, and its delivery to Constantinople was now blocked by *Canning*, since he felt that its transport aboard a British vessel would encourage an attack by the Greek corsairs, thus presenting an insult to the *Union Jack*⁸³). The Porte viewed this decision as a diplomatic affront, and it subsequently complained about Ionian neutrality, especially since it wrongly suspected that the treasure-hoard of *Ali Pasha* had been embezzled by the British authorities in Corfu⁸⁴). As further apologies on his own part were beneath his personal dignity, *Strangford* decided that such incidents occurring in the future must be resolved by the Lord High Commissioner, and this fortuitous decision soon enabled the British authorities in Corfu to make a direct improvement in Anglo-Ottoman relations.

To reduce the diplomatic tensions between London and Constantinople, Ionian neutrality was re-proclaimed in April 1824. In his new role as the Lord High Commissioner, Sir *Frederick Adam* promised that Ionian neu-

⁸¹) F.O. 352/9c: *G. Canning* to *Wellesley*, Confidential, 5 Dec. 1824.

⁸²) F.O. 78/125: *G. Canning* to *Turner*, 24 Dec. 1824.

⁸³) C.O. 136/1148: *Hankey* to *Temple*, 22 Mar. 1821; C.O. 136/474: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 22 Jan. and 15 Apr. 1824; and F.O. 78/120: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 24 Apr. 1824.

⁸⁴) F.O. 78/121: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 25 Feb. and 10 Mar. 1824.

trality would be strictly enforced against all violators, regardless of their nationality, and he immediately acted by placing an embargo on all Ionian commerce with the Greek mainland⁸⁵). As this action also coincided with the official recall of Colonel *Stanhope* from Greece by the War Office, the Porte was quickly impressed with this re-proclamation, and this situation prompted the British ambassador in Constantinople to remark that all the differences between himself and the British authorities in Corfu over the proper enforcement of Ionian neutrality no longer existed⁸⁶). Though he denied that he was pro-Turkish, *Strangford* did admit that he was obliged to represent the diplomatic interests of his government in the most expedient manner, and this admission was intended to include his consistent sympathizing with Ottoman complaints about Ionian neutrality. In the light of these remarks, he was reminded by the Foreign Office that the Crown supported nearly every decision made in accordance with the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality, and it also stated that it expected him to defend openly, rather than shun, all such decisions before the Porte⁸⁷). *George Canning* had finally developed an interest in the diplomatic significance of Ionian neutrality after realizing that his strategy to resolve both the Greek Revolution and the Russo-Ottoman crisis had not succeeded. Nevertheless, he failed to examine this situation further, while he often failed to realize that many setbacks in his diplomatic strategy originated with the unofficial nature of British neutrality. This latter situation suited *Strangford*, since he had no intention of arranging a Russo-Ottoman reconciliation, and he later justified this attitude by claiming that the criminal activities involving the Ionian residents of the Ottoman Empire had distracted him from all diplomatic business during the spring months of 1824. Since Russo-Ottoman relations of a commercial nature were renewed without his assistance in August 1824, *Strangford* concluded that all the outstanding issues of his diplomatic mission had been concluded, and he departed from Constantinople at the end of that same year, knowing well that his views on the British role in the Eastern Question were not at all appreciated by the Foreign Office⁸⁸), which was still seeking to resolve the Greek Revolution.

With this objective in mind, *George Canning* now appointed a new ambassador to the Porte in July 1825. Since he had previously served at the Porte during the Napoleonic era, *Stratford Canning de Redcliffe* — a cousin of the Foreign Secretary — was now transferred to Constantinople from St. Petersburg, where he had briefly served as the British ambassador, and his

⁸⁵) F.O. 78/120: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 10 Sept. 1824.

⁸⁶) C.O. 136/474: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private, 8 July 1824.

⁸⁷) F.O. 78/120: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 25 May and 20 July 1824.

⁸⁸) C.O. 136/474: *Strangford* to *Adam*, Private, 22 Jan. 1824; and F.O. 352/9c: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, Confidential, 27 May 1824.

place in the Russian capital was taken by *Viscount Strangford*⁸⁹). Now that he had made an informal alignment in his diplomatic strategy between the capitals of two contentious governments, *Canning* instructed his cousin to mediate a settlement in the Greek Revolution through the normal course of Anglo-Ottoman relations⁹⁰), while *Strangford* was expected to calm further the Russian fears about the Hellenic cause. The Foreign Secretary hoped that the Porte should now be thoroughly convinced that British neutrality was completely genuine, especially since he had refused to commit his government officially to an European conference which had convened earlier in St. Petersburg to discuss the issue of the Greek Revolution. Further, he even absorbed the consular network of the Levant Company, which handled nearly all the British trade with Turkey, into the diplomatic service of the Foreign Office as a means to prove that his government could not favour either belligerent state in the Greek Revolution, especially since several consuls in this mercantile service had provided both hostile forces with vital supplies during the initial months of the hostilities in the Peloponnese⁹¹). Unfortunately for British policy, the Porte was hardly impressed by such diplomatic strategy, since it had always resented any foreign interference with such domestic matters as the political unrest in the Peloponnese, and it was even less convinced that British neutrality was as sincere and candid as the Foreign Office had recently claimed⁹²). Since *Stratford Canning* was not expected to arrive in Constantinople until the end of the year, the Porte was not likely to modify its strongly-held views without much persuasion, and *Canning* now turned his attention again to St. Petersburg, where political events threatened his diplomatic strategy on the Eastern Question⁹³).

6. The Anglo-Russian Protocol and Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1826

Although the hostilities in Greece continued unabated, *George Canning* managed to reduce slightly the threat of a Russo-Ottoman war. The political unrest which followed the death of Tsar *Alexander I* in December 1825

⁸⁹) F.O. 78/130: *G. Canning* to *Turner*, 7 July 1825; F.O. 352/10a: Memorandum by *S. Canning*, Confidential, 31 Mar. 1825; and F.O. 352/11: Memorandum by *G. Canning*, 29 Sept. 1825.

⁹⁰) F.O. 352/11: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 26 July 1825.

⁹¹) F.O. 78/133: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 12 Oct. 1825; and F.O. 95/8/14: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 22 Apr. 1826, and *S. Canning* to *G. Canning*, 8 Feb. 1827. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, p. 35.

⁹²) F.O. 78/132: *Turner* to *G. Canning*, 22 Sept. 1825; and C.O. 136/491: *Turner* to *Adam*, 28 Dec. 1825.

⁹³) F.O. 352/11: *Adam* to *S. Canning*, 24 Dec. 1825.

had convinced the Foreign Secretary that a formal understanding on the Greek Revolution must be arranged immediately, and he instructed *Viscount Strangford* to initiate diplomatic talks on this particular matter⁹⁴). *Strangford* had not properly been briefed by the Foreign Secretary about British strategy in the Eastern Question upon his return from Constantinople, and he now inadvertently accepted a proposal by Count *Nesselrode* which called for joint Anglo-Russian intervention in Greece⁹⁵). Since he still refused to sign any formal accord on this matter, *Canning* immediately repudiated the acceptance of this proposal, and he subsequently sent the Duke of *Wellington* to St. Petersburg as a special emissary⁹⁶). *Wellington* was instructed to offer the new Russian monarch, Tsar *Nicholas I*, the diplomatic mediation of the British government in the issue of the Greek Revolution, and he was even authorized to signify that the Foreign Office would approve any political compromise reached in Greece by both belligerent states⁹⁷). In addition, he was authorized to inform the Russian government about the current progress of all Anglo-Ottoman talks on the Greek Revolution, and he was to assure it further that neither the British, nor the Ionian, government possessed any special interests in Greece⁹⁸). As he knew from *Stratford Canning* that the Hellenic government was now prepared to accept almost any compromise, *Canning* hoped that the Ottoman government might soon follow suit, and he was even ready to approve a Continental guarantee on any such compromise which could be formulated in London under his direct supervision, even though previously such talks with Count *Lieven*, the Russian ambassador to the Court of St. James, had proven to be inconclusive⁹⁹). Though a compromise involving Hellenic independence would be detrimental to its Ionian interests, the Foreign Office knew that a Russo-Ottoman conflict over any aspect of the Eastern Question, especially the Greek Revolution, would be even more detrimental to its Levantine interests, and *Canning* now hoped that *Wellington* might harness the Russian interest in the Hellenic cause before a real crisis, such as a war, occurred¹⁰⁰).

While the Tsar expressed his lack of interest in the Greek Revolution, *Wellington* soon learned that his ministers felt otherwise. The Russian gov-

⁹⁴) F.O. 78/140: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, Private, 6 and 8 Jan., 7 Mar., and 26 Apr. 1826.

⁹⁵) F.O. 352/13a: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 17 Jan. and 4 Feb. 1826. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, p. 54; and H. W. V. Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning*, 2 vols; London: G. Bell, 1926, p. 341—343.

⁹⁶) F.O. 352/13a: *S. Canning* to *Willock*, 18 Apr. 1826.

⁹⁷) F.O. 352/13a: *G. Canning* to *Strangford*, 11 Feb. 1826.

⁹⁸) F.O. 78/140: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 10 Feb. 1826.

⁹⁹) F.O. 78/140: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 26 Apr. 1826.

¹⁰⁰) F.O. 352/15a: *G. Canning* to *Wellington*, 14 Feb. 1826.

ernment was anxious about the rumours concerning the Egyptian enslavement of Greek civilians, especially since the native inhabitants of both Greece and Russia were members of the Orthodox faith, and both Count *Nesselrode* and Count *Lieven*, the latter diplomat now arrived unexpectedly from London, suggested that the issue of the Greek Revolution should be included in the formal negotiations pertaining to the final restoration of Russo-Ottoman relations¹⁰¹). While this suggestion hardly suited the diplomatic strategy of the Foreign Office, Wellington felt that the Russian government was prepared for war, and his subsequent acceptance of this suggestion led to the formalization of an Anglo-Russian protocol on the Greek Revolution in April 1826. Calling for the Ottoman acceptance of British mediation, this protocol alluded to the 'Act of Submission' of June 1825, when the Hellenic government requested political protection from Great Britain, by recommending that political autonomy should be granted to an Hellenic state comprising both the Peloponnese and the islands of the Archipelago, and it added that the Porte should receive an annual tribute from this autonomous state. If this recommendation was rejected by the Porte, both signatory powers would declare their determination to include it in any formal negotiations on the Greek Revolution which might later take place. Although it still refused to offer any formal guarantees, the British government invited the Continental states to offer their own guarantees of Hellenic autonomy by signing the Anglo-Russian protocol, thus hoping that their renewed interest in the Greek Revolution would resolve the current threat of a Russo-Ottoman war¹⁰²). Because such a conflict could still occur over such non-Hellenic matters as the Danubian Principalities, *Wellington* informed the British ambassador in Constantinople that the Porte should voluntarily accept the terms of this protocol before it was forced to accept less generous terms in the aftermath of a military defeat by the Russian army.

As he had placed able diplomatic representatives in both St. Petersburg and Constantinople, *George Canning* also felt that the Porte should now accept a compromise on the Greek Revolution. The Porte was unaware that an Anglo-Russian accord had been concluded, and *Stratford Canning* was instructed to exploit its fears about a Russo-Ottoman conflict in order to secure its assent to such a compromise¹⁰³). Since the Hellenic government

¹⁰¹) F.O. 352/13a: *Wellington* to *S. Canning*, 27 Mar. 1826; and F.O. 352/15a: *S. Canning* to *Hamilton*, Private and Confidential, 6 May 1826.

¹⁰²) Cf. M. S. Anderson, *Eastern Question*, pp. 64f.; D. Dakin, *Greek Struggle*, pp. 173—180; C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, pp. 43—62; and M. S. Anderson, *The Great Powers and the Near East, 1774—1923* (New York: St. Martin's, 1974), pp. 31f.

¹⁰³) F.O. 352/13a: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, Private and Confidential, 26 Apr. 1826, and *G. Canning* to *Lieven*, 5 May 1826.

also wanted *Stratford Canning* to mediate a settlement in the current hostilities, the Foreign Secretary believed that the political concessions which it offered could be adapted to fit the terms contained in the Anglo-Russian protocol, and he instructed the British ambassador in Constantinople to persuade the Porte that the diplomatic mediation of his government was the best possible solution in resolving the Greek Revolution without involving the diplomatic interference of the Continental powers¹⁰⁴). If the Porte again refused such mediation, then the British government might be prompted to recognize the political independence of any region undisputedly controlled by the Hellenic forces, and the Foreign Office stated that such regions definitely included both the Peloponnese and the islands of the Archipelago. Basically, it was felt in London that the Porte must either accept some sort of political compromise, or defeat the Greek insurgents¹⁰⁵). Though he favoured a compromise, *Stratford Canning* could not approach the Porte on any diplomatic business during the summer months of 1826, since it was wholly preoccupied with the purge of the Janissary corps, the traditional organization of elite Turkish troops, and this situation provided him with time to compose an important memorandum on the issue of Ionian neutrality in Anglo-Ottoman relations¹⁰⁶).

7. Anglo-Ottoman Relations and Ionian Neutrality, 1826—1827

Within a few months of his arrival in Constantinople, the British ambassador expressed his thoughts on the diplomatic significance of Ionian neutrality. Because the Porte was filled Anglophobes, the Sultan and his ministers had formed an inaccurate impression that Ionian neutrality was pro-Hellenic by nature, and this impression had seriously affected the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations during the early years of the Greek Revolution¹⁰⁷). After he had met briefly with Sir *Frederick Adam* at Corfu in December 1825, *Stratford Canning* was convinced that Ionian neutrality had actually been enforced with both strictness and impartiality since its initial proclamation in June 1821, and he concluded that it would continue to be enforced along such lines¹⁰⁸). Since the Porte generally attributed all

¹⁰⁴) F.O. 352/15a: *S. Canning* to *Wellington*, Private and Most Confidential, 12 June 1826; and Adm. 1/445: *S. Canning* to *Hamilton*, Secret and Confidential, 25 May 1826. Cf. D. Dakin, *Greek Struggle*, pp. 194—196.

¹⁰⁵) F.O. 78/140: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 25 Mar. and 4 and 15 Aug. 1826.

¹⁰⁶) Adm. 1/446: *Neale* to *Croker*, 1 Sept. 1826.

¹⁰⁷) F.O. 352/13a: *S. Canning* to *Ponsonby*, Private and Confidential, 19 and 28 May 1826.

¹⁰⁸) F.O. 78/133: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 12 Oct. 1825; F.O. 352/10b: *S. Canning* to *Planta*, Private, 20 Dec. 1825; and Adm. 1/445: *Neale* to *Croker*, 7 Dec. 1825.

its troubles in the Greek Revolution to this strict enforcement, *Stratford Canning* stated that the British authorities in Corfu should promptly submit accurate reports describing such enforcement against violations committed by both belligerent states, thus enabling him to refute all Ottoman complaints about Ionian neutrality¹⁰⁹). Nevertheless, the constant refusal of the Porte to distinguish the totally different natures of Ionian and British neutrality could not facilitate the fulfilment of this task, and this situation often prevented him from approaching the Porte about accepting a compromise in the Greek Revolution¹¹⁰), which was briefly extended to the Ionian Islands.

In September 1826, the Ottoman government unexpectedly claimed its rights of sovereignty over the Ionian island of Petala. Resentful over the asylum which was extended to all Greek refugees, the Porte ordered Captain *Georgios Varnachiottis*, an Albanian renegade of Hellenic descent, to occupy this island in order to discourage their future emigration from Greece, especially after the capture of the town of Missolonghi by the Egyptian army in April 1826¹¹¹). Apart from rejecting this Ottoman claim, *Stratford Canning* expressed his anger over this blatant violation of Ionian neutrality, and he again defended its strict enforcement as *Varnachiottis* and his armed band were evicted forcibly from Petala by the Royal Navy¹¹²). Although a diplomatic crisis might have easily resulted from this incident, the detailed reports submitted by the Lord High Commissioner enabled the British ambassador to prove that there was no problem of security involving the internment camp of refugees on Calamos, and the Porte suddenly ceased all complaints about the Greek refugees, since it was embarrassed by all the adverse publicity in the European press surrounding both the massacre of Greek civilians in Missolonghi during April 1826¹¹³) and the ruthless purge of the Janissary corps in Constantinople during June of that same year. Though the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality often affected the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, *Stratford Canning* easily defended this strict enforcement against nearly all the charges brought to light by the Porte, and no refugees were ever deported arbitrarily from Calamos, even though all the refugees were eventually encouraged to return home as their unrestricted emigration had placed a severe strain on the

¹⁰⁹) F.O. 352/15a: *S. Canning* to *Wellington*, Private and Most Confidential, 12 June 1826.

¹¹⁰) F.O. 352/13a: *S. Canning* to *Adam*, Confidential, 25 Mar. 1826, and *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, Private, 3 July 1826.

¹¹¹) F.O. 352/13a: *Crummer* to *Gilpin*, 13 Oct. 1826.

¹¹²) F.O. 352/13a: *S. Canning* to *Ponsonby*, 10 June 1826, and *Ponsonby* to *S. Canning*, 11 Oct. 1826.

¹¹³) F.O. 352/13a: *Ponsonby* to *S. Canning*, 16 May 1826.

economic resources of the Ionian government¹¹⁴). Nevertheless, the continuous complaints of the Porte about Ionian neutrality greatly affected the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, and the failure of British policy to resolve the Greek Revolution greatly diminished the chances of averting a Russo-Ottoman war.

Indeed, the Anglo-Russian protocol had hardly resolved any of the current crises in the Eastern Question. The Russian government could still fight the Ottoman government over any non-Hellenic matter, and it was prepared for war if a new agreement over the political status of the Danubian Principalities was not satisfactorily concluded¹¹⁵). With its various interests in both the Levant and India, the British government feared the outbreak of another Russo-Ottoman conflict, and it felt that its strategic position in the Ionian Islands would be particularly threatened by the appearance of a Russian force in Greece¹¹⁶). Nevertheless, *George Canning* felt that this situation was not entirely hopeless, since both signatory powers of the Anglo-Russian protocol had renounced all their territorial ambitions in the Levant, and it had also been mutually agreed that the British government would take the diplomatic initiative to arrange a political compromise in the Greek Revolution¹¹⁷). All the same, this latter issue could also be included in any diplomatic negotiations resulting from a Russo-Ottoman conflict, and *Stratford Canning* had accordingly been instructed that he should reveal the terms of the Anglo-Russian protocol if such a conflict appeared imminent¹¹⁸). Since the Porte was usually raging about Ionian neutrality and other supposedly related matters, the British ambassador had been unable to approach it about the Greek Revolution, and it was even less inclined to discuss this issue after it had settled all outstanding matters on the Danubian Principalities by concluding the Convention of Akkerman with the Russian government in October 1826¹¹⁹). A Russo-Ottoman reconciliation had finally been achieved, and the new Russian ambassador, Count *Ribeaupierre*, presented himself to the Porte in February 1827. The threat of a Russo-Ottoman war had greatly been reduced without the diplomatic assistance of the British government; however, this situation was not conducive to Levantine peace as the Greek Revolution was still unresolved.

¹¹⁴) F.O. 352/15a: *Neale* to *S. Canning*, 10 June 1826; and C.O. 136/516: *S. Canning* to *Ponsonby*, 3 July 1826.

¹¹⁵) F.O. 352/13a: *S. Canning* to *Willock*, Confidential, 14 Sept. 1826; and F.O. 352/12b: *Blutte* to *S. Canning*, 28 Sept. 1826.

¹¹⁶) F.O. 78/140: *Planta* to *S. Canning*, 22 Nov. 1826.

¹¹⁷) F.O. 352/13a: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, Private and Confidential, 3 July and 5 Sept. 1826.

¹¹⁸) F.O. 78/140: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 4 Aug. and 6 Sept. 1826.

¹¹⁹) F.O. 352/12a: *Yeames* to *S. Canning*, 22 July 1826.

In spite of its persistent refusal, the Porte was occasionally approached by *Stratford Canning* about accepting a political compromise in the Greek Revolution. After a summer of inconclusive diplomacy, he was reduced to hinting about the existence of the Anglo-Russian protocol, and he added that this accord might soon be implemented unless the Porte signified its willingness to negotiate a compromise on this long-standing issue¹²⁰). Since these hints failed to motivate the Porte, he next suggested that his government could independently mediate a compromise in the Greek Revolution along the guidelines found in the Anglo-Russian protocol, and he officially outlined all the diplomatic advantages which the Porte could expect from such independent mediation. Since the Hellenic government was prepared to honour all its proposed commitments for peace, the Porte could accept a mediated compromise without losing any diplomatic prestige, and *M. Minciaky* — the Russian commercial attaché in Constantinople — even signified his official approval of this latest offer of mediation¹²¹). Unfortunately for the British ambassador, the Porte would not accept even this proposal as any such compromise was declared contrary to both its political and religious principles, while the continued absence of *M. Ribeaupierre* during the summer of 1826 belied the diplomatic significance of the Anglo-Russian protocol¹²²). Even when its full terms were belatedly disclosed in April 1827, this particular protocol had no real effect upon the Porte, since it simply issued an official statement relating its refusal to be persuaded about accepting any compromise in the Greek Revolution. By May 1827, *Stratford Canning* concluded that all the diplomatic means within his reach to arrange a compromise had completely been exhausted¹²³). It seemed from Constantinople that a Russo-Ottoman war over the Hellenic cause for political freedom was now inevitable; however, *George Canning* had devised yet another plan to prevent such a conflict.

8. The Treaty of London and Anglo-Ottoman Diplomacy, 1827

Worried about the possibility of Russian intervention in Greece, *George Canning* now enlisted the diplomatic assistance of the Continental states to arrange a political compromise in the Greek Revolution. Since this idea did not appeal to either the Austrian, or the Prussian, governments, the Foreign Secretary instead visited Paris, where he invited the French government

¹²⁰) F.O. 352/17a: *Disbrowe* to *G. Canning*, 18 Nov. 1826, and *S. Canning* to *Adam*, Private, 10 Feb. 1827.

¹²¹) F.O. 421/2: pp. 41—43.

¹²²) F.O. 352/12b: *Blutte* to *S. Canning*, 23 Oct. and 16 Dec. 1826.

¹²³) F.O. 352/19a: *S. Canning* to *McDonald*, Private, 14 Apr. and 24 Oct. 1827.

during September 1826 to sign the Anglo-Russian protocol¹²⁴). Because he could not permit either France, or Russia, to gain a diplomatic predominance in any Levantine matter, *Canning* had to harness both states with an alliance, and the French government was anxious to join this alliance, since it could not let Great Britain gain a diplomatic advantage in any negotiations to settle the Greek Revolution. After several months of negotiations, the French government accepted the original proposal of *Canning*, and a tripartite alliance was formalized on 14 July 1827 as the Treaty of London. The Allied states of Great Britain, France, and Russia expressed their joint determination to mediate collectively a political compromise in the Greek Revolution by separating the belligerent forces with their Mediterranean fleets, and these fleets would also provide protection for all Levantine shipping against piratical attacks¹²⁵). In addition, the Allied states expressed their joint intention to delineate the boundaries of a politically-autonomous state headed by an Hellenic president, and they agreed that the Foreign Secretary, assisted by both the French and Russian ambassadors in London, would form an Allied conference to determine the political future of this Hellenic state in direct relation to either the cooperation, or the non-cooperation, of the Porte on the matter of the Greek Revolution. Finally, the Allied states also secretly agreed to withdraw their ambassadors from Constantinople within a fortnight of the official presentation of this treaty, if the Porte still refused all offers of Allied mediation, and this move would oblige the signatory powers to establish diplomatic relations with the Hellenic government upon a commercial basis¹²⁶). Although he subsequently initiated separate negotiations with the Egyptian government about the evacuation of its forces from Greece, *Canning* hoped that the Porte would now accept a political compromise in the Greek Revolution before it was too late for British diplomacy to avert a Russo-Ottoman war¹²⁷).

In conformity with Allied policy, the British ambassador officially presented the Porte with the Treaty of London on 16 August 1827. Due to its recent obstinacy, the Porte was given only fifteen days to consider the terms of this treaty. Its subsequent rejection of these terms led to the presentation on 30 August of a secret note which informed the Porte that the Allied states would impose a truce in the Greek Revolution if either belligerent contender refused to accept these terms for peace¹²⁸). Although it

¹²⁴) F.O. 352/13a: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, Private and Confidential, 23 Sept. 1826.

¹²⁵) F.O. 78/151: *G. Canning* to *S. Canning*, 19 Feb. 1827.

¹²⁶) F.O. 352/18: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, 14 July 1827. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, pp. 63—78.

¹²⁷) F.O. 78/151: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, 14 July 1827.

¹²⁸) F.O. 352/19a: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, 20 July 1827, and Treaty of London, Annex A, 12 July 1827.

questioned whether this presentation was an actual declaration of war, the Porte also rejected this secret note, and this refusal subsequently forced the Allied states to establish commercial relations with the Hellenic government¹²⁹). The Porte was unmoved by all these events as it had been forewarned by the unexpected publication of the Allied treaty in the *London Times* on 12 July, and the subsequent reiteration of these terms in September had no effect, since the Ottoman government found all such compromises to be quite repugnant on both political and religious grounds¹³⁰). Accordingly, the Porte stated that its military commanders had been instructed to counter in a diplomatic manner all Allied interference with their current operations against the Greek forces, and it warned that any resulting violence would be attributed to Allied aggression¹³¹). Nevertheless, the Allied states were determined to impose an armistice in the Greek Revolution, and the determination of the Porte to resist any such truce led to such tension in Anglo-Ottoman relations that the British ambassador postponed all Ionian-related business, so that his diplomatic efforts would not be suddenly hindered by Ottoman complaints about Ionian neutrality¹³²).

As the Porte would not accept the Treaty of London, the Allied ambassadors accordingly informed their respective admirals to impose a truce in the Greek Revolution. Directed by Vice-Admiral Sir *Edward Codrington*, both the British and French fleets proceeded towards Greece, where they intended to separate the belligerent forces of the Ottoman and Hellenic governments¹³³). The Turkish and Egyptian navies were still docked at Navarino, and *Codrington* informed *Ibrahim Pasha* that these Allied fleets would forcibly prevent any further attempts by the belligerent fleets to attack the Greek forces¹³⁴). Though he pledged his cooperation, *Ibrahim Pasha* soon broke this promise, since several Egyptian supply-vessels and warships subsequently embarked for Patras to engage the Hellenic navy in battle before it could be reinforced. Occupied with intercepting those Ionian and Austrian vessels which supplied the Egyptian forces, the British fleet

¹²⁹) F.O. 352/17a: *S. Canning* to *Adam*, Private and Confidential, 1 Sept. and 22 Oct. 1827.

¹³⁰) F.O. 352/19a: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, 30 July 1827, and *S. Canning* to *McDonald*, Private, 15 Sept. 1827.

¹³¹) F.O. 352/15a: *Neale* to *S. Canning*, 17 July 1826; and Adm. 1/467: *Codrington* to *Croker*, 11 Sept. 1827.

¹³²) F.O. 352/17a: *Adam* to *S. Canning*, 20 Feb. and 16 July 1827.

¹³³) Adm. 1/448: *Codrington* to *Croker*, Secret, 21 July, 11 Aug., and 3 Sept. 1827.

¹³⁴) Adm. 1/467: *Dudley* to *Codrington*, 12 July 1827, and *Dudley* to the Duke of *Clarence*, Secret, 15 Oct. 1827; and C.O. 136/536: *Meyer* to *Rudsdell*, Private, 28 Sept. 1827.

could not respond until the following day, when it forced these belligerent vessels back to Navarino¹³⁵). Since he was now unwilling to honour any further promises, *Codrington* threatened to destroy all belligerent vessels remaining in this port, if even one gun was fired at the British fleet, and this statement was not an idle threat because the sudden arrival of the Russian fleet meant that the Ottoman-Egyptian navies were now out-gunned¹³⁶). The Allied fleets entered Navarino bay on 20 October to implement fully the Treaty of London, and initial resistance from the belligerent navies resulted in their complete destruction. Without the loss of a single vessel, the Allied fleets destroyed at least sixty Ottoman and Egyptian ships in less than four hours, losing only 174 sailors in the process, while casualties in the belligerent navies exceeded 6,000 sailors. After he attributed the origins of this naval battle to the perfidious conduct of the Egyptian commander, *Codrington* concluded that the Allied treaty could not have been implemented in any other manner¹³⁷). Although the independence of Greece was inadvertently precipitated by one of the worst *débâcles* in the history of Anglo-Ottoman relations, the news of this battle had little immediate effect upon the diplomatic *impassé* in Constantinople.

While the Allied ambassadors complained collectively about the ambiguous promises of *Ibrahim Pasha*, *Stratford Canning* continued his attempts to persuade the Porte about accepting a political compromise in the Greek Revolution. Encouraged by Ottoman silence about the naval action at Navarino, the British ambassador privately informed the Porte that the Allied demands concerning this political compromise had been tempered only by the respect which his government held for the Ottoman Empire, and he confidently urged the Porte to accept either the Anglo-Russian protocol, or the Treaty of London, before the Russian government actively intervened in the Greek Revolution¹³⁸). Even though it agreed to a temporary suspension of hostilities in Greece, the Porte still rejected all suggestions concerning a political compromise, and it added that the naval action at Navarino had constituted an unprecedented act of aggression which could not be easily rectified. Though it promised to maintain commerce with all the Allied governments, the Porte expected to be indemnified for its losses in this naval battle, and it demanded that the Allied states now terminate

¹³⁵) C.O. 136/535: *Codrington* to *Stovin*, 1 Oct. 1827; and Adm. 1/467: *Codrington* to *Croker*, 2 and 6 Oct. 1827.

¹³⁶) Adm. 1/467: *Codrington* to *Mustapha Bey*, 2 Oct. 1827; Adm. 1/468: *Codrington* to the Hellenic Government, 19 Oct. 1827. Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, *The Battle of Navarino*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965, pp. 84f., 107.

¹³⁷) Adm. 1/467: *Codrington* to *Croker*, 21 Oct. 1827; and Adm. 1/448: General Orders by *Codrington*, 24 Oct. 1827. Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, *Navarino*, pp. 140f.

¹³⁸) F.O. 352/16a: *Charnaud* to *S. Canning*, 17 Nov. 1827; and F.O. 78/151: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, Secret and Confidential, 16 Oct. 1827.

all their joint operations in reference to the Greek Revolution¹³⁹). Since it refused to summarize all these points in an official note, the Porte was subsequently informed by the Allied ambassadors that their governments must suspend all diplomatic relations until it accepted the Treaty of London, and they departed from Constantinople on 8 December 1827¹⁴⁰).

In the four months which followed the death of *George Canning* in August 1827, the diplomatic strategy which he had devised completely failed. The Porte refused persistently to compromise on the issue of the Greek Revolution, and it used its complaints about Ionian neutrality to counter all efforts by the Foreign Office to resolve hostilities in Greece. This Ottoman intransigence obliged the new Foreign Secretary, Lord *Dudley*, to establish Anglo-Hellenic relations on a commercial basis in conformity with Allied policy; an act facilitated by the Allied naval victory at Navarino. Since it blamed the Egyptian government for starting this naval battle, the Foreign Office insisted that Anglo-Ottoman relations were unchanged¹⁴¹). Sadly for the British government, the conspicuous absence of its ambassador from Constantinople belied this insistence, and the approaching war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire also indicated that the Levantine strategy of the Foreign Office had not succeeded. Although the Russian government had subordinated its own interests in the Greek Revolution to the Allied conference which was assembling in London, it could still initiate a conflict with the Ottoman Empire over any non-Hellenic matter, and the Ottoman repudiation in November 1827 of the Convention of Akkerman, which had restored the political administration of the Danubian Principalities, served as a pretext for such a conflict. In the light of both its Levantine and Ionian interests, the British government had feared the outbreak of this conflict for many years, and the Foreign Office now attempted a restoration of cordial relations between London and Constantinople before the Greek Revolution was resolved solely upon the terms of the Russian government. Fortunately for the British government, Anglo-Ottoman relations at the Ionian level were still cordial, and this situation would eventually encourage the resumption of such relations at a higher level, even though British diplomacy in the Levant was basically tied to Allied policy.

¹³⁹) F.O. 95/8/14: Memorandum by *Huskisson*, 9 Oct. 1827; and F.O. 352/17a: *S. Canning* to *Wellington*, 1, 11, and 28 Nov. 1827.

¹⁴⁰) F.O. 352/18: *S. Canning* to *Dudley*, Private, 5 Dec. 1827; and F.O. 352/19a: *S. Canning* to *McDonald*, 28 Nov. 1827, and *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, Private, 5 Dec. 1827.

¹⁴¹) F.O. 78/151: *Dudley* to *S. Canning*, 6 Dec. 1827.

9. The Resumption of Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1828—1830

While the Allied plenipotentiaries in London attempted to resolve the Greek Revolution, the British government considered the resumption of Anglo-Ottoman relations. In response to Ottoman pleas for such a resumption, the Foreign Office replied that diplomatic relations between London and Constantinople could not be renewed until the Porte accepted a compromise in the issue of the Greek Revolution, and the Earl of *Aberdeen*, who succeeded Lord *Dudley* as the Foreign Secretary in May 1828, urged it to do so before Hellenic independence was recognized formally by the Conference of London¹⁴²). Since he felt that such independence was not an indispensable prerequisite for the resumption of Anglo-Ottoman relations, *Aberdeen* promised to arrange an Allied-Ottoman understanding on the Greek Revolution, and in the light of Levantine peace, he was also eager to restore British prestige at the Porte, especially because both the Admiralty and the War Office had concluded that the city of Constantinople could not be defended against any sizeable Russian force¹⁴³). Unfortunately for the Foreign Office, the Porte hesitated as it was uncertain about British policy towards the Russo-Ottoman war, and it was still convinced that Allied intentions were not peaceful, since the Royal Navy had implemented a blockade of the Peloponnese, while an expeditionary force of French troops was prepared to invade this same region, unless it was evacuated by the Egyptian army¹⁴⁴). As its troops were well-supplied by Ionian merchants, the Egyptian government would not agree to an armistice, and the political autonomy of the Hellenic government in both the Peloponnese and the Cyclades Islands was consequently recognized by the Conference of London in its protocol for 16 November 1828¹⁴⁵). *Aberdeen* hoped that this latter event would now force the Porte to accept a compromise; however, it was other military considerations which led eventually to the resumption of Anglo-Ottoman relations.

Worried by its setbacks in the Russo-Ottoman war, the Porte again signified its willingness to resume diplomatic relations with the British gov-

¹⁴²) F.O. 352/21a: *Cowley* to *S. Canning*, Private, 21 July 1828; F.O. 352/20b: *Backhouse* to *S. Canning*, 15 Aug. 1828; and F.O. 32/1: *Dudley* to *Polignac*, 6 Mar. 1828.

¹⁴³) F.O. 78/164: *Aberdeen* to *S. Canning*, 4 and 26 July 1828; Adm. 1/468: *Aberdeen* to *Malcolm*, 2 July 1828; W.O. 80/12: *Lane* to *Bathurst*, 10 Apr. 1826; and Adm. 1/447: *Ingestre* to *Neale*, 26 Jan. 1827.

¹⁴⁴) Adm. 1/468: *Codrington* to *Croker*, 5 Feb. 1828; and F.O. 78/164: *Aberdeen* to *S. Canning*, 19 and 21 Aug. 1828.

¹⁴⁵) F.O. 421/3: pp. 31—49. Cf. David C. Fleming, *John Capodistrias and the Conference of London, 1828—1831*. Salonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1970, pp. 30—40, 76—83.

ernment. Although these relations had been suspended since December 1827, the British consulate in Prevesa had not been closed during the months immediately following Navarino, and *William Meyer*, the Consul-General for Albania, was eventually informed by *Mehemet Reshid Pasha*, the *Serasker* (Commander-in-Chief) of all Turkish forces in Roumelia, that such relations could be resumed if the Foreign Office took the diplomatic initiative by resolving the Greek Revolution¹⁴⁶). In spite of his own preference for the maintenance of such relations, *Aberdeen* had thoroughly committed his government to Allied policy, which now recognized Hellenic independence, and he accordingly advised the Porte to accept a *de facto* armistice immediately as the preliminary step towards accepting the Treaty of London¹⁴⁷). Even though a current armistice was being violated by the Greek forces in Albania, its observance in the Peloponnese was not obstructed by any extraneous factors, since the Egyptian forces had finally been evacuated in September 1828, while the Russian government had already renounced its rights of belligerency in the Mediterranean Sea. In order to placate the Porte further, *Meyer* even suggested that the Ionian merchants of Zante alleviate the current famine in Albania with supplies of grain¹⁴⁸). This particular plan was not at all practical, since the recent suspension of Anglo-Ionian commerce in the Levant had led to a shortage of grain in the Ionian Islands, while these Zantiote merchants would not produce any further vital supplies from their existing stocks, since they were still unpaid for supplying corn to the French forces in the Peloponnese¹⁴⁹). Nevertheless, the Porte was intent upon restoring its diplomatic relations with London, and the *Serasker*, who subsequently became the Foreign Minister in Constantinople, announced in March 1829 that the Porte had tentatively accepted the Treaty of London. Since *Stratford Canning* have recently been recalled from Greece, *Aberdeen* now appointed his own brother, *Sir Robert Gordon*, to be the new ambassador at the Porte¹⁵⁰).

With the restoration of Anglo-Ottoman relations, *Aberdeen* hoped that the Porte would accept a formal settlement of the Greek Revolution. In the light of the Russo-Ottoman war, the Foreign Secretary hoped to increase

¹⁴⁶) C.O. 136/536: *Meyer* to *Rudsdell*, 23 Oct. 1827; F.O. 352/16a: *S. Canning* to *Meyer*, 30 Dec. 1827, and *Meyer* to *S. Canning*, 2 Jan. 1828; and F.O. 352/21a: *S. Canning* to *Adam*, Private, 2 Nov. 1828.

¹⁴⁷) F.O. 78/178: *Aberdeen* to *S. Canning*, 30 Jan. 1829; and C.O. 136/573: *Meyer* to *S. Canning*, Private, 28 Jan. 1829, and *Meyer* to *Aberdeen*, 8 Feb. 1829.

¹⁴⁸) F.O. 32/1: *S. Canning* to *Reis Effendi*, 2 July 1828; and F.O. 32/7: *Meyer* to *Adam*, 30 Jan. 1829.

¹⁴⁹) C.O. 136/573: *Aberdeen* to *Meyer*, 12 Jan. 1829, and *Meyer* to *Adam*, 14 Mar. 1829; C.O. 136/54: *Adam* to *Meyer*, 4 Feb. 1829; and F.O. 32/2: Report by *Lyons*, (Nov.), 1829.

¹⁵⁰) F.O. 78/179: *Aberdeen* to *Gordon*, 9 Apr. 1829.

the diplomatic dependence of the Porte on his government, and he instructed the new ambassador to inform the Porte that the British government would not assist it in any non-Hellenic matter until the Greek Revolution had successfully been resolved¹⁵¹). Confronted by this ultimatum, the Ottoman government was expected by *Aberdeen* to accept the Protocol of London for 22 March 1829, which basically created an independent Greek state, so that the Greek Revolution would be settled on Allied, rather than Russian, terms. This strategy was not easily implemented since *Gordon* soon learned after his arrival in Constantinople that the Porte was not really prepared to confirm any Allied acknowledgement of Hellenic independence¹⁵²). Even worse, the Russian government had recently insisted that such independence be acknowledged by the Porte before it concluded any treaty of peace, and it subsequently gained a brief diplomatic advantage by incorporating this acknowledgement in the Treaty of Adrianople, which was signed on 14 September 1829¹⁵³). Since this latter situation had been dreaded for years by the Foreign Office, *Gordon* now salvaged the diminishing prestige of British diplomacy by persuading the Porte to cooperate with all decisions reached by the Conference of London, and its subsequent assent to the Protocol of London for 22 March 1829 was seen as solid assurance that the Greek Revolution would finally be settled on Allied terms. In spite of many Russian complaints on this matter, the Foreign Office was quite satisfied with the progress which its ambassador in Constantinople had achieved so quickly; however, *Aberdeen* still insisted on outlining a new strategy for the future of Anglo-Ottoman relations¹⁵⁴).

Whereas *Adam* was concerned with the Greek threat to the Ionian interests of the British government, *Aberdeen* was more concerned with its Levantine interests. The Foreign Secretary stated that British policy in the Eastern Question must be modified to fit the ever-changing circumstances in the Levant. As illustrated by the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman war, the British government had lost control of the Levantine situation during the Greek Revolution by relying too much upon its traditional alliance with the Porte. *Aberdeen* insisted that the future of Anglo-Ottoman relations would now be based on pragmatic considerations, since the Foreign Office would no longer waste its energies on such an obstinate ally, especially as the Continental states would not tolerate the further repression of any Christian race by the Porte. From this latter standpoint, the Russian government still presented a threat to the Levantine *status quo*, since it could

¹⁵¹) F.O. 78/179: *Aberdeen* to *Gordon*, 10 Apr. 1829.

¹⁵²) F.O. 78/180: *Gordon* to *Aberdeen*, 10 Sept. 1829.

¹⁵³) F.O. 78/180: *Gordon* to *Aberdeen*, 26 June 1829; and F.O. 421/3: pp. 72 ff. Cf. M. S. Anderson, *Great Powers*, pp. 33—35.

¹⁵⁴) F.O. 78/179: *Aberdeen* to *Gordon*, 23 Sept. 1829; and F.O. 286/8: *Gordon* to *Dawkins*, 25 Apr. 1830. Cf. D. C. Fleming, *John Capodistrias*, pp. 95—105.

encourage the perpetual expansion of the Hellenic state, and the Foreign Secretary concluded that his government must monitor all such threats by again acting *en concert* with both France and Russia in all issues pertaining to the Eastern Question¹⁵⁵). Since it was added that this particular strategy took priority over the restoration of Anglo-Ottoman relations, the British ambassador in Constantinople received the impression that the Porte was being abandoned at a time when it was extremely pro-British, and he commented that it currently needed much support from London, since the Russian government still threatened both its political and territorial integrity. *Aberdeen* responded by informing his brother that the Foreign Office had only once withheld its diplomatic support during the Greek Revolution, and that occasion occurred when the Sultan had emphatically refused to accept the Treaty of London, thus forcing the British government to conform with Allied policy by suspending all diplomatic relations with the Porte. Anglo-Ottoman relations had been cordially resumed since the occasion, and the Porte had even accepted the Protocol of London of 3 February 1830, which assured peaceful relations between Greece and the Ottoman Empire by establishing a strategic frontier running from Arta to Volos¹⁵⁶). The Foreign Secretary reiterated his concern for Anglo-Ottoman relations, especially since the Board of Control for India intended to increase its commerce throughout the Levant¹⁵⁷); however, Ionian neutrality was no longer a factor in these relations since it would soon be rescinded towards the end of the Greek Revolution.

10. Conclusion

Although it was hardly a consideration in European diplomacy, Ionian neutrality was an important issue in Anglo-Ottoman relations during the era of the Greek Revolution. The Porte complained about Ionian neutrality whenever British policy in the Greek Revolution did not suit its own interests, and its insistence that this strict neutrality was not enforced with impartiality enabled it to resist all British efforts to mediate the outstanding crises of the Eastern Question during the 1820s. *Viscount Strangford* did not refute many Ottoman charges about Ionian neutrality, since he was principally concerned with the Levantine interests of his government, and

¹⁵⁵) F.O. 78/179: *Aberdeen to Gordon*, 10 Nov. 1829. Cf. C. R. Crawley, *The Question*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁶) F.O. 78/188: *Aberdeen to Gordon*, 26 Feb. 1830; and F.O. 32/8: *Aberdeen to Prince Leopold*, 12 May 1830.

¹⁵⁷) F.O. 78/188: *Aberdeen to Gordon*, 2 Apr. 1830. Cf. Edward Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia, 1828—1834*. Oxford: University Press, 1979, p. 193.

he also refused to arrange a Russo-Ottoman reconciliation, despite clear instructions from London, because the diplomatic tensions which occurred between St. Petersburg and Constantinople increased the Levantine trade of British merchants. By contrast, the Foreign Office was rather concerned with the overall situation in the Levant, especially since the persistent refusal of the Porte to accept a compromise on the issue of the Greek Revolution might have easily led to a Russo-Ottoman war. Paradoxically, neither *George Canning*, nor *Stratford Canning de Redcliffe*, discerned fully that it was British, rather than Ionian, neutrality which often enabled the Porte to resist all British efforts of mediation, especially since the Foreign Office could not directly interfere with such Ionian-related matters as British philhellenes, or Greek refugees. As a result, the Porte remained obstinate about the Greek Revolution, even when it was confronted by Allied determination to impose a truce upon the belligerent forces in the Peloponnese, and Anglo-Ottoman relations were consequently suspended in the aftermath of the naval action at Navarino. After years of futile diplomacy, the fears of the Foreign Office were realized in 1828, when a Russo-Ottoman conflict was initiated, albeit over a non-Hellenic matter. Fortunately for the British government, strict neutrality had preserved the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations at the Ionian level, and this situation facilitated the resumption of diplomatic relations between London and Constantinople, which finally enabled the Foreign Office to resolve the Greek Revolution on Allied, rather than on Russian, terms. Nevertheless, the diplomatic events surrounding the Greek Revolution convinced the Foreign Office that it could not always depend upon the traditional cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations to assure the Levantine interests of the British government, and even before Ionian neutrality was quietly rescinded in June 1830, Lord *Aberdeen* had initiated a more-realistic approach to the Eastern Question.