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No 84

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem April 22d 1880

Hon. Wm M. Evarts
Secretary of State
Washington D. C.

Sir

I write to ask, for, leave of absence for sixty days during the heated term, commencing about the 10th of July. I deem this course as prudent merely as a precautionary measure especially in view of the fact that since my sojourn in the Lebanon last year my health has been better than for year before, and also, that Europeans and Americans residing at Jerusalem, without change, are very apt to be attacked, with the autumnal fevers incident to the country, resulting as I suppose, from bad water and general bad hygeine — for this mountain region ought to be a healthy country.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient servant
Wilson

Signed

Consul

No 85

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem April 30th 1880

Hon. Chas. Payson
Third Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D. C.

Sir

By refering to your despatch No. 41, of December 4th 1879, I find the following statement.

"Refering to your despatch No 73, it gives me pleasure to inform you that the same has been read with interest."

"You will continue to study the question of reform in Asiatic Turkey, and will communicate from time to time with the Department upon the subject."

In

In accordance with this suggestion, I have placed upon record and herewith transmit some considerations, that have occurred to me, as embracing the elements of the problem in what is called the Eastern question. The subject is a large one, as well as a complicated one, so many and so various are the factors involved; but I have compressed the statements into the smallest space possible compatible with a full and clear presentation of the subject.

The object to be contemplated is Turkey, in itself considered and in its relation to Russia, England and the various Governments more or less interested, in the manner of the solution of the problem — as Austria, France, Italy, Greece and the various principalities and dependencies of the Ottoman Empire.

The decay of the Ottoman Empire is of long continuance and its downfall is only a question of time.

It is not now self supporting. It is melting away, before the irresistible force of things, as the ice palace on the Neva, erected in contempt of the laws of nature.

The energies of its people are paralized the Officials are corrupt, the treasury is bankrupt, hopelessly, the Bottom loans are mortgaged to European Bankers, backed as they are by the Western nations and as a bulwark or a fortress it must fall, all its supports, being undermined.

The support of an Empire which is in course of dissolution from internal as well as from external causes, for a short period is about the measure of success to be expected, and the result is hardly worth the cost.

Treaties and customs and decrees, can not prevent the conjunction of the planets, nor can they make barbarism sacred from the intrusion of civilized industry.

All irrational customs and hoary traditions must give place to the advancing tide of civilization. Institutions and laws must be changed, with the change in the stream of affairs, or they perish. The Oriental is influenced by selfish motive, in conferring favors and in receiving them. Services performed and past are readily forgotten.

Those only who know Turkey, and none know the Turks except those who have lived among them can comprehend the extent and applicability of the term, intrigue; nor will it be deemed too much to say

to say that the counsels and administration of the Government
ultimately carried on by this treacherous machinery.

Living under a despotic Government, under laws framed to
screen the authorities rather than to protect the people, in a land
where might makes right, where justice, or judgment rather, is
bought and sold, the people are suspicious, jealous, cowardly,
revengeful and being without education without commerce, except
except on a very small scale, and without employment comparatively
they make vice and intrigue and pleasure, the business
and the employment of life.

The spirit of the present administration is retrograde and
fanatical. The ultra Moslem party is in the ascendant as is
evidenced by the fact that the decree or opinion of the Ulema
was accepted by the Sultan as the basis of the reason of his
action in the dismissal of the Grand Vizier Khereddin Pacha.

The import of this decision is that the Sultan is not a
civil Ruler, but rather a Caliph, bound by the Sheriat, or
sacred law, of which he cannot divest himself.

Under such circumstances the equality before the law of
Christians and Mohammedans is impossible. The Christian
may be to tolerated, but he has no rights, and there is no liberty
for Mohammedan to become a Christian.

In 1866, Ali Pacha wrote to Lord Russell, that the Turkish
Government would never tolerate any effort to convert Mohammedans
to Christianity, and in 1875 the deputation from
the Evangelical Alliance, was even refused a hearing.

Under the Mohammedan Government, every Turk who
becomes a Christian, is a traitor as well as an apostate.

It is this false view of the situation that makes the people
and the Rulers intolerant.

The Turk terms himself an Ottoman, that is to say, a
descendant of Othoman, a predatory, a predatory chief,
half prophet, half robber. His descendants have squatted
in Europe and in Asia Minor, but they never have become
wedded to the soil that they occupy any more than a band
of locusts. Their scheme of government is a theocratic
one, and their laws are based upon their interpretation of Koran.
For the last century, European Powers have sought to convert
these marauders into a nation, and they have signally failed
in the

in the attempt. Wars have been undertaken in their behalf, money
has been showered on them. But they go from bad to
worse, and each succeeding year they become more feeble, more
corrupt, and more effete.

They are a doomed race, and the sooner that we realize this
fact the better it will be for the world.

Constantinople said Napoleon is the Empire of the world.
Constantinople, said the Czar Peter, is the Key of my street
door, and I must have it. Constantinople, said the Duke
of Wellington, if Constantinople be taken, the Map of the
world must be reconstructed.

Said Lord Derby. The Eastern question, is the question,
who shall have Constantinople.

In the course of a few years said Napoleon at St. Helena
Russia will have Constantinople the greatest part of Turkey,
and all Greece. I see into futurity farther than other, and I
wanted to establish a barrier against these Barbarians by
reestablishing the Kingdom of Poland and placing Constantine,
Ki at the head as King. A hundred years hence I shall be
praised and Europe, especially England will lament, that I did
not succeed. When they shall see the finest countries in
Europe overrun and a prey to these Northern Barbarians, they will
say, Napoleon was right.

Said Prince Gorchakoff, 1830 It is an old and settled principle
of our policy, not to allow any intervention between ourselves
and the Turks, because of the geographical situation of our south
ern provinces and of the Bosphorus, which is the key of it. A
permanent influence at Constantinople is a first rate
necessity of our policy.

We demand it, and we shall know how to maintain it.

Since the commencement of the 18th century, Russia has waged
nine aggressive wars against the Turks. About one every twenty
years, and invariably, with one exception the Crimean war,
with a large advancement of her frontier in all directions.

The Caspian sea has been converted into a Russian Lake.
From Sweden she has wrested half her dominions, she has
absorbed the Crimea, and the plains of Tartary, she has dismembered
Poland, and thereby acquired territory equal to the whole
of Austria, and her conquests, from Turkey in Europe, pin
even

wen to the late Russo-Turkish war, have equalled the size of Russia proper, and from Turkey in Asia, and from Persia, her acquisitions have been enormous.

The territories incorporated with Russia since 1772 exceed in extent and value all her former possessions. She has advanced her frontier 900 miles towards central Europe and has annexed countries 400 miles in breadth in the direction of Constantinople that city being the goal of her ambition and the object of her diplomacy and of her wars.

This was the dream of Sebastiani, of Peter of Alexander and of Nicholas and it is the traditional policy of the Empire. And though, by the Berlin convention she was obliged to give up some of the territorial acquisition recognized by the treaty of St. Stephano, there is reason to believe, that she has not relinquished her purpose.

In 1788, Gibbon adverted to an ancient prophecy respecting Constantinople.

Speaking of the Russian varanginians, of the 9th and 10th centuries, he says.

"The memory of those Arctic fleets, that seemed to descend from the Arctic circle left a deep impression of terror on the imperial City. By the vulgar of every rank, it was ancient and believed, that an equestrian statue in the square of Sauru, was secretly inscribed with a prophecy how the Russians in the last days, should become Masters of Constantinople."

The astute diplomacy of Russia, has proved more than a match for the counterplotting of England and France and Germany and Austria.

Russia relies largely upon force, but history attests that in intrigue, and skill, her trained diplomats, are unrivalled if not unequalled.

Russia is master of the sea of Aral, and only a distance of 400 miles separates her advanced posts from the North West frontier of India.

The Russian flag is dominant on the coasts of countries with which England is intimately, associated, As Afghanistan Persia and Bengania.

Russia

Russia proposes to take Persia under her protection as England has taken Asia Minor and Afghanistan.

In the treaty recently concluded between Russia and China by which a portion of Kuldja was to be ceded by the former to the latter power it was stipulated that the Russians should have the exclusive right of trading in the Western provinces of China and the Russian papers, are now discussing the most effectual means of exercising this right.

Russia is half Asiatic in sympathy and character and civilization, and wholly so in political administration.

China is inflamed with hatred against Europe and against England in particular and is furnishing herself with European arms and equipments.

Even her navy is by no means contemptible, and among the possibilities of the future is a Russian Alliance with China, and Persia, as well as with Turkey, and a war between the East and the West — the Tartar and the European, a war not unlike that of the Goths and vandals against Rome; a vast magazine stored with inflammable materials, and if once, the match be applied, no man can foretell when the flames will stop.

The financial weakness of the Turkish Empire appears from the non payement of official salaries from the repudiation of the currency paper and coin, in various forms from the imposition of forced loans, upon landed estates, from the failure last year to provision, the caravan pilgrimage to Mecca an event which has never before occurred, since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, and from the farming of the Customs revenue to pay the interest on the bonded debt to European capitalists. The English administration even, seems to be impotent for the fulfillment or the enforcement of the promises upon.

Orders have been issued and countermanded again and again in reference to movements of the British fleet, showing that the administration is apprehensive of a collapse of the Turkish Government, and that England proposes to be at Constantinople before Russia can send an army.

Lord Salisbury, "Rich and extensive provinces have been restored to his rule, at the same time that provision against future misgovernment has been made, which will, it may be

be hoped, assure their loyalty, and prevent a recurrence of the calamities which have brought the Ottoman power to the verge of ruin.

Arrangements of a different kind, but having the same end in view, have provided for the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan, security for the present and the hope of prosperity and stability in the future.

Whether use will be made of this, probably the last opportunity which has been thus obtained for Turkey by the interposition of the Powers of Europe, and of England in particular, or whether it is to be thrown away, will depend upon the sincerity with which Turkish statesmen now address themselves to the duties of good government and the task of reform."

Russia undoubtedly proposes, to resume the policy of Eastern conquest and to declare a war of revenge against the Authors of the Berlin treaty by which the treaty of St. Stephano was modified, depriving the Empire of so large a portion of territorial conquests, the results and acquisitions of the war.

The victorious arms were arrested and turned back at the objective point of the campaign, and in sight of Constantinople after centuries of diplomacy and intrigue, and numerous and expensive wars in pursuance of the dynastic idea.

The National party, so called of Russia exasperated to the highest degree, by the condition of the treaty of Berlin, destructive to the peace and tranquility of the Empire and inimical to the safety of the dynasty, persists in a foreign policy of war and aggression, as a means of self-protection and to detract the attention of the public, from the disturbed state of domestic affairs.

The policy is to "fight fire with fire;" to appease domestic violence and revolution, foreign wars military glory and national aggrandisement.

The Nihilists aim at the destruction of the state, the Nationalists on the contrary would increase its power and crush all external elements by sheer slavonic military force. The Russo-Turkish war was the work of the latter, appealing to the sympathy of race, the fanaticism of the Eastern

Church,

Church, and the traditional aspiration of centuries for the conquest of Byzantium. The Nihilists cared nothing for the war, except in so far, as it might weaken the authority of the Government, exhaust its resources and open the flood gates of revolution, whether by victory or defeat.

These two parties, not in concert, but acting in the same direction, with different aims and ends, have impelled the Government along a course of action or line of conduct, contrary to the intention of the Rulers, and which may lead to self-destruction.

It is understood, indeed it is no secret, that the Emperor and his Ministers were opposed to the late war, but were incapable of resisting the popular will.

Bismarck has recently demanded the withdrawal of the Russian cavalry from the Russian frontier, and it is no secret, that the dynastic policy of Russia is regarded with apprehension by the Cabinets of Germany and of Austria.

The Austro-German Alliance is intended as a means to protect the peace of the world; it is a measure of defence against Russia. for the contingency of a Russian invasion of Germany, weighs heavily upon the mind of Prince Bismarck, and the show so, as it might and doubtless would encourage France, to attempt the Rectification of the Rhine frontier, by the recovery of her lost provinces.

The British flag, rules over the Mediterranean sea. England holds Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and perhaps Alexandretta, as a harbor and entrepot and depot for the Euphrates Railroad that is to be, opening a direct and quicker transit to India.

England and France have virtually the control of Egypt.

Of the Commerce of the Suez canal so too, is under the British flag.

A few years ago, the Duke of Sunderland was at Paris for the purpose of purchasing the Egyptian Railroads, to be operated by an English company; the impoverishment of the Khedive, making a sale, or a disposition of some kind almost a necessity.

England, for the protection of her India possessions and the security of her commerce demands a double route through Egypt by canal and by railway.

Egypt

Egypt is a quasi province of Turkey, and is tributary; but the debt of Egypt, is $500,000,000 and the interest account is $35,000,000.

It is a singular fact that the Queen of England is now the greatest Mohammedan sovereign in the world — that is, has more Mohammedan subjects than any other Power. These are found chiefly in India, over which the Queen rules. There are not so many Mohammedans in Turkey as there are in the East Indian dominions of Her Majesty.

It will therefore not be deemed objectionable by the British Cabinet to add additional provinces, of Mohammedans subjects to the Empire.

Among the probable results are.

The transfer of the Christian provinces of Turkey to the Christian powers or their erection into independent states under the protection of the powers —

An independent state or confederation of states, with the capital at Constantinople.

Syria is a Christian province, and its proper position is in relation to France, Egypt, now controlled by France and England, will in the natural course of events fall under the domination of England.

Palestine is a Mohammedan province, but the native Arabs have no love for the ruling Turks, who are a small minority of the population.

France and Russia, claim the protectorate over the sacred places, and both or rather the Latin Church, and the Greek Church, have large landed estates and numerous entrants in the Country.

To prevent riots and violence the sacred places are guarded by the Turkish police.

They carry the keys, even of the Church of the Sepulchre and of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

France and Russia are rivals, as protectors and champions of the Cross, and it is a fact, not generally known that the Crimean War, commenced in the Church of the Nativity, Napoleon III, reduced England into the espousal of his quarrel, with Russia.

All parties here, now agree, that the Crimean war

was a blunder for England and a calamity for the world.

Palestine should be given to France rather than to Russia — or better perhaps, to England or to Germany, as neutral powers, as to question ecclesiastical, and in regard to sacred places.

Some years ago, it is a part of the secret history of diplomacy, perhaps about 1845, a treaty was signed and sealed, by the representatives of the high contracting powers but for some reason not ratified and published, making Russia, the Protectorate of Palestine and the guardian of the Holy places the rights and privileges of the Latin and of the Greek Church, to be respected and maintained.

Thus, the European provinces, may be gradually detached from Turkey, and the border provinces, in Asia and Africa, but there will still remain, a vast, but not populous Asiatic Turkey with a barbarous people, and with few resources, a people, whom no European government, would desire even as tributary provinces.

This vast country, may be regarded, I think, as the nucleus of an Arabian Empire of the future — or of the Turkish Empire continued, with the seat of Government, at Bussa, or at Bagdad, as in the days of the Caliphs.

For a constitutional Government, or for a civilized Government of any form, these people have as yet, no adaption and few qualifications.

There is another possible contingency, provided Lord Beaconsfield, can have no intimacies of life, and of administration, or if the same line of policy should be prosecuted by his successors, foreshadowed in Conigsby and in Tancred; Viz. Asia Minor and Syria and Palestine and Egypt, and the countries adjacent, an Oriental Empire, as in India, subject to Great Britain, and the English Flag, full high advanced, and the Queen of England, the crowned Empress of India of Western Asia, and of Egypt; a dominion almost universal; the scheme of Empire of Rome, of Charlemagne and of Napoleon, revived, but too vast and of materials, too diverse, to be realized permanently.

Since, however, the accession of Gladstone to power, with a liberal Cabinet, and a decided majority in Parliament, it is probable that the tendency and trend of the British Government towards Imperialism, has been arrested, for the present at least,

land, and that the Eastern question, may be permitted a solution, more in accordance with Geographical position and Dynastic necessities — a barrier against Russian aggression, being secured, by the erection of an independent Kingdom or Empire, with the capital at Constantinople.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient servant
Wilson
(Signed)
Consul

No 86

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem May 8th 1880

Hon. Chas Payson
Third Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D. C.

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge Circular No 18 dated March 20th, and also your despatch No 44 of the 7th of April, in reference to Mr John Boldwin Hay, informing me that he has been ordered to report to me for duty.

I have also to report that Mr Hay left Jaffa two or three weeks ago, in charge of his Mother and Servants, for Europe or America. Mrs Hay was very reticent in regard to her contemplated movements, not giving her confidence so far as I can learn to any persons at Jaffa, and still persisting in the statement that Mr Hay was not seriously ill, and not at all insane.

I have also further to report, that from Dec: 8th 1879, Mr Hay's health became gradually worse rather than better, his paroxysmal attacks being lighter, but the intervals between the attacks, being marked more and more by mental imbecility. It is possible, that he may be benefitted by the sea voyage. The testimony of his physicians is, that the only hope of his recovery, is by skilful treatment in a well appointed Insane Asylum.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your obedient servant
(Signed) Wilson
Consul

No 87

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem June 5th 1880

Hon. Chas Payson
Third Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D. C.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of two boxes through the Liverpool Consulate, Containing Coat of Arms, and Books and Stationery; but no blank forms and no flags.

1/. I send herewith List of Articles received enclosure No 1.

And List of Articles not received, but asked for, and for which

2/. I renew my application Enclosure No 2

I am out of Forms, and my Flags are worn out.

When I came to Jerusalem the Department sent with stationery one Flag, which I have used only on special accasions.

Out of the remnants of the old Flags, I made three small ones, one of which I sent to to Jaffa.

The next year, I made three new Flags, of such materials as I could find in the shops at Jerusalem, one of them also I sent one to Jaffa.

I can not find proper materials here for Flags, but such as they are I shall have to avail my self of them until the arrival of Flags from the Department of State.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient Servant
Wilson
Consul

Two Enclosures
1 List of Articles received
2 " " " not received